

AUSSEN WIRTSCHAFT BRANCHENREPORT CHINA, HONGKONG



CHANCEN FÜR ÖSTERR. BILDUNGSANBIETER IN HONGKONG & VR CHINA

MARKTÜBERSICHT
CHANCEN
ANHÄNGE | LINKS | ADRESSEN

AUSSENWIRTSCHAFTSCENTER HONGKONG
APRIL 2026



Unser vollständiges Angebot zum Thema **Bildung** (Veranstaltungen, Publikationen, Schlagzeilen etc.) finden Sie unter wko.at/aussenwirtschaft/bildung.

Eine Information des
AußenwirtschaftsCenters Hongkong

T +852 2522 2388

E hongkong@wko.at

 fb.com/aussenwirtschaft

 x.com/wko_aw

 linkedin.com/company/aussenwirtschaft-austria

 youtube.com/aussenwirtschaft

 flickr.com/aussenwirtschaftaustria

 instagram.com/aussenwirtschaft_austria.at

Dieser Branchenreport wurde im Rahmen der Internationalisierungsoffensive **go-international**, einer Förderinitiative des Bundesministeriums für Arbeit und Wirtschaft und der Wirtschaftskammer Österreich, erstellt.

Das Werk ist urheberrechtlich geschützt. Alle Rechte, insbesondere die Rechte der Verbreitung, der Vervielfältigung, der Übersetzung, des Nachdrucks und die Wiedergabe auf fotomechanischem oder ähnlichem Wege durch Fotokopie, Mikrofilm oder andere elektronische Verfahren sowie der Speicherung in Datenverarbeitungsanlagen bleiben, auch bei nur auszugsweiser Verwertung, der Wirtschaftskammer Österreich – AUSSENWIRTSCHAFT AUSTRIA vorbehalten. Die Wiedergabe mit Quellenangabe ist vorbehaltlich anders lautender Bestimmungen gestattet.

Es wird darauf hingewiesen, dass alle Angaben trotz sorgfältiger Bearbeitung ohne Gewähr erfolgen und eine Haftung der Wirtschaftskammer Österreich – AUSSENWIRTSCHAFT AUSTRIA ausgeschlossen ist.

Darüber hinaus ist jede gewerbliche Nutzung dieses Werkes der Wirtschaftskammer Österreich – AUSSENWIRTSCHAFT AUSTRIA vorbehalten.

Bild: imaginima via Getty Images

© AUSSENWIRTSCHAFT AUSTRIA DER WKÖ

Offenlegung nach § 25 Mediengesetz i.d.g.F.

Herausgeber, Medieninhaber (Verleger) und Hersteller:
WIRTSCHAFTSKAMMER ÖSTERREICH / AUSSENWIRTSCHAFTSCENTER AUSTRIA

Wiedner Hauptstraße 63, 1045 Wien

Redaktion: AUSSENWIRTSCHAFTSCENTER HONGKONG

13 F Diamond Exchange Building, 8 – 10 Duddell Street, Central, Hong Kong, T +852 2522 2388

E hongkong@wko.at, W wko.at/aussenwirtschaft/cn

Table of Contents

1. Executive Summary	4
2. Education System Overview: Hong Kong and Mainland China	4
2.2 Hong Kong	4
3.2.1 Key Education Stages.....	4
3.2.1 Post-Secondary / Higher Education	5
2.1.3 Certifications and Articulation	8
2.1.4 Governance and key agencies.....	8
2.1.5 Demographic & Student Population Trends	8
2.2 China	9
2.2.1 Key Education Stages.....	10
2.2.2 Certifications and Articulation.....	10
3. Policy Direction: Priorities and Emerging Trends	11
3.1 Hong Kong Specific Trends	11
3.2 Integration with China's Education and Innovation Strategies	11
3.2.1 Long-Term National Vision.....	12
3.2.2 Higher Education and International Cooperation.....	12
3.2.3 Vocational Education and Industry Integration	12
3.2.4 Digital Transformation and AI in Education.....	12
4. Hong Kong Education Expenditure - FY 2026 – 27 Overview.....	12
4.1 Total Expenditure on Education	12
4.2 Key Education Related Spending	13
5. Integrated Development of EdTech & Talent	16
6. Tertiary Internationalisation, Scholarships & Talent Attraction	16
7. Vocational & professional education and training (VPET)	16
8. Student Accommodation and Infrastructure	17
9. Outbound Students between Austria and Hong Kong	17
10. Implications & Opportunities for Austria	18
11. Risks and Constraints.....	18
12. Recommendations for Austria	19
13. Assistance Provided by AUSSENWIRTSCHAFT AUSTRIA.....	19
14. Key Education Fairs and Engagement Platforms.....	19
15. Annex.....	21

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides an overview of the **education systems of Hong Kong and Mainland China**, outlining system structures, governance arrangements, recent policy developments, demographic trends, education expenditure, and areas of international engagement. It describes developments across basic education, higher education, vocational and professional education, and digital education. Hong Kong is strategically positioning itself as an international education hub, increasing non-local student quotas, investing heavily in digital education, and addressing demographic declines. Mainland China continues large-scale reforms under the 2024–2035 Master Plan, with significant expansion in vocational and higher education, increased international openness, and strong digitalisation benchmarks. The report also states the bilateral academic relations and cooperation projects between universities and students in Hong Kong and Austria.

2. EDUCATION SYSTEM OVERVIEW: HONG KONG AND MAINLAND CHINA

2.2 Hong Kong

Hong Kong's system operates under "One Country, Two Systems," maintaining curriculum autonomy while aligning strategically with China's national education vision. The **Education Bureau's (EDB) Figures & Statistics** remains the authoritative source on enrolment, expenditure and system structure. The system largely follows the British model, though Chinese-medium instruction and Mainland-aligned content, such as national identity and history education, have become more prominent in recent years.

3.2.1 Key Education Stages

- **Kindergarten (K1–K3):** Optional, widely attended; supported by the Kindergarten Education Scheme and monitored through EDB quality frameworks.
- **Primary (P1–P6):** A compulsory six-year stage offered through government, aided, and **Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS)** schools.

Primary Schools		No. of Schools	No. of Students	School Fees (Euro per year)
Local	Government	33	21,084	Free
	Aided	420	258,571	Free
	Direct Subsidies	21	15,744	EUR 1,200 to over EUR 6,000
	Private	116	30,327	EUR 1,200 to over EUR 20,000
International	ESF and others	46	22,933	EUR 12,500 to over EUR 24,000
Total		590	348,659	

Source: [Education Bureau Hong Kong](#)

- **Secondary (S1–S6):** Students complete six years of secondary schooling leading to the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE), with international pathways such as the IB and GCE A-Levels also available.

Secondary Schools		No. of Schools	No. of Students	School Fees (Euro per year)
Local	Government	30	19,061	Free
	Aided	357	241,182	Free
	Caput	2	1,365	Free
	Direct Subsidies	58	48,276	EUR 1,200 to over EUR 9,800
	Private	65	30,723	EUR 1,200 to over EUR 25,000
International	ESF and Others	33	20,797	EUR 12,500 to over EUR 28,000
Total		545	361404	

Source: [Education Bureau Hong Kong](#)

3.2.1 Post-Secondary / Higher Education

Public Universities

Hong Kong has **eight University Grants Committee (UGC) -funded universities**:

- The University of Hong Kong (HKU)
- The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK)
- Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST)
- The Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU)
- City University of Hong Kong (CityU)
- Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU)
- Lingnan University
- The Education University of Hong Kong (EdUHK)

These institutions collectively provide approximately **15,000 first-year-first-degree places annually**, funded through the **University Grants Committee (UGC)**.

Global Standing and International Reputation

Hong Kong continues to reinforce its status as a global higher education hub. In the QS World University Rankings 2026, five Hong Kong universities ranked within the global top 100, with six in the top 200. Notable results include:

University	Global Rank	Highlights
The University of Hong Kong (HKU)	11th	Reached a historic high; climbed 6 places; now among the world's top 15 and 2nd highest in Asia.
Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK)	32nd	Best performance since 2010; rising research influence and expanding global networks.
Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST)	44th	Maintains strong international appeal with highly diverse faculty and student body.
Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU)	54th	Strengthened global standing through applied research excellence and strong international partnerships.
City University of Hong Kong (CityU)	63rd	Exceptional research impact; ranked top-two globally in <i>Citations per Faculty</i> .

Institutional Cooperation between Hong Kong and Austrian Education Providers

Hong Kong	Austria	Partnership
University of Hong Kong	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academy of Fine Arts Vienna • University of Innsbruck • University of Vienna • Vienna University of Economics and Business 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Exchange - Architecture • Student Exchange - University Level • Student Exchange - University Level • Business school exchangee • Business & economics research collaboration

The Chinese University of Hong Kong	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graz University of Technology • University of Graz • University of Vienna • Vienna University of Economics and Business 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Exchange - University -Level & Institutional MOU (academic collaboration; Architecture exchange) • Student Exchange - University Level • Student Exchange – University Level • Student Exchange – University Level
The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MCI Management Centre Innsbruck • University of Innsbruck • Vienna University of Economics and Business 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exchange Partnership for School of Science, School of Engineering, School of Humanities and Social Science • Exchange Partnership for Business School / School of Business and Management • Exchange Partnership for Business School
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management Center Innsbruck • Modul University Vienna • Salzburg University of Applied Sciences • IMC University of Applied Sciences Krems • Vienna University of Economics and Business 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Exchange - School of Hotel and Tourism Management (SHTM) and Departmental Mobility • Student Exchange + Dual-Degree / Mobility Programmes with PolyU School of Hotel & Tourism Management • Formal academic cooperation includes joint curriculum design, mutual recognition, and applied tourism research collaboration • Student Exchange (School of Hotel & Tourism Management and engineering-related faculties) • School of Hotel & Tourism Management Exchange Partnership • Student Exchange - Faculty of Business

City University of Hong Kong	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Johannes Kepler University Linz • Management Center Innsbruck • University of Applied Sciences Upper Austria • University of Vienna • Vienna University of Technology • Vienna University of Economics and Business 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student exchange - Department of Decision Analytics and Operations • Student exchange College of Engineering & College of Biomedicine • Student Exchange – engineering and school of management • Student Exchange – University Level • Student Exchange - College of Engineering & College of Science • Student Exchange - College of Business, Department of Decision Analytics & Operations & School of Law
Hong Kong Baptist University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MCI Management Centre Innsbruck • University of Graz • University of Klagenfurt • University of Applied Sciences Upper Austria • Vienna University of Economics and Business 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student exchange - Business, Management, Communication & IT-related programmes (primarily Bachelor-/Master-level applied business fields) • Student exchange – Social Science • Student Exchange - University Level • Student Exchange - University Level • Student Exchange – School of Business
Lingnan University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Applied Sciences Kufstein Tirol • University of Applied Sciences IMC Krems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Exchange- Business, Management, and Social Sciences • Student Exchange - Tourism & Leisure Management
The Education University of Hong Kong	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pädagogischen Hochschule Tirol 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Exchange - University Level Student Exchange

Vocational and Applied Education

The Vocational Training Council (VTC) is Hong Kong's largest vocational and professional education provider, offering programmes from Qualifications Framework (QF) Levels 2–5, including certificates, diplomas, higher diplomas and applied degrees.

Key features:

- At least 60% vocational content in Higher Diploma programmes
- Strong industry collaboration
- Approximately 250,000 training places annually, including pre-employment and in-service training

International Schools

Hong Kong's 54 international schools, including 15 operated by the [English Schools Foundation \(ESF\)](#), the city's largest international school provider offering through-train IB-based education form a key pillar of its global education ecosystem. These schools provide kindergarten-to-secondary pathways and offer a wide range of curricula, including the IB, UK, US, German, French, Japanese, Korean and Singaporean systems. Their presence is essential in supporting the inflow of multinational talent, serving expatriate families.

2.1.3 Certifications and Articulation

- [Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education \(HKDSE\)](#) is the principal exit qualification and is recognised by 1,100+ higher-education institutions worldwide. [[info.gov.hk](#)]
- The [Qualifications Framework \(QF\)](#) supports articulation across vocational and higher education pathways.

2.1.4 Governance and key agencies

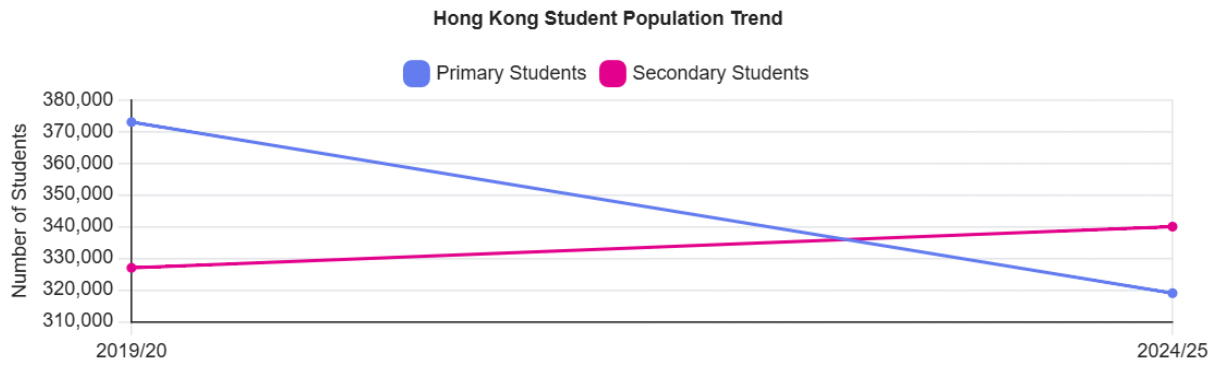
- [Education Bureau \(EDB\)](#) – policy, administration, quality assurance. <https://www.edb.gov.hk/en/about-edb/publications-stat/figures/index.html>
- [University Grants Committee \(UGC\)](#) – funding and development of public universities.
- [Vocational Training Council \(VTC\)](#) – vocational and applied education provision.
- [Innovation & Technology \(I&T\) authorities](#) – support EdTech and AI initiatives.

2.1.5 Demographic & Student Population Trends

Hong Kong's education system is increasingly shaped by demographic decline. The city recorded 31,100 births in 2025, the lowest on record, despite policy measures such as a HK\$20,000 newborn bonus and expanded tax relief.

The fall in local births has significant implications for school enrolment. However, cross-border student mobility from Mainland China continues to supplement enrolment in some districts. Research and government commentary confirm that Hong Kong hosts a substantial population of cross-border students (CBS) and new immigrant students (NIS) from Mainland China, many of whom travel daily or reside in Hong Kong for schooling.

In response to demographic shifts and increasing Hong Kong–Mainland integration the education sector has seen concrete institutional developments, including new Hong Kong-style and Hong Kong-run schools have been established in Shenzhen, including [Princeton Skylake International School](#) for Hong Kong Students, with additional schools in Luohu and Bao'an collectively enrolling over 4,500 Hong Kong students. These developments reflect broader education cooperation and population movement under the Greater Bay Area integration framework.



Source: [Education Bureau Hong Kong](#)

- Primary students declined from 373,000 (2019/20) to 319,000 (2024/25), a drop of ~14%
- Secondary enrollment increased from ~327,000 to 340,000, a 3.7% YoY rise.
- Mainland new arrivals rebounded to 7,085 (4,614 primary + 2,471 secondary) in 2024/25.

Early Childhood Education (Kindergarten Sector)

Due to low birth rates, the Hong Kong government:

- Reduce subsidy to HK\$4.5B (2026 – 2027); down 6.6%
- Enrollment expected to fall to 105,800 toddlers (2026 – 2027)

Higher Education & International Schools

While shrinking local birth cohorts are reducing long-term domestic demand, Hong Kong's post-secondary sector continues to be supported by non-local and cross-border student inflows.

Beginning in the 2026–27 academic year, publicly funded universities may admit self-financing non-local students up to 50% of local student places, increased from the previous cap of 40%, with greater flexibility at the postgraduate level, including higher over-enrolment limits for research postgraduate programmes.

The number of non-local full-time post-secondary students reached about 79,000 in the 2024/25 academic year, nearly doubling over four years, partially offsetting the decline in domestic student numbers

At the school level, the Government has allocated two vacant school premises and additional sites in the Northern Metropolis for international school development. International schools are encouraged to expand enrolment capacity and related facilities, reflecting demand from expatriate households and Greater Bay Area cross-border families rather than local birth-rate growth.

2.2 China

China operates a public education system overseen by the [Ministry of Education](#). Although the government provides primary funding for the system, schools may still charge certain miscellaneous fees.

China's national strategy emphasises science, education, talent development and integration with major regional initiatives such as the Guangdong–Hong Kong–Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA). This includes strengthened cooperation between Hong Kong and Mainland institutions and the development of the Northern Metropolis University Town, a cross boundary innovation and education cluster.

2.2.1 Key Education Stages

Compulsory Education: 9 years

- Primary school: 6 years (grades 1–6), starting at age 6
- Junior secondary school: 3 years (grades 7–9), ages 12–15 (Some provinces use a 5-year primary + 4-year junior secondary model)

Senior Secondary Education (High School):

- 3 years (grades 10–12) Not compulsory

2.2.2 Certifications and Articulation

- **National Higher Education Entrance Examination (Gaokao)** - Primary national examination taken at the end of senior secondary education. Main gateway to public universities, determining admission, institution type and field of study.
- **Senior Secondary Graduation Certificate** - Awarded upon completion of upper secondary education. Serves as a prerequisite for participation in the Gaokao.
- **Vocational Education and Training (VET) Pathway** - Parallel certification track alongside the academic stream. Allows progression from secondary vocational schools to higher vocational colleges. Increasingly supports vertical articulation into application-oriented undergraduate programmes. Governance and Key Agencies
- **State Council** - Provides overall policy direction and approves major national education strategies and reform frameworks.
- **Ministry of Education (MOE)** - Central authority responsible for education policy formulation, national curriculum standards, teacher qualifications, and system-wide reforms across compulsory, vocational and higher education. Oversees national examinations, including overarching regulation of the National Higher Education Entrance Examination (Gaokao).
- **Provincial Education Departments** - Implement national policies at the regional level. Responsible for school administration, education funding allocation, enrolment planning, and organisation of Gaokao examinations within central guidelines.
- **Municipal and County Education Bureaus** - Manage day-to-day school operations, teacher deployment, local admissions and compliance supervision.

English Language Education

English language learning is a compulsory subject throughout the nine-year compulsory education cycle and remains one of the three mandatory subjects (Chinese, Mathematics and English) in the Gaokao. Under the current national curriculum framework, updated in recent years, English instruction places greater emphasis on practical communication, cultural awareness and applied language use, with reduced reliance on rote memorisation.

The K–12 system, covering kindergarten through the 12th grade is the full span of primary and secondary education. This system is the largest in the world. In 2020, it included 289 million students and 17.9 million teachers. In June 2021, 10.78 million students sat for the National Higher Education Entrance Examination (Gaokao). China's public education budget in 2021 reached RMB 3.76 trillion (about EUR 535 billion), accounting for 4.22% of GDP, a proportion that has remained relatively stable in recent years.

3. POLICY DIRECTION: PRIORITIES AND EMERGING TRENDS

The **2025 Policy Address** outlines a comprehensive strategy to strengthen Hong Kong's position as an international education hub and talent hub, deepen integration between education, technology and talent development, and enhance the overall quality of the education system from kindergarten to post-graduate levels.

3.1 Hong Kong Specific Trends

- **Increased Non-Local Intake and Internationalisation**
 - Raising the non-local student quota for funded post-secondary institutions from 40% to 50%, enhanced scholarships, and over-enrolment ceiling of self-financing places of funded research postgraduate programmes will be increased from 100% to 120% starting 2026–27.
 - Launch the Hong Kong: Your World-class Campus global campaign with HK\$40M **University Grants Committee (UGC)** promotion funds to promote Hong Kong's quality resources in areas such as academic studies, scientific research and international co-operation.
- **More AI/EdTech Pilots and Infrastructure Investment**
 - The Government has allocated HK\$2 billion under the Quality Education Fund to accelerate digital transformation across primary and secondary schools. This will support the enhancement of AI-assisted learning platforms, upgrades to digital infrastructure, the adoption of advanced classroom technologies, and strengthened professional training for teachers
 - 2026 launch of Blueprint for Digital Education including:
 - AI Literacy Frameworks and AI in Core Curricula
 - Teacher AI Training
 - Industry–Education Collaboration in AI
 - Rollout of 20+ e-Learning platforms under the e-Learning Ancillary Facilities Programme.
- **Expand Special Education Needs (SEN), wellbeing and mental-health services**
 - Incremental expansions of mental-health support and integrated SEN services.
- **Pilot Opening of Basic Education Pathways for Overseas Pupils**
 - Pilot schemes enabling selected DSS schools to admit overseas pupils, an early step toward limited international recruitment at school level.

3.2 Integration with China's Education and Innovation Strategies

These education reforms in Hong Kong closely align with China's national education and innovation trajectory. China's Education Master Plan (2024–2035) sets out the objective of transforming the country into a global education leader by 2035 through the integrated development of education, science and technology, and talent. Central to this vision is the creation of an internationalised, innovation-driven education ecosystem that supports high-quality growth and global engagement.

3.2.1 Long-Term National Vision

China's education development is guided by the **Plan for Building a Leading Country in Education (2024–2035)**, jointly issued by the CPC Central Committee and the State Council. The plan aims to establish a high-quality, modern education system supporting national innovation, talent cultivation, and global engagement.

3.2.2 Higher Education and International Cooperation

- Accelerate development of **research-intensive universities** and reorganise disciplines to align with national strategic priorities and emerging technologies.
- Encourage **foreign universities**, particularly in science and engineering, to establish joint programmes and institutes in China.
- Expand **transnational education (TNE)** through relaxed approval processes, greater institutional autonomy, and increased joint programmes. In 2025 alone, dozens of new joint institutes and programmes were approved.

3.2.3 Vocational Education and Industry Integration

- Deepen reform of the **modern vocational education system**, strengthening links between education providers, cities, and industry partners.
- Promote international cooperation in vocational education and position China as a global leader in vocational training standards.

3.2.4 Digital Transformation and AI in Education

- Implement a nationwide digital education strategy centred on the **"Smart Education of China"** platform.
- Integrate **artificial intelligence education across primary, secondary, and tertiary levels**, with structured AI literacy frameworks and guidelines for responsible use of generative AI.
- Use digital platforms to support personalised learning, lifelong education, and stronger alignment between education outcomes and labour market needs.

Implications for Hong Kong

Within this national context, Hong Kong is expected to contribute by leveraging its internationally connected education system and strong research universities. Accordingly, the Hong Kong Government has prioritised school digitalisation, AI adoption, research-talent recruitment, and deeper participation in Mainland–Hong Kong scientific collaboration platforms, such as the **InnoHK Research Clusters**. These initiatives align Hong Kong's education and innovation development with broader Greater Bay Area integration, reinforcing its role as an international education and research hub within China's national strategy.

4. HONG KONG EDUCATION EXPENDITURE - FY 2026 – 27 OVERVIEW

4.1 Total Expenditure on Education

The Education Bureau's (EDB) Figures & Statistics, together with the **2026–27 Budget Speech** and related government announcements, constitute the authoritative sources of education expenditure data in Hong Kong. These publications set out the confirmed annual funding allocations approved by the Legislative Council and provide the foundation for public finance planning across all education subsectors.

Based on the 2026–27 Budget, recurrent government expenditure on education is projected to reach HKD 102.3 billion, accounting for approximately 17.1% of total recurrent government expenditure. This

reinforces education's status as one of the largest and most stable areas of public spending, and reflects the Government's sustained commitment to talent development, education quality and internationalisation. At this stage, however, the Hong Kong Government has not yet released a detailed sector-by-sector breakdown of recurrent education expenditure for FY2026–27.

4.2 Key Education Related Spending

Based on the **FY2026–27 budget** and **official announcements**, the main education-related funding areas include:

- **Daily Education Spending**

About HKD 102.3 billion will be used to cover regular education costs. This includes teachers' and staff salaries, funding for schools, student financial assistance, support for universities, services for students with special educational needs, and the day-to-day running of the education system.

- **University Campuses and Student Housing**

The Government has set aside HKD 10 billion in loans to help universities build new campuses and student accommodation, as part of the Northern Metropolis University Town plan. This will allow universities to take in more students.

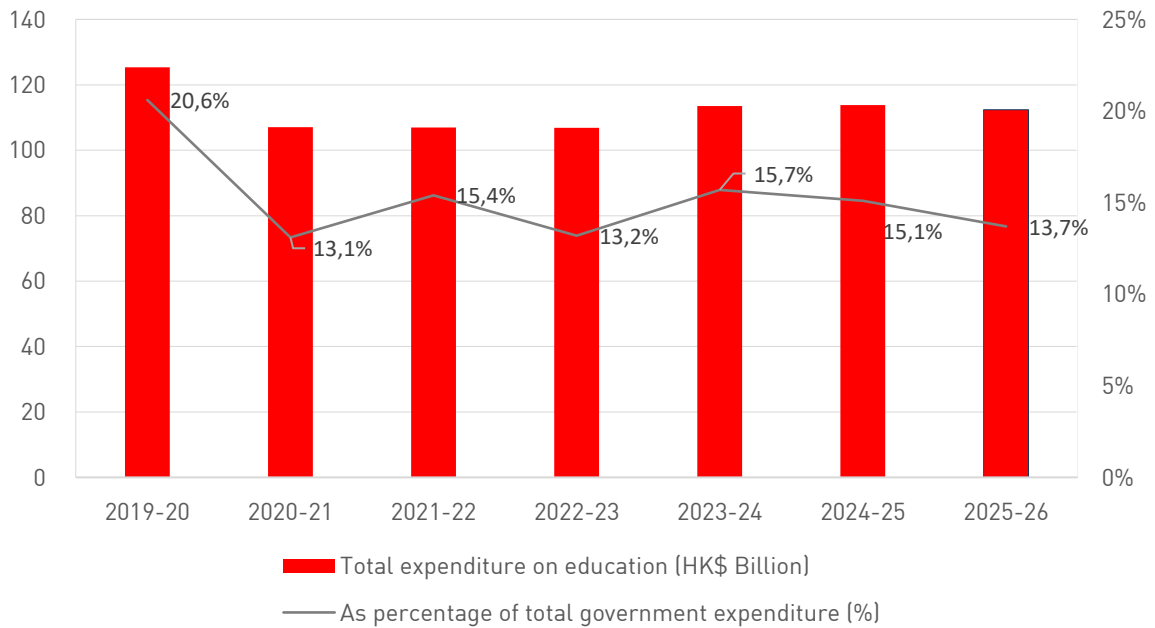
- **Digital Learning and AI in Education**

Funding will continue for digital education and artificial intelligence-related learning at all levels. This includes better digital facilities, AI-supported teaching, and training for teachers. Exact amounts are included within existing education budgets rather than listed separately.

- **Research and Attracting Talent**

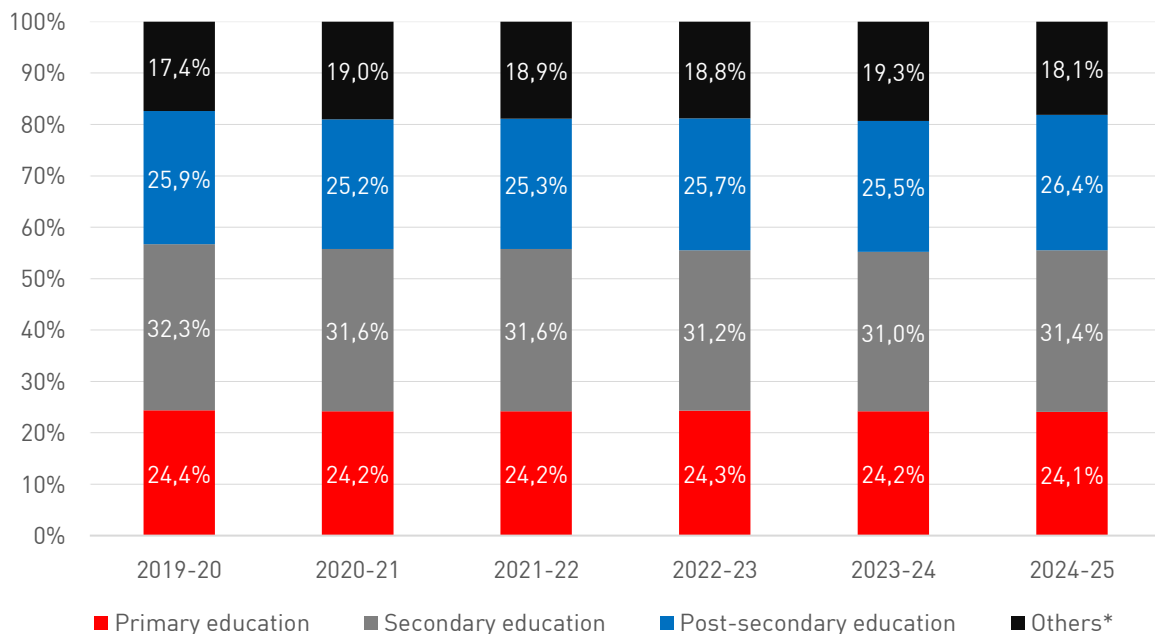
Extra resources will support university research, postgraduate education and the attraction of overseas talent. These efforts support Hong Kong's goal of becoming a leading international centre for education and innovation.

Total Expenditure on Education



Source: [Figures and Statistics - Education Bureau](#)

Education Expenditure by Area



Source: [Figures and Statistics - Education Bureau](#)

4.3 Mainland China - Education Spending Overview

China's national education strategy stresses heavy investment in science, technology and talent pipelines. The 2025 Policy Address emphasises Hong Kong's role in supporting China's innovation ecosystem and participation in cross-boundary R&D clusters, informing FY2026 allocations in research, digitalisation and talent recruitment.

- **Basic and Compulsory Education**

Government education funding prioritises equitable access to compulsory education, supported by substantial central–local fiscal transfers to rural, less-developed, and ethnic minority regions. Public expenditure covers tuition exemptions, free textbooks, and targeted student assistance, helping ensure nationwide access to quality basic education. A nationally funded one-year preschool fee waiver, benefiting over 12 million children, further strengthens early childhood education participation.

- **Digital Education and Artificial Intelligence**

Significant public investment supports China’s digital transformation in education, centred on the “[Smart Education of China](#)” national platform. Education budgets fund digital infrastructure, online learning resources, teacher training, and data-driven education governance. In parallel, government expenditure supports the systematic rollout of AI education across primary, secondary, and tertiary levels, including AI literacy curricula, controlled use of generative AI, pilot smart classrooms, and nationwide teacher upskilling in AI-supported pedagogy. [\(MOE sets 2026 priorities for digital education - Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China\)](#)

- **Vocational Education and Skills Development**

China has launched a new phase of vocational education reform focused on high institutional capacity and high-quality integration with industry.

Rather than prioritizing facilities alone, vocational institutions are now evaluated on how well they serve industrial development and regional economic needs. Nearly 80% of specialized program clusters are aligned with strategic and advanced manufacturing sectors, reinforcing vocational education’s role in economic transformation.

- **Higher Education and Research**

Government education expenditure prioritises the expansion of research-intensive universities, postgraduate programmes, and interdisciplinary disciplines aligned with national strategic priorities. Additional public investment is directed to less-developed regions to reduce disparities in higher education quality and research capacity. Funding also underpins academic research, innovation, and talent development across universities and research institutes nationwide. [\(China unveils blueprint for building strong education system by 2035\)](#)

- **International and Transnational Education**

While often embedded within broader education budgets, public expenditure supports China’s growing transnational education (TNE) sector through regulatory reform, digital partner-matching platforms, and administrative capacity. By 2025, large numbers of new China-foreign joint institutes and programmes had been approved, reflecting continued public investment in international education cooperation and global engagement. [\(Transnational Education Reform in China\)](#)

- **Teacher Workforce Development**

Education spending includes nationwide programmes for teacher training, leadership development, digital skills, and AI pedagogy, aimed at improving teaching quality and strengthening the professionalism of the education workforce across all levels. [\(New guideline stresses on AI-based education\)](#)

Overall, China's education expenditure is systematic, long-term, and strategically aligned with national goals. Spending priorities focus on **Universal access and equity, Digital and AI-enabled education, Skills-oriented vocational training, Research and innovation capacity and International education engagement.**

These investments collectively support China's ambition to become a globally influential education system by 2035, with strong implications for international cooperation, talent development, and education partnerships.

5. INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT OF EDTECH & TALENT

China's national vision emphasises integrating education, technology and talent as a foundational and strategic pillar, directly shaping Hong Kong's policy priorities. Hong Kong's AI pilots, EdTech R&D hubs, digital-learning infrastructure upgrades and STEM talent programmes all reflect this alignment.

Key Implementation Pillars (Hong Kong and China Context)

- AI-assisted teaching and assessment pilots in schools.
- Cross-boundary R&D via InnoHK and GBA cooperation.
- Teacher training in digital pedagogy & responsible AI.
- Co-funded university–industry innovation hubs in line with China's innovation policy.
- Expanded PhD/postdoc talent schemes to attract global researchers into China–Hong Kong joint labs.

Collectively, these implementation pillars put into practice the integrated development of education, technology and talent by embedding innovation across the full education pipeline from school level pedagogy to advanced research and talent mobility.

6. TERTIARY INTERNATIONALISATION, SCHOLARSHIPS & TALENT ATTRACTION

Internationalisation remains a core strategic priority for Hong Kong's tertiary education sector and a key mechanism through which China seeks deeper global engagement. Hong Kong aims to establish itself as an international education hub and a cradle for future talents, reinforcing China's broader ambition to enhance global education leadership while maintaining system openness.

Policy measures introduced from the 2026–27 academic year include expanded non-local student quotas in publicly funded universities, enhanced scholarship schemes, and greater flexibility in postgraduate enrolment particularly at the doctoral and research master's levels. These initiatives are designed not only to offset domestic demographic decline but also to strengthen Hong Kong's attractiveness to high-quality international students and researchers.

From Mainland China's perspective, Hong Kong plays a strategic intermediary role, linking national universities and research institutes with global academic networks. Hong Kong's internationally recognised qualifications, English-medium instruction, and research excellence provide a platform through which China can engage with foreign institutions, talent and collaborative research while operating within a familiar regulatory and academic environment.

7. VOCATIONAL & PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (VPET)

Vocational and professional education is a priority growth area within both Hong Kong and Mainland China's education strategies. In China, vocational education reform is deeply embedded in industrial policy, with an explicit focus on supporting advanced manufacturing, digital industries, green technology and applied sciences.

Hong Kong's Vocational Training Council (VTC) aligns closely with this direction. Its applied degree programmes, higher diplomas, micro-credentials and specialised training in areas such as cybersecurity, information technology and engineering reflect a broader shift toward skills-oriented, industry-linked education.

The increasing convergence between Hong Kong's VPET framework and China's modern vocational system creates opportunities for cross-boundary cooperation, joint curriculum development and international benchmarking. This alignment is particularly relevant for foreign partners with strong applied education and industry collaboration models.

8. STUDENT ACCOMMODATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

The expansion of education infrastructure, particularly student accommodation, has become a strategic enabler of internationalisation and talent attraction. In Hong Kong, large-scale hostel and campus expansion projects are closely linked to the Northern Metropolis University Town and the broader GBA integration agenda.

Adequate student housing is increasingly recognised as essential for accommodating growing numbers of non-local, Mainland and overseas students, as well as for supporting research mobility and postgraduate expansion. Infrastructure investment therefore serves not only social and educational objectives but also economic and talent-policy goals.

From a national perspective, China's talent strategy similarly emphasises the importance of physical capacity in education and research hubs to host international students, visiting scholars and cross-boundary programmes.

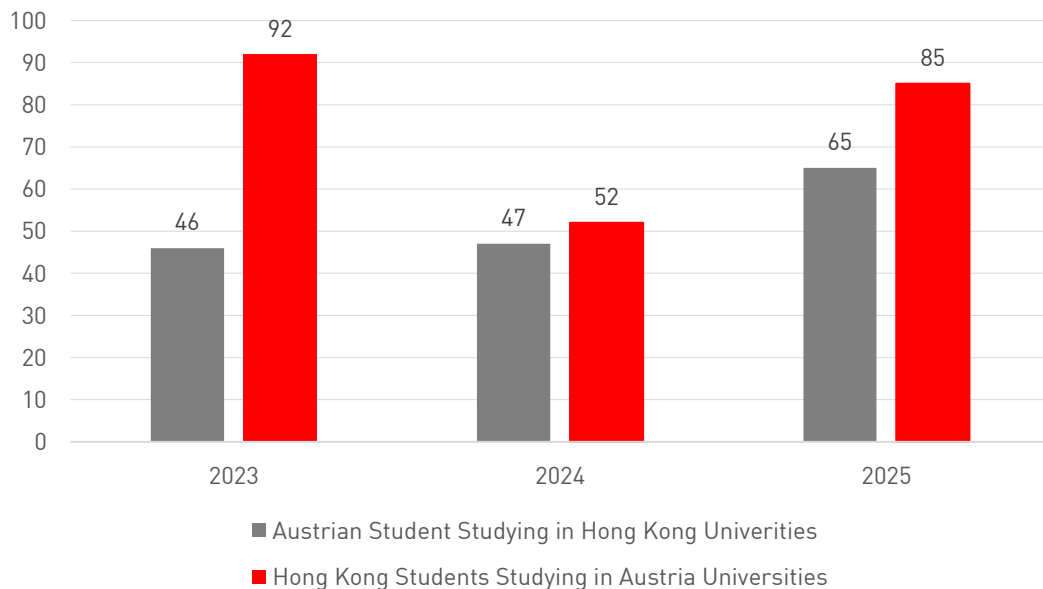
9. OUTBOUND STUDENTS BETWEEN AUSTRIA AND HONG KONG

Hong Kong universities, particularly the UGC-funded institutions, host substantial numbers of international exchange students each year through established bilateral agreements and global university exchange networks, including partnerships with European institutions such as those in Austria.

Students from Hong Kong form a small but consistent group within Austria's international student population. They are predominantly enrolled in private universities and universities of applied sciences, with common fields of study including business and economics, arts and music and tourism. Austria's attractiveness to Hong Kong students is supported by its high academic quality, strong reputation in arts and applied sciences, and comparatively low tuition fees at public higher education institutions.

In addition, many universities in Hong Kong maintain student exchange agreements with Austrian higher education institutions, enabling Hong Kong students to undertake short-term exchange or study-abroad periods in Austria as part of their degree programmes.

Austrian Students in Hong Kong vs Hong Kong Students in Austria



Disclaimer: The figures in this chart are based on data obtained from universities in Hong Kong and on visa application numbers recorded by the Austrian Consulate in Hong Kong. While every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, the data are provided for indicative purposes only.

10. IMPLICATIONS & OPPORTUNITIES FOR AUSTRIA

- Vocational & Skills Training Partnerships
 - China's workforce training initiatives require international expertise, creating opportunities for foreign partners. Significant resources are being directed toward fostering international collaboration and aligning vocational education with global standards.
 - Austria's strength in engineering, green tech, and Industry 4.0 aligns well.
- Joint Degree & Transnational Education Programs (TNE)
 - TNE reforms lower barriers substantially.
 - Austrian universities can establish joint programmes with reduced risk.
- Digital & AI Education Collaboration
 - Hong Kong actively integrates AI into core curriculum (2026).
 - China's National Smart Education Platform uses AI for course development.
- Student & Academic Mobility
 - Hong Kong expanding non-local quotas to 50%.
 - Rising demand for European international programs.

11. RISKS AND CONSTRAINTS

- Hong Kong's demographic contraction impacts long-term local student numbers.
- Regulatory navigation still required in Mainland China.
- Competition from UK/Australian universities in Asia.

12. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AUSTRIA

- Prioritize entering the Greater Bay Area through Hong Kong as a launchpad.
- Develop vocational exchange programmes targeting China's high-tech and manufacturing clusters.
- Deploy Austrian EdTech companies into pilot schools in Hong Kong.
- Create Austrian–Chinese Applied Science Institutes under the new TNE policy environment.
- Expand Mandarin and cultural programmes to boost student mobility.

13. ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY AUSSENWIRTSCHAFT AUSTRIA

AUSSENWIRTSCHAFT AUSTRIA in Hong Kong provides comprehensive support to Austrian education institutions, training providers and education-related companies seeking to engage with the education markets of Hong Kong and Mainland China, or to recruit students from these markets.

Assistance is tailored to the needs of individual institutions and companies, covering market entry, promotion, stakeholder engagement and student recruitment, and includes the following core services:

Market Access and Local Partner Introduction

- Introduction to reputable local education consulting agencies and recruitment partners in Hong Kong and Mainland China.
- Support in identifying suitable target schools, institutions and education stakeholders, depending on the nature of the offering.

Promotion and Visibility

- Promotion of Austrian education programmes through Advantage Austria's official online platforms, including **dedicated education pages and country-specific promotional content**.
- Support for visibility through locally relevant media channels, including education-focused publications where appropriate.

14. KEY EDUCATION FAIRS AND ENGAGEMENT PLATFORMS

We participate regularly in a range of international education fairs and engagement platforms to promote Austria's education. These platforms serve as important channels to increase Austria's international visibility, support student recruitment, and strengthen institutional partnerships across the region.

Through consistent participation, we showcase Austrian universities, universities of applied sciences, and vocational education pathways, while highlighting Austria's strengths in high-quality education, applied research, innovation, and industry-linked training. Engagement at these events also supports dialogue with education authorities, schools, universities, and intermediary organisations, reinforcing Austria's reputation as an attractive, accessible and future-oriented study destination.

- **HKTDC Education & Career Expo (Hong Kong)**

Organised by the Hong Kong Trade Development Council (HKTDC), the Education & Career Expo is one of Hong Kong's largest annual education and career exhibitions. It attracts a broad audience of students, parents, educators and professionals, and brings together hundreds of local and international institutions. The Expo provides a comprehensive platform for promoting post-secondary study options,

career pathways and lifelong learning opportunities, offering Austrian institutions high visibility within the Hong Kong education market.

- **Hong Kong International Education & Careers Expo (Hong Kong)**

Organised by the Chinese Manufacturers' Association of Hong Kong, the event focuses on global education, training and career development opportunities, enabling direct engagement with students and job seekers. Participation supports outreach to a wide demographic, including secondary students, tertiary applicants and early-career professionals exploring overseas study options.

- **Canadian International School University Fair (Hong Kong)**

Hosted annually by the Canadian International School of Hong Kong, this targeted university fair connects international higher education institutions with secondary students and their families. The format enables direct, in-depth discussions on admissions requirements, academic pathways and study planning, making it a valuable recruitment and brand-building opportunity for Austrian institutions.

- **English Schools Foundation Education Fair (Hong Kong)**

Organised by the English Schools Foundation (ESF), Hong Kong's largest international school provider, this fair offers university guidance and international study pathway information to secondary students across 8 ESF campuses. Engagement provides direct access to internationally mobile students and families preparing for overseas tertiary education.

- **Study in Europe Fair (Hong Kong)**

Led by the European Union Office to Hong Kong and Macao, the Study in Europe Fair promotes higher education opportunities across EU member states. The platform offers comprehensive information on European study pathways, admissions and scholarships, positioning Austria within the broader European higher education brand while highlighting its distinctive strengths.

- **APAIE Conference and Exhibition (Asia-Pacific Region)**

Organised by the Asia-Pacific Association for International Education (APAIE), APAIE is the leading higher education conference and exhibition in the Asia-Pacific region, dedicated to internationalisation and global academic cooperation. The event is hosted in a different Asia-Pacific country each year and attracts universities, government agencies and education organisations worldwide, supporting institutional networking, research collaboration and exchange partnerships.

In conjunction with APAIE this year (2026), ADVANTAGE Austria co-hosted a networking reception with OeAD. While ADVANTAGE Austria did not participate in the exhibition, OeAD was present as an exhibitor to promote Austrian education and international study and research opportunities.

Reference:

- [EDB Figures & Statistics](#)
- [2025 Policy Address — Supplement 07 \(Education & Talent\)](#)
- [2025 Legislative Council Education Panel Paper \(national alignment & Master Plan\)](#)
- [CE's 2025 Policy Address \(International hub & GBA role\)](#)
- [Hong Kong 2026 – 27 Budget](#)
- [Ministry of Education of The People Republic of China – Building Stronger Education](#)
- [Ministry of Education of The People of Republic of China – Vocation Education](#)

15. ANNEX

Useful Contacts

AußenwirtschaftsCenter Hongkong

Ms Monica Ng, Ms Yvonne Choi
 T +852 2522 2388
 E hongkong@wko.at
 W [AUSSENWIRTSCHAFT: China - WKO](#)

OeAD (Österreichische Austauschdienst) GmbH

Alexandra Wagner
 OeAD-Kooperationsbüro Shanghai
 T +86 21 6564 2112
 E alexandra.wagner@oead.at
 W [OeAD, Agency for Education and Internationalisation](#)

AUSSENWIRTSCHAFT Service

T +43 5 90 900 5134
 E aussenwirtschaft.service-export@wko.at
 W [AUSSENWIRTSCHAFT: Bildung - WKO](#)

Eurasia-Pacific UNINET

T +43 1 250 77-4209
 E eurasiapacific@oead.at
 W [Eurasia Pacific UniNet](#)

DAAD Information Centre Guangzhou

Sun Yat Sen University Guangzhou (School of Foreign Languages - German Department)
 Room 601, Guangzhou 510275, China
 T +86 20 8411 3213 / +86 20 8411 3214
 E guangzhou@daad.org.cn
 W <https://www.daad.org.cn/>

British Council

3 Supreme Court Road, Admiralty, Hong Kong
 T +852 2913 5100
 E educationuk@britishcouncil.org.hk
 W <https://www.britishcouncil.hk/en>

Consulate General of France in Hong Kong & Macau

25/F & 26/F, Tower II, Admiralty Centre, 18 Harcourt Road, Hong Kong
 T +852 3752 9974 / +852 3752 9900
 E campusfrance@consulfrance-hongkong.org
 W [Accueil | La France à Hong Kong et à Macao](#)

Campus France

25/F, Tower II, Admiralty Centre, 18, Harcourt Road, Central, Hong Kong
 E campusfrance@consulfrance-hongkong.org
 W [Welcome | Campus France](#)

Tertiary Education Institutions in Hong Kong

University Grants Committee-Funded Universities:

City University of Hong Kong

Tat Chee Avenue, Kowloon, Hong Kong
 Ms Judy HUI, Manager
 T +852 3442 7127 (Judy) | +852 3442 7654
 E judy.hui@cityu.edu.hk | cpro@cityu.edu.hk
 W [City University of Hong Kong \(CityUHK\)](#)

Hong Kong Baptist University

Kowloon Tong, Kowloon, Hong Kong
 Ms Yvonne LEE, Director, International Office
 T +852 3411 2187 (Yvonne) | +852 3411 7400
 E [yvonnelee@hkbu.edu.hk](mailto:yvonnellee@hkbu.edu.hk) / exchange@hkbu.edu.hk
 W [Hong Kong Baptist University – HKBU](#)

Lingnan University

8 Castle Peak Road, Tuen Mun, New Territories,
Hong Kong
Ms Joanne LAI, Director, Office of Global Education
and Interdisciplinary Studies
T +852 2616 8990 (Joanne) / +852 2616 8888
E omip@LN.edu.hk / exchange@LN.edu.hk
W [Lingnan University – A research-focused liberal
arts university in Hong Kong](#)

The University of Hong Kong

Pokfulam, Hong Kong
Ms Carmen YUEN, Programme Manager, In-
ternational Affairs Office
T +852 2859 2111
E goabroad@hku.hk / global@hku.hk
W [The University of Hong Kong \(HKU\)](#)

Self Finance Universities**Caritas Institute of Higher Education**

2 Chui Ling Lane, Tseung Kwan O, New Territories,
Hong Kong
T +852 3653 6600/+852 2521 4693
E info@cihe.edu.hk
W [Caritas Institute of Higher Education](#)

Chu Hai College of Higher Education

80 Castle Peak Road, Castle Peak Bay, Tuen Mun,
N.T. Hong Kong.
T +852 2408 9928
E info@chuhai.edu.hk
W <https://www.chuhai.edu.hk/>

HKCT Institute of Higher Education

T +852 2926 1222
E enquiry@hkct.edu.hk
W [HKCT Institute of Higher Education](#)

Hong Kong Shue Yan University

10 Wai Tsui Crescent, Braemar Hill, North Point,
Hong Kong
T +852 2570 7110
E studyabroad@hksyu.edu
W [Hong Kong Shue Yan University](#)

The Hang Seng University of Hong Kong

Hang Shin Link, Siu Lek Yuen, Shatin, N.T., Hong
Kong
T +852 2647 5151
E exchange@hsu.edu.hk
W [The Hang Seng University of Hong Kong](#)

Tung Wah College

31 Wylie Road, Homantin, Kowloon, Hong Kong
T +852 3190 6600
E enquiry@twc.edu.hk
W [Tung Wah College](#)

Centennial College

3 Wah Lam Path, Pokfulam, Hong Kong
T +852 3762 6200
E international@centennialcollege.hku.hk
W [Centennial College](#)

Gratia Christian College

5 Wai Chi Street, Shek Kip Mei, Kowloon,
Hong Kong
T +852 5804 4140
E sdo@gratia.edu.hk
W <http://www.gcc.edu.hk/>

**Hong Kong Nang Yan College of Higher Edu-
cation**

325-329 Lai Chi Kok Road, Sham Shui Po,
Kowloon, Hong Kong
T +852 3996 1000
E registry@ny.edu.hk
W [Hong Kong Nang Yan College](#)

**Technological and Higher Education Insti-
tute of Hong Kong, Vocational Training
Council**

T +852 3890 8000
E thei@thei.edu.hk
W [Technological and Higher Education Insti-
tute of Hong Kong](#)

Hong Kong Metropolitan University

30 Good Shepherd Street, Homantin, Kow-
loon, Hong Kong
T +852 2711 2100
E info@hkmu.edu.hk
W [Hong Kong Metropolitan University](#)

UOW College Hong Kong

FW 402, 4/F, Festival Walk Tower, 0 Tat Chee
Avenue, Kowloon Tong, Hong Kong
T +852 3442 9880
E uowchk-main@uow.edu.au
W [UOW College Hong Kong](#)

Yew Chung College of Early Childhood Education
 2 Tin Wan Hill Road, Tin Wan, Aberdeen, Hong Kong
 T +852 3977 9877
 E enquiry@yccece.edu.hk
 W [Yew Chung College of Early Childhood Education](#)

Contacts of Tertiary Education Institutions in Macau

University of Macau

Av. Padre Tomás Pereira, Taipa, Macau
 T +853 2883 1622
 E info@um.edu.mo
 W [Univeristy of Macau](#)

City University of Macau

Av. do Dr. Rodrigo Rodrigues, Ed. Royal Centre, 3
 Andar, Macau
 T +853 2878 1698
 E info@cityu.mo
 W [City University of Macau](#)

Macao Polytechnic Institute

Rua de Luís Gonzaga Gomes, Macau
 T +853 2857 8722
 E saof@ipm.edu.mo
 W [Macau Polytechnic Institute](#)

Kiang Wu Nursing College of Macau

Est. Repouso No.35, R/C, Macau
 T +853 8295 6200
 E admin@kwnc.edu.mo
 W [Kiang Wu Nursing College of Macau](#)

Macau Millennium College

Alameda Dr. Carlos d'Assumpção No. 255, China
 Civil Plaza 8- Andar, Macau
 T +853 2878 8186
 E info@mmc.edu.mo
 W [Macau Millennium College](#)

United Nations University International Institute for Software Technology

Casa Silva Mendes, Estrada do Engenheiro Trigo
 No. 4, Macau
 T +853 2871 2930
 E info_macau@unu.edu
 W [United Nations University](#)

Macau University of Science and Technology

Avenida Wai Long, Taipa, Macau
 T +853 2888 1122
 E itsc@must.edu.mo
 W [Macau University of Science and Technology](#)

University of Saint Joseph

Rua de Londres 16 (NAPE), Macau, China
 T +853 8796 4400
 E global@usj.edu.mo
 W [University of Saint Joseph](#)

Institute for Tourism Studies

Colina de Mong-Ha, Macau
 T +853 2856 1252
 E outbound@ift.edu.mo
 W [Institue for Tourism Studies](#)

Macau Institute of Management

Rua de Xangai 175, Edif. ACM, 9 andar, Macau
 T +853 2832 3233
 E registry@mim.edu.mo
 W [Macau Institute of Management](#)

Academy of Public Security Forces

Calçada do Quartel, , Coloane, Macau
 T +853 2887 1112, +852 8899 0362
 E esfsm-info@fsm.gov.mo
 W [Academy of Public Security Forces](#)

Institute of European Studies of Macau

Calçada do Gaio N.6, Macau
 T +853 2835 4326
 E ieem@macau.ctm.net
 W [Institute of European Studies of
 Macau](#)<https://ieem.org.mo/>

AUSSENWIRTSCHAFT AUSTRIA

AUSSENWIRTSCHAFTSCENTER HONGKONG

13/F, Diamond Exchange Bldg., 8-10 Duddell Street, Central
Hongkong

T +852 2522 2388

E hongkong@wko.at

W wko.at/aussenwirtschaft/cn

