

CHAPTER 8

**Education Bureau
Vocational Training Council**

<p>Youth College</p>

**Audit Commission
Hong Kong
30 November 2021**

This audit review was carried out under a set of guidelines tabled in the Provisional Legislative Council by the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee on 11 February 1998. The guidelines were agreed between the Public Accounts Committee and the Director of Audit and accepted by the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

Report No. 77 of the Director of Audit contains 8 Chapters which are available on our website at <https://www.aud.gov.hk>

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YOUTH COLLEGE

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YOUTH COLLEGE

Executive Summary

1. The Youth College (YC) is one of the Vocational Training Council (VTC)'s 13 member institutions. YC provides vocational and professional education and training to Secondary 3 to 6 school leavers to equip them with knowledge and skills for further studies and employment. Training programmes offered by YC are full-time Diploma of Vocational Education (DVE) programmes, full-time Diploma of Vocational Baccalaureate (DVB) programmes, part-time Diploma/Certificate programmes, the Teen's Programme and the Project for Tradesman Trainees. In academic year 2020/21 (other than calendar years and unless otherwise specified, all years (e.g. 2020/21) mentioned in this Audit Report refer to academic years), there were 5,770, 252, and 3,469 students studying in the full-time DVE programmes, full-time DVB programmes and part-time Diploma/Certificate programmes respectively and 1,305 trainees participating in other training programmes. As at 31 March 2021, YC had an establishment of 727.5 staff, comprising 5 principals, 399.5 teaching staff and 323 non-teaching staff. The Audit Commission (Audit) has recently conducted a review of YC.

Management of training programmes

2. *Some programmes are under/over-enrolled by more than 10%.* In 2018/19, 2019/20 and 2020/21, of the 33, 35 and 36 full-time DVE programmes, regarding Year 1 students, 5 (15%), 18 (51%) and 16 (44%) programmes respectively were under-enrolled by more than 10%, and 14 (42%), 10 (29%) and 15 (42%) programmes respectively were over-enrolled by more than 10%. Of the 33 full-time DVE programmes offered by YC every year in the period, 9 (27%) had under/over-enrolment of Year 1 students of more than 10% in each and every year (paras. 2.3 and 2.4).

3. *Enrolment of some programmes decreased significantly.* Of the 33 full-time DVE programmes offered by YC every year in the period from 2018/19 to 2020/21, the Year 1 student enrolment of 3 (9%) programmes in 2020/21 decreased by more than 50% comparing to that in 2018/19 (para. 2.7).

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4. *Need to improve the performance of some training programmes.* YC reports the performance of its training programmes under six performance indicators. Performance targets were set for three indicators. Audit noted that in the period from 2015/16 to 2019/20: (a) against the target rate of 100%, the average enrolment rates of the 45 programmes ranged from 92% to 112%. There were 26 (58%) programmes with under-enrolment or over-enrolment by more than 10% for 3 years or more; (b) every year, there were programmes not meeting the target retention rates (85%, 90% and 95% for different programmes). The retention rates of 5 (11%) of the 45 programmes were below targets for 3 years or more; (c) every year, there were full-time DVE programmes not meeting the target employment rate of 85%. The employment rates of graduates of 8 (32%) of the 25 full-time DVE programmes were below target for 3 years or more; (d) the average pass rates of the 45 programmes ranged from 91% to 94%. The pass rates of 11 (24%) programmes in 2019/20 decreased by 5 percentage points or more as compared to those in 2015/16; (e) the average level of student satisfaction of the 45 programmes ranged from 7.45 to 7.58 (out of a 10-point scale). The scores for student satisfaction of 7 (16%) programmes in 2018/19 decreased by 0.5 point or more as compared to those in 2015/16; and (f) the average level of employer satisfaction decreased from 7.33 to 6.94 (out of a 10-point scale). The scores for employer satisfaction of 12 (40%) of the 30 programmes covered at least twice in the Survey of Employers' Views decreased by 0.5 point or more (paras. 2.11, 2.13 and 2.14).

5. *Need to collect employers' views on more graduates.* Employers are invited to participate in the Survey of Employers' Views if the graduates they employed have been employed in jobs relevant to their training programmes for at least three months and the graduates agree that their employers are surveyed. Audit noted that: (a) not more than 60% of such graduates of 2016 to 2018 agreed that their employers were surveyed. Although the response rates were 66% to 71%, the Survey only collected employers' views on about 30% to 39% of such graduates; and (b) the employers' views on graduates from 14 (33%) of 43 programmes in 2016, 9 (19%) of 47 programmes in 2017 and 18 (37%) of 49 programmes in 2018 were not collected by the Survey (paras. 2.15 and 2.16).

6. *Need to encourage more employers to join Workplace Learning and Assessment (WLA).* In 2014/15, YC launched the Earn and Learn Scheme (E&L Scheme) in three full-time DVE programmes for Secondary 3 to 5 (S3-S5) school leavers to provide on-the-job training for the students while they continue their study. Since 2019/20, YC has incorporated WLA into the eight DVE full-time programmes offering E&L Scheme. Through WLA, VTC aims to facilitate

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integration of school-based learning and workplace learning by including learning and assessment at workplace as part of the curriculum requirement. Only the employers participating in E&L Scheme are eligible to join WLA. Of the 112 employers in 2019/20 and the 116 employers in 2020/21 participating in E&L Scheme, only 52 (46%) and 59 (51%) respectively joined WLA (paras. 2.20 to 2.22).

7. ***Need to explore the feasibility of extending E&L Scheme and WLA to more DVE programmes.*** Since 2019/20, YC has incorporated WLA into the eight DVE full-time programmes offering E&L Scheme. Both E&L Scheme and WLA add value to the training programmes and are complementary to each other in enhancing the employability of the students. In 2020/21, YC offered 19 full-time DVE programmes for S3-S5 school leavers. YC has not extended E&L Scheme or WLA from the 8 programmes to the remaining 11 programmes (paras. 2.24 and 2.25).

Campus management

8. ***Need to improve utilisation of some teaching and learning facilities.*** Audit found that there was room for improving the utilisation of some teaching and learning facilities. In 2018/19, the utilisation rates of the 211 teaching and learning facilities averaged 48% and the utilisation rates of 105 (50%) facilities were below 50%. Among the 211 facilities, there were 89 classrooms, 36 computer laboratories and 20 language laboratories. The utilisation rates of these three major categories of facilities ranged from 1% to 98% (averaging 57%), 25% to 79% (averaging 53%) and 15% to 77% (averaging 41%) respectively (paras. 3.4 and 3.5).

9. ***Guidelines on hire of facilities not complied with.*** In the period from 2015/16 to 2019/20, there were 91 hires of facilities to organisations outside VTC. VTC's guidelines on hire of facilities were not complied with: (a) in 24 (26%) hires, hire charges were calculated on a half-hourly basis instead of an hourly basis; (b) in 2 (2%) hires, the revised charge rates were not used; (c) in 27 (30%) hires, the hire charges were not collected in advance; and (d) of the 6 cases of waiver of hire charges, in 2 cases, applications for waiver of hire charges were not made in writing and in 4 cases, there was no documentary evidence showing that the hirers had applied for the waiver (paras. 3.7 and 3.8).

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10. ***Room for rationalising requirements in Campus Safety Management Manuals.*** In the Safety Management Framework, VTC promulgated its safety and health policies, guidelines and procedures. In accordance with the Framework, each YC campus promulgated a Campus Safety Management Manual. Audit found that there were variations in the requirements between the 8 Manuals, and some requirements in the Manuals were not compatible with the Framework and/or legal requirements. For instance: (a) for accidents which resulted in incapacity of an employee exceeding 3 days, 6 Manuals stipulated submission of the required notice to VTC headquarters in less than 4 days and 2 stipulated less than 3 days (versus less than 3 calendar days stipulated in the Framework); and (b) only 5 Manuals stipulated the requirements for reporting to the Commissioner for Labour within 24 hours accidents resulting in the death of an employee and accidents involving dangerous occurrences defined by the Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance (Cap. 509). None of the Manuals stipulated the other pertinent reporting requirements under the Ordinance (paras. 3.15 and 3.16).

11. ***Requirements in Safety Management Framework and Campus Safety Management Manuals not complied with.*** In the period from 2016/17 to 2019/20, the 8 YC campuses reported 53 accidents. Audit found that: (a) for the 4 campuses which required accidents to be reported within 2 days, 10 (36%) of the 28 accidents were reported 1 to 62 days later than the Manuals' stipulated deadlines; (b) there were 10 accidents involving work injuries, 4 (40%) of which were reported to VTC headquarters 2 to 13 days later than the Framework's stipulated deadlines. Subsequently, the notices for these 4 accidents were submitted to the Commissioner for Labour 1 to 10 days later than the legal requirements; and (c) for 2 accident investigation reports which were required to be submitted within 7 days, 1 (50%) was submitted 37 days late (para. 3.18).

12. ***Campus environmental targets not always met.*** YC campuses are required to meet environmental targets to reduce waste and consumption of resources. In the period from 2015/16 to 2019/20, every year there were campuses not meeting the environmental targets (paras. 3.23 and 3.24).

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Other Administrative issues

13. ***Need to encourage staff to attain more Continuous Professional Development (CPD) hours.*** Staff covered by CPD Scheme are encouraged to attain not less than 40 CPD hours within a CPD cycle of 24 months. Audit found that: (a) for the CPD cycle from 1 October 2015 to 30 September 2017, 54 (12%) of the 444 staff attained less than 40 CPD hours; and (b) for the CPD cycle from 1 October 2017 to 30 September 2019, 62 (15%) of the 426 staff attained less than 40 CPD hours (paras. 4.2 and 4.3).

14. ***Guidelines on further employment of staff not complied with.*** In the period from 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2021, there were 17 approved applications for further employment beyond the age of 60. Audit found that: (a) in 8 (47%) cases, the principals supported the applications but had not provided the action plans/succession plans as required; (b) in 2 (12%) cases, there was no documentary evidence showing that consideration had been given to whether the applicants' extension of service would cause promotion blockage; (c) in 13 (76%) cases, there was no documentary evidence showing that the physical fitness of the applicants had been considered; and (d) in 10 (59%) cases, the dates of informing the applicants of the results of applications were later than required (paras. 4.5 and 4.6).

15. ***Need to avoid prolonged acting appointments.*** In the period from financial years 2016-17 to 2020-21, 146 staff undertook acting appointments (including acting-up, doubling-up and doubling-sideways) in 214 acting periods. The total acting allowance paid was \$12.3 million. The durations of the 214 acting periods ranged from 1 month to 3.4 years. No guidelines were promulgated on the length of prolonged acting appointments that would be considered as undesirable and unsustainable (paras. 4.9 and 4.10).

16. ***Results of sexual conviction record checks not documented.*** According to VTC guidelines, sexual conviction record check is required for all new recruits of teaching positions in YC. The result is required to be recorded in writing and filed as a formal appointment record. In the period from financial years 2018-19 to 2020-21, for 3 of the 20 appointment records examined by Audit, the sexual conviction record check results had not been documented as required (paras. 4.11 and 4.12).

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17. ***Need to conduct annual stocktaking exercise and submit stocktaking reports in a timely manner.*** As of 31 July 2021, YC had an inventory of 12,248 items with total purchase costs of \$80.5 million. The inventory was mainly comprised of computer equipment, audio-visual equipment, and workshop and laboratory equipment. In the six financial years from 2015-16 to 2020-21, 32 stocktaking reports were submitted to VTC headquarters by the 8 YC campuses for 4 annual stocktaking exercises. Audit found that: (a) 16 (50%) stocktaking reports were submitted 6 days to 5.1 months later than the submission deadlines; and (b) in 13 (81%) of the 16 cases of late submissions, the stocktaking exercises were completed even after the report submission deadlines (paras. 4.17 and 4.18).

18. ***Need to enhance guidelines on valuable and attractive stores.*** With effect from financial year 2017-18, YC is required to complete a full stocktaking on all valuable and attractive stores every two years and submit a list of valuable and attractive items checked to VTC headquarters. Audit noted that: (a) 4 campuses did not classify any of their inventory items as valuable and attractive stores and hence no stocktaking on valuable and attractive stores had been conducted; (b) of the 4 remaining campuses, 2 (50%) did not conduct the full stocktaking exercise on all valuable and attractive stores in the cycle of 2019-20 to 2020-21; and (c) there were inconsistencies among the 8 YC campuses in their criteria for classifying valuable and attractive stores (paras. 4.20 to 4.22).

19. ***Need to ensure that surprise stock and security checks are conducted.*** According to VTC guidelines, surprise stock and security checks should be carried out at least once every year and the findings recorded in the surprise inspection books. Audit found that, in each financial year from 2015-16 to 2020-21, 6 (75%) of the 8 campuses did not conduct surprise stock and security checks and 5 (83%) of the 6 campuses did not have a surprise inspection book (paras. 4.24 and 4.25).

20. ***Need to ensure that lost stores are written-off in a timely manner.*** According to VTC Stores Manual, where losses or deficiencies of stores are identified, an application for write-off of stores should be submitted for approval as soon as possible. Audit found that: (a) application for write-off of 12 books that had been lost since 2010 was not submitted and approved until July 2021 after Audit's enquiry; and (b) 3 books were found lost in the annual stocktaking exercise in financial year 2018-19, but the application for write-off of stores was not submitted until April 2021 (paras 4.27 and 4.28).

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21. *Need to make improvements in organising student activities.* The 8 Student Development Offices of YC organise various student activities for students. In 2020/21, there were 360 activities organised. Audit found that: (a) the number of activity-hours varied among campuses, ranging from 27 to 169.5; (b) of the 360 activities organised, target numbers of participants were not set for 40 (11%) activities; (c) of the 320 activities with target numbers of participants set, the targets were not met in 225 (70%) activities. In particular, the participation rates of 40 (13%) activities were less than 50%; and (d) evaluations were not conducted for 86 (24%) of the 360 activities (paras. 4.32 to 4.34).

Audit recommendations

22. **Audit recommendations are made in the respective sections of this Audit Report. Only the key ones are highlighted in this Executive Summary. Audit has *recommended* that the Executive Director, VTC should:**

Management of training programmes

- (a) **avoid significant under/over-enrolments of training programmes and plan the number of places as accurately as possible (para. 2.9 (a) and (b));**
- (b) **for training programmes with significant decreases in student enrolments, identify the reasons for the decrease and take appropriate measures to address the issue (para. 2.9(c));**
- (c) **step up efforts to enhance performance of training programmes (para. 2.18(a));**
- (d) **collect employers' views on more graduates in the Survey of Employers' Views (para. 2.18(b));**
- (e) **encourage more employers to join WLA and explore the merits and feasibility of extending E&L Scheme and WLA to more full-time DVE programmes for S3-S5 school leavers (para. 2.29 (a) and (b));**

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Campus management

- (f) **improve the utilisation of teaching and learning facilities (para. 3.13(a));**
- (g) **ensure that guidelines on hire of facilities are complied with (para. 3.13(b));**
- (h) **rationalise the variations in the requirements stipulated in the Campus Safety Management Manuals of different campuses (para. 3.21(a));**
- (i) **ensure that requirements stipulated in the Campus Safety Management Manuals are compatible with the Safety Management Framework and legal requirements (para. 3.21(b));**
- (j) **ensure that requirements stipulated in the Safety Management Framework and the Campus Safety Management Manuals are complied with (para. 3.21(c));**
- (k) **step up efforts in facilitating the achievement of environmental targets (para. 3.26);**

Other administrative issues

- (l) **encourage staff to actively participate in CPD training and activities and attain not less than 40 CPD hours in each CPD cycle (para. 4.14(a));**
- (m) **ensure that the requirements stipulated in VTC guidelines for further employment of staff beyond the age of 60 are complied with (para. 4.14(b));**
- (n) **enhance the guidelines on prolonged acting appointments and ensure that prolonged acting appointments are avoided as far as practicable (para. 4.14(c));**
- (o) **ensure that results of sexual conviction record checks for new recruits in teaching positions are documented (para. 4.14(d));**

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- (p) ensure that annual stocktaking exercises are conducted in a timely manner and stocktaking reports are submitted before the deadlines (para. 4.30(a));
- (q) issue guidelines on the criteria for classifying store items as valuable and attractive stores and ensure that the requirement for conducting full stocktaking exercise on all valuable and attractive stores is complied with (para. 4.30(b));
- (r) ensure that surprise stock and security checks are conducted and the results are properly recorded (para. 4.30(c));
- (s) ensure that applications for write-off of lost stores are submitted in a timely manner (para. 4.30(d)); and
- (t) make improvements in organising student activities (para. 4.36).

Response from the Vocational Training Council

23. The Executive Director, VTC agrees with the audit recommendations.

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 This PART describes the background to the audit and outlines the audit objectives and scope.

Background

1.2 The Vocational Training Council (VTC) was established in 1982 under the VTC Ordinance (Cap. 1130). It provides vocational and professional education and training at degree, higher diploma, diploma and certificate levels at post-Secondary 3 to post-Secondary 6 levels. It also provides a diverse range of professional development programmes for people in employment.

1.3 The Youth College (YC), which was established in 2004, is one of VTC's 13 member institutions. YC provides vocational and professional education and training to Secondary 3 to 6 school leavers to equip them with knowledge and skills for further studies and employment.

1.4 To keep abreast of the latest international standards and promote skills excellence, YC maintains and explores collaboration with industries and other institutions for skills competitions both locally and overseas. Students of YC have won medallions in the biennial WorldSkills Competitions (Note 1) and other awards in various local and regional contests and events. To enhance international exposure, YC also organises and participates in academic and cultural exchange activities for students and staff with partner institutions in Japan, Korea, Singapore, Thailand, etc.

Note 1: *The WorldSkills Competition, organised by the WorldSkills International, aims to showcase the best in skills, uplift professional skills standards, and to raise the awareness and status of vocational education and skills training. Hong Kong has participated in the Competition since 1997.*

Training programmes

1.5 YC offers the following training programmes:

Training programmes leading to academic qualifications

- (a) ***Full-time Diploma of Vocational Education (DVE) programmes.*** Full-time DVE programmes are designed with dual objectives of preparing students for further studies and for employment. It normally takes three years for Secondary 3 to 5 (S3-S5) school leavers and one year for Secondary 6 (S6) school leavers to acquire DVE qualification. The full-time DVE programmes are accredited by the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ) and recognised as Level 3 in the Qualifications Framework (Note 2). Holders of DVE are considered having met the general entrance requirements of Higher Diploma programmes of VTC. Students can choose among various specialised vocational programmes under three major study areas, namely “Business and Services”, “Design and Information Technology” and “Engineering”. In academic year 2020/21 (Note 3), there were 19 and 17 full-time DVE programmes for S3-S5 school leavers and S6 school leavers respectively (see Table 1) and there were 5,770 students studying in the full-time DVE programmes. Under the 12-year free education policy, S3-S5 school leavers are normally exempted from tuition fee payments until they have exhausted all free tuition-credits (Note 4). S6 school leavers are required to pay tuition fees. In 2020/21, the tuition fee was \$20,500;

Note 2: *Qualifications Framework is a seven-level hierarchy covering qualifications in the academic, vocational, professional and continuing education sectors to promote and support lifelong learning.*

Note 3: *Other than calendar years and unless otherwise specified, all years (e.g. 2020/21) mentioned in this Audit Report refer to academic years. The academic year of YC starts on 1 September of a year and ends on 31 August of the following year.*

Note 4: *The credit requirements of full-time DVE programmes range from 394 to 460 credits. S3-S5 school leavers may study for 500, 375 and 250 free credits respectively without paying tuition fee. After exhausting their free credits, students are required to pay the tuition fee for each credit they studied. In 2020/21, the tuition fee of each credit was \$115.*

Table 1
Full-time DVE programmes
(2020/21)

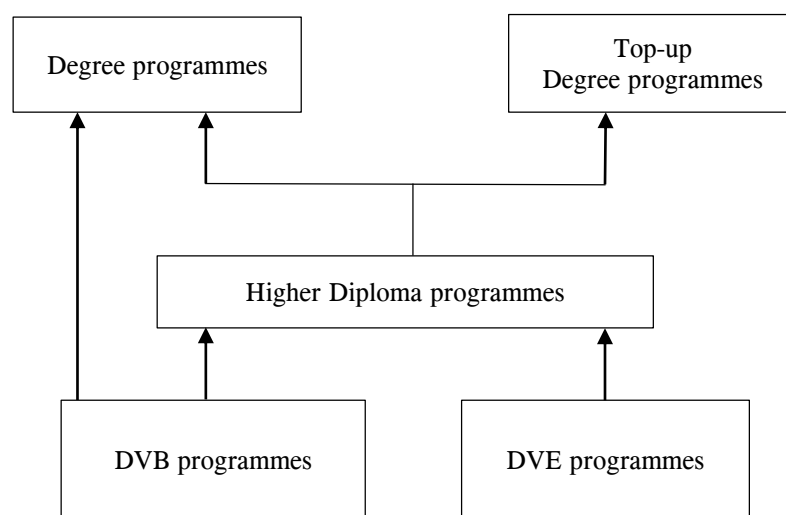
Programme	Target student	
	S3-S5 school leaver	S6 school leaver
<i>Business and Services</i>		
Beauty Care	✓	✓
Business	✓	✓
Business Event Operations	✓	✓
Fitness and Sports Studies	✓	✓
Hotel Studies	✓	✓
<i>Design and Information Technology</i>		
Fashion Textile Design and Merchandising	✓	✓
Hairdressing	✓	✗
Information Technology	✓	✓
Interior and Exhibition Design	✓	✗
Jewellery Arts and Design	✓	✓
Print Media	✓	✓
<i>Engineering</i>		
Aircraft Maintenance	✗	✓
Automotive Technology	✓	✓
Building Services Engineering	✓	✓
Construction	✗	✓
Construction Technology	✓	✗
Electrical Engineering	✓	✓
Electronic and Computer Engineering	✓	✓
Gas Services Engineering	✓	✗
Mechanical Engineering	✓	✓
Watch and Clock	✓	✓
Total number of programmes	19	17

Source: Audit analysis of YC records

- (b) ***Full-time Diploma of Vocational Baccalaureate (DVB) programmes.*** Since 2018/19, YC has offered DVB programmes. DVB programmes are three-year full-time programmes designed for S3-S5 school leavers to prepare them for articulation to higher education. Upon completion of DVB programmes, students can progress to local or overseas universities, or to higher education at one of VTC's member institutions. The curricula of DVB programmes are designed with reference to international academic standards and the programmes are delivered in English. In 2020/21, there were two DVB programmes, namely DVB (Design) and DVB (Engineering). The DVB programmes are accredited by HKCAAVQ and recognised as Level 3 in the Qualifications Framework. In 2020/21, there were 252 students studying in DVB programmes. The tuition fee charging mechanism was the same as that of the full-time DVE programmes (see (a) above). Figure 1 shows the progression pathways for further studies for graduates of DVE and DVB programmes;

Figure 1

**Progression pathways for further studies
for graduates of DVE and DVB programmes**



Source: Audit analysis of YC records

- (c) ***Part-time Diploma/Certificate programmes.*** The part-time programmes are designed for school leavers and working adults to enhance their employability. YC offers part-time DVE programmes and Certificate of Vocational Education programmes, which are accredited by HKCAAVQ and recognised as Levels 3 and 2 in the Qualifications Framework respectively. In 2020/21, the tuition fee was \$7,000 for Diploma programmes and \$1,960 for Certificate programmes per annum. There were 3,469 students studying in part-time Diploma/Certificate programmes;

Other training programmes

- (d) ***Teen's Programme.*** Under the Programme, YC offers training courses with 300 training hours (about 3 months) in 5 areas to non-engaged youth aged 14 to 24 with education attainment below secondary education level. Trainees of the Programme do not have to pay tuition fee. In 2020/21, there were 348 trainees; and
- (e) ***Project for Tradesman Trainees.*** Under the Project, YC provides training to young people aged 15 to 24 with education attainment at sub-degree level or below. Trainees of the Project do not have to pay tuition fee. In 2020/21, there were 957 trainees.

Campuses

1.6 YC has eight campuses, namely Kowloon Bay, Kwai Chung, Kwai Fong, Pokfulam, Tin Shui Wai, Tseung Kwan O (located at Tsui Lam of Tseung Kwan O), Tuen Mun and Yeo Chei Man (located at Po Lam of Tseung Kwan O) (see Figure 2). Four campuses are accommodated in premises owned by VTC and four in premises leased from the Government. In 2020/21, the number of students studying in each campus ranged from 388 to 2,549. Students of full-time DVE programmes and part-time Diploma/Certificate programmes attend classes at YC campuses. Students of DVB programmes and trainees of other training programmes attend classes at the campuses of other VTC's member institutions such as the Tsing Yi campus and the Lee Wai Lee campus of the Hong Kong Institute of Vocational Education.

Figure 2

YC campuses



Source: YC records

Management structure

1.7 YC is under the supervision of a Deputy Executive Director and five principals:

- (a) four principals are responsible for the operations of the training programmes other than DVB programmes. Each principal is also responsible for the administration of two YC campuses; and
- (b) one principal is responsible for the operations of DVB programmes.

1.8 As at 31 March 2021, YC had an establishment of 727.5 staff, comprising 5 principals, 399.5 teaching staff and 323 non-teaching staff (Note 5). For financial year 2020-21 (Note 6), YC received income of \$67 million, mainly from tuition fees. The expenditure incurred was \$424 million, comprising staff expenditure of \$364 million and operating expenditure of \$60 million. The shortfall of \$357 million was funded by Government subvention.

1.9 The following boards are established to steer, support and monitor the delivery of vocational and professional education and training of YC (see Appendix A):

- (a) ***Vocational Education and Training Academic Board.*** The Vocational Education and Training Academic Board, chaired by the Executive Director (ED) of VTC, is the highest body of VTC on academic matters. It is responsible for setting standards, approving and overseeing all aspects of academic activities within VTC;
- (b) ***Foundation Studies Board.*** The Foundation Studies Board reports to the Vocational Education and Training Academic Board and is responsible for looking after the development and operation of programmes below sub-degree level, such as overseeing and reviewing the implementation of the quality assurance measures for the programmes; and

Note 5: *The establishment included positions for less than one year and therefore might not be in whole number.*

Note 6: *The financial years start on 1 April of a year and end on 31 March of the following year.*

- (c) **Programme Boards.** Two Programme Boards, namely DVE Programme Board and DVB Programme Board, report to the Foundation Studies Board. The Programme Boards are responsible for setting academic standards and maintaining the academic quality of the programmes, maintaining regular reviews and evaluations of the programmes, and ensuring that the programmes fulfil the requirements of accreditation authorities (such as HKCAAVQ) and align with the standards of the Qualifications Framework.

1.10 The Youth College Executive Committee, chaired by a YC principal, oversees the operations and resources management of YC (Note 7). The roles and responsibilities of the Youth College Executive Committee include:

- (a) reporting to the Vocational Education and Training Management Committee (Note 8) on matters related to the development and operations of YC;
- (b) formulating the strategic development of YC; and
- (c) monitoring the implementation and progress of the quality assurance system of YC.

Note 7: *The Youth College Executive Committee also oversees the administrative operations and resources management of the Pro-Act Training and Development Centres (Pro-Act) managed by the principals of YC. Pro-Act is one of the 13 member institutions of VTC. Nine of the ten training centres of Pro-Act are accommodated together with YC campuses on the same premises. Prior to 2012, Pro-Act was under the supervision of VTC headquarters. According to VTC, since 2012, to foster more effective operation and synergy, the principals of YC have also overseen the daily operations and personnel issues of the nine centres.*

Note 8: *The Vocational Education and Training Management Committee is responsible for matters for the effective operation of programmes at sub-degree or equivalent levels, including the strategic development, allocation of resources, and formulation of administrative policies and guidelines.*

Audit review

1.11 In April 2021, the Audit Commission (Audit) commenced a review of YC. This audit has focused on the following areas:

- (a) management of training programmes (PART 2);
- (b) campus management (PART 3); and
- (c) other administrative issues (PART 4).

Audit has found room for improvement in the above areas and has made a number of recommendations to address the issues.

General response from the Vocational Training Council

1.12 ED, VTC agrees with the audit recommendations. She has said that VTC greatly appreciates the strenuous efforts of the audit team in investigating, identifying and suggesting areas of improvement in the management of training programmes, campus management, administrative management as well as student support services.

Acknowledgement

1.13 Audit would like to acknowledge with gratitude the full cooperation of the staff of YC during the course of the audit review.

PART 2: MANAGEMENT OF TRAINING PROGRAMMES

2.1 This PART examines the management of training programmes, focusing on the following areas:

- (a) enrolment of students (paras. 2.2 to 2.10);
- (b) programme performance (paras. 2.11 to 2.19); and
- (c) workplace learning (paras. 2.20 to 2.30).

Enrolment of students

2.2 In July 2018, in the Accreditation Report on YC (Note 9), HKCAAVQ raised concerns on the over-enrolment of programmes at various campuses and had recommended that YC should improve its planning mechanism so as to minimise the potential implications of over-enrolment on the effective delivery of programmes. In its response to the recommendation, YC stated that:

- (a) the principals, Study Area Committee Chairpersons, Programme Leaders and relevant parties would review the overall strategy in the admission exercise and make suitable adjustment to the planned intake of individual programmes; and
- (b) the admission strategy and planning mechanism would also be reviewed in each academic year after the admission exercise.

Note 9: *In March 2018, HKCAAVQ conducted a review on YC to determine whether YC was competent to ensure that its learning programmes at Qualifications Framework Level 3 under the approved programme areas met the Qualifications Framework standards (i.e. meeting Programme Area Accreditation status). In July 2018, HKCAAVQ issued the Accreditation Report on YC and determined that YC could be granted Programme Area Accreditation status for a period of five years starting from September 2018. The Report also provided various recommendations to YC.*

Some programmes are under/over-enrolled by more than 10%

2.3 Audit analysed the enrolment rates of Year 1 students of the full-time DVE programmes in the period from 2018/19 to 2020/21 (see Table 2). Audit found that of the 33, 35 and 36 programmes in 2018/19, 2019/20 and 2020/21:

- (a) 5 (15%), 18 (51%) and 16 (44%) programmes respectively were under-enrolled by more than 10%; and
- (b) 14 (42%), 10 (29%) and 15 (42%) programmes respectively were over-enrolled by more than 10%.

Management of training programmes

Table 2

**Enrolment of full-time DVE programmes
(2018/19 to 2020/21)**

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Programmes with under-enrolment by more than 10%			
No. of programmes	5	18	16
Planned enrolment (a)	523	2,006	1,837
Actual enrolment (b)	412	1,579	1,387
Under-enrolment			
– No. (c)=(b)–(a)	(111)	(427)	(450)
– Percentage (d)=(c)÷(a)×100 %	(21 %)	(21 %)	(24 %)
Programmes with over-enrolment by more than 10%			
No. of programmes	14	10	15
Planned enrolment (e)	1,142	919	616
Actual enrolment (f)	1,546	1,087	885
Over-enrolment			
– No. (g)=(f)–(e)	404	168	269
– Percentage (h)=(g)÷(e)×100 %	35 %	18 %	44 %
All programmes			
No. of programmes	33	35	36
Planned enrolment (i)	3,540	3,560	3,200
Actual enrolment (j)	3,792	3,311	3,015
(Under)/over-enrolment			
– No. (k)=(j)–(i)	252	(249)	(185)
– Percentage (l)=(k)÷(i)×100 %	7 %	(7 %)	(6 %)

Source: Audit analysis of YC records

2.4 There were 33 full-time DVE programmes offered by YC every year in the period from 2018/19 to 2020/21. Audit noted that 9 (27%) of the 33 programmes had under/over-enrolment of Year 1 students of more than 10% in each and every year in the three-year period.

2.5 In response to Audit's enquiry, YC informed Audit in October 2021 that:

- (a) a small percentage of under/over-enrolment was unavoidable with a view to providing flexibility in enrolment;
- (b) with a view to accommodating variations in the number of students enrolled arising from under/over-enrolment, teaching and learning resources for generic modules were shared across subject areas, and teaching and learning resources for the same study area were shared among the programmes in the study area; and
- (c) every under/over-enrolment in individual programmes was considered and approved by YC management to ensure that the teaching quality was not affected.

2.6 Audit considers that YC needs to take measures to avoid significant under/over-enrolments to minimise the possible negative impacts on the training programmes. YC also needs to plan the number of places as accurately as possible taking into account the under/over-enrolment of the training programmes in previous years.

Enrolment of some programmes decreased significantly

2.7 Audit analysed the 33 full-time DVE programmes offered by YC every year in the period from 2018/19 to 2020/21 and noted that the Year 1 student enrolment of 3 (9%) programmes in 2020/21 decreased by more than 50% comparing to the enrolment in 2018/19:

Management of training programmes

- (a) the enrolment of 2 (6%) programmes decreased by 52% and 69% respectively; and
- (b) for 1 (3%) programme, no students were enrolled in both 2019/20 and 2020/21.

2.8 Training programmes with significant decreases in student enrolments may indicate that the programmes did not meet students' and/or industries' needs or the demand for the programmes decreased. Audit considers that YC needs to identify the reasons for the decrease and take appropriate measures to address the issue (e.g. by improving the programme design or phasing out the programmes).

Audit recommendations

2.9 **Audit has *recommended* that ED, VTC should:**

- (a) **take measures to avoid significant under/over-enrolments to minimise the possible negative impacts on the training programmes;**
- (b) **plan the number of places as accurately as possible taking into account the under/over-enrolment of the training programmes in previous years; and**
- (c) **for training programmes with significant decreases in student enrolments, identify the reasons for the decrease and take appropriate measures to address the issue.**

Response from the Vocational Training Council

2.10 ED, VTC agrees with the audit recommendations. She has said that barring any unforeseen external circumstances, YC will make the best endeavour to meet training programme planned targets having regard to industry manpower demand.

Programme performance

2.11 YC is required to submit the Programme Quality Analysis Report (PQAR) annually to VTC headquarters. In PQAR, YC reports the performance of its training programmes under six performance indicators (PIs):

- (a) **Enrolment rate.** The enrolment rate is the number of students enrolled as a percentage of the number of planned places;
- (b) **Retention rate.** The retention rate of a module is the number of students assessed as a percentage of the number of students enrolled. The retention rate of a programme is the average of the retention rates of individual modules of the programmes weighted according to the number of students enrolled in the modules;
- (c) **Employment rate.** The employment rate is the number of graduates in employment as a percentage of the total number of graduates who are in employment or seeking employment;
- (d) **Pass rate.** The pass rate of a module is the number of students who have passed as a percentage of the number of students assessed. The pass rate of a programme is the average of the pass rates of individual modules of the programmes weighted according to the number of students assessed in the modules;
- (e) **Student satisfaction.** The student satisfaction of a programme is obtained by analysing the results of the student feedback questionnaires. Student satisfaction is a measure of how satisfied the students are as a score out of a 10-point scale. The higher the scores, the more satisfied the students are; and
- (f) **Employer satisfaction.** The employer satisfaction is obtained by analysing the results of the Survey of Employers' Views. Employer satisfaction is a measure of how satisfied the employers are with the performance of YC graduates as a score out of a 10-point scale. The higher the scores, the more satisfied the employers are.

Management of training programmes

2.12 The PIs in PQAR are analysed by individual programmes under 4 programme modes:

- (a) ***Full-time DVE programmes for S3-S5 school leavers.*** The programmes are analysed by all the six PIs;
- (b) ***Full-time DVE programmes for S6 school leavers.*** The programmes are analysed by all the six PIs;
- (c) ***Part-time day programmes.*** The programmes are analysed by five PIs (i.e. all but employment rate); and
- (d) ***Part-time evening programmes.*** The programmes are analysed by four PIs (i.e. all but employment rate and employer satisfaction).

Need to improve the performance of some training programmes

2.13 ***Overall performance.*** There were 45 programmes which were offered by YC in every academic year during the five-year period from 2015/16 to 2019/20 (Note 10). The 45 programmes comprised 14 full-time DVE programmes for S3-S5 school leavers, 13 full-time DVE programmes for S6 school leavers, 14 part-time day programmes and 4 part-time evening programmes. Audit examined PQARs in the period to assess the overall performance of the 45 programmes (see Table 3) and noted the following:

- (a) ***Enrolment rate.*** The target enrolment rate was 100%. The average enrolment rates of the 45 programmes ranged from 92% in 2019/20 to 112% in 2016/17. The average enrolment rates in the period ranged from 77% in 2019/20 to 87% in 2015/16 for programmes with under-enrolment and ranged from 115% in 2019/20 to 129% in 2018/19 for programmes with over-enrolment (see Appendix B for details);
- (b) ***Retention rate.*** There were different target retention rates for different modes and levels of programmes:

Note 10: *Programmes that ceased in 2020/21 were excluded from this analysis.*

- (i) ***Full-time DVE programmes for S3-S5 school leavers.*** The target retention rate was 85%. The average retention rates for the 14 programmes ranged from 87% in 2017/18 and 2018/19 to 95% in 2019/20. Except for 2019/20, every year there were programmes not meeting the target, ranging from 1 (7%) in 2016/17 to 3 (21%) in 2015/16, 2017/18 and 2018/19 (see Appendix C for details);
 - (ii) ***Full-time DVE programmes for S6 school leavers.*** The target retention rate was 95%. The average retention rates for the 13 programmes ranged from 93% in 2018/19 to 97% in 2019/20. Every year there were programmes not meeting the target, ranging from 2 (15%) in 2015/16 to 7 (54%) in 2017/18 and 2018/19 (see Appendix D for details); and
 - (iii) ***Part-time programmes.*** The target retention rate for part-time programmes (including part-time day programmes and part-time evening programmes) was 90%. The average retention rates for the 18 part-time programmes ranged from 93% in 2015/16 to 96% in 2019/20. In 2015/16, 2016/17 and 2018/19, there were programmes not meeting the target, ranging from 1 (6%) in 2018/19 to 3 (17%) in 2015/16 (see Appendix E for details);
- (c) ***Employment rate.*** The employment rate is a PI for YC's full-time DVE programmes. The target employment rate was 85%. As part-time programmes are designed for school leavers and working adults to enhance their employability, the employment rate is not applicable to them. There were 25 full-time DVE programmes (Note 11) which had graduates every year in the period. The average employment rates for graduates of the 25 programmes ranged from 82% in 2015 and 2016 to 90% in 2018. Every year, there were programmes not meeting the target, ranging from 7 (28%) for graduates of 2017 to 11 (44%) for graduates of 2015 and 2016 (see Appendix F for details);

Note 11: *There were 27 full-time DVE programmes offered every year from 2015/16 to 2019/20. For two programmes, namely DVE (Fitness and Sports Studies) for S6 school leavers and DVE (Watch and Clock) for S3-S5 school leavers, the first batch of students graduated only in 2016 and 2017 respectively.*

Management of training programmes

- (d) **Pass rate.** There were no target pass rates. The average pass rates of the 45 programmes offered in the period ranged from 91 % in 2019/20 to 94 % in 2015/16 and 2016/17. The pass rates of 2 (4 %) programmes in 2018/19 and 1 (2 %) programme in 2019/20 were lower than 80 % (see Appendix G for details);
- (e) **Student satisfaction.** The student feedback questionnaire survey is conducted every year. The assessment is made on a 10-point scale from 1 (least satisfied) to 10 (most satisfied). There was no target on the level of student satisfaction. The average level of student satisfaction of the 45 programmes offered in the period ranged from 7.45 in 2016/17 to 7.58 in 2018/19 (Note 12) (see Appendix H for details); and
- (f) **Employer satisfaction.** The Survey of Employers' Views on YC graduates was conducted in September every year on employers of graduates of full-time programmes and part-time day programmes graduating in the previous year. However, not all the programmes were covered every year (see para. 2.16). Employers rate their satisfaction level on a 10-point scale from 1 (least satisfied) to 10 (most satisfied). There was no target on the level of employer satisfaction. The average level of employer satisfaction on graduates of 2014 to 2018 (Note 13) decreased from 7.33 in 2014 to 6.94 in 2018. The employer satisfaction level of 1 programme in 2016 and another programme in 2017 was lower than 5 points (see Appendix I for details).

Note 12: *The level of student satisfaction was not available for 2019/20 because the student feedback questionnaire survey was not conducted due to the suspension of face-to-face classes in the year amid the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) epidemic.*

Note 13: *The Survey of Employers' Views on YC graduates was conducted one year after their graduation. Therefore, the employer satisfaction reported in any particular year of PQAR covers employers of graduates in the previous year.*

Table 3

**Performance of programmes
(2015/16 to 2019/20)**

PI	Target	Actual performance				
		2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Enrolment rate						
— Programmes with under-enrolment	100 %	87 %	86 %	83 %	81 %	77 %
— Programmes with over-enrolment		125 %	125 %	126 %	129 %	115 %
— Overall		104 %	112 %	104 %	104 %	92 %
Retention rate						
— Full-time DVE programmes for S3-S5 school leavers	85 %	88 %	89 %	87 %	87 %	95 %
— Full-time DVE programmes for S6 school leavers	95 %	95 %	95 %	94 %	93 %	97 %
— Part-time programmes	90 %	93 %	94 %	94 %	94 %	96 %
Employment rate (Note 1)	85 %	82 %	82 %	88 %	90 %	88 %
Pass rate	N/A	94 %	94 %	93 %	92 %	91 %
Student satisfaction (1 to 10 points)	N/A	7.48	7.45	7.48	7.58	(Note 2)
Employer satisfaction (1 to 10 points) (Note 3)	N/A	7.33	7.11	7.3	7.17	6.94

Source: Audit analysis of YC records

Note 1: The employment rates in 2015/16, 2016/17, 2017/18, 2018/19 and 2019/20 were for graduates of 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019 respectively.

Note 2: See Note 12 to para. 2.13(e).

Note 3: See Note 13 to para. 2.13(f).

Management of training programmes

2.14 **Performance of individual programmes.** Audit noted that in the period from 2015/16 to 2019/20, there was room for improvement in the performance of some programmes:

- (a) **PIs with targets.** There were targets for three of the six PIs:
 - (i) **Enrolment rate.** Of the 45 programmes in the period from 2015/16 to 2019/20, 26 (58%) were under-enrolled or over-enrolled by more than 10% for 3 years or more;
 - (ii) **Retention rate.** Of the 45 programmes in the period from 2015/16 to 2019/20, the retention rates of 5 (11%) were below targets for 3 years or more; and
 - (iii) **Employment rate.** Of the 25 full-time programmes with DVE graduates (see Note 11 to para. 2.13(c)) in the period from 2015 to 2019, the employment rates of graduates of 8 (32%) programmes were below target for 3 years or more; and
- (b) **PIs without targets.** There were no targets for the remaining three PIs. Audit compared the results of the first year and last year in the period from 2015/16 to 2019/20 and noted the following:
 - (i) **Pass rate.** Of the 45 programmes in the period from 2015/16 to 2019/20, the pass rates of 11 (24%) programmes in 2019/20 decreased by 5 percentage points or more (ranging from 5 to 11 percentage points) as compared to those in 2015/16. The average pass rate decreased from 94% in 2015/16 to 91% in 2019/20;
 - (ii) **Student satisfaction.** Of the 45 programmes in the period from 2015/16 to 2018/19 (see Note 12 to para. 2.13(e)), the scores for student satisfaction of 7 (16%) programmes in 2018/19 decreased by 0.5 point or more (ranging from 0.55 point to 1.89 points) as compared to those in 2015/16. The average point of satisfaction for 2015/16 was 7.48 while for 2018/19 was 7.58; and

- (iii) ***Employer satisfaction.*** Of 30 programmes (Note 14) which had employers covered in the Survey of 2014 to 2018 (see Note 13 to para. 2.13(f)), the scores for employer satisfaction of graduates of 12 (40%) programmes decreased by 0.5 point or more (ranging from 0.5 point to 3 points). The average employer's satisfaction point decreased from 7.33 in 2014 to 6.94 in 2018.

Audit considers that YC needs to step up efforts to enhance performance of training programmes which have not met the targets for enrolment rate, retention rate or employment rate, or have shown a declining trend in performance.

Need to collect employers' views on more graduates

2.15 Employers are invited to participate in the Survey of Employers' Views if the graduates they employed:

- (a) have been employed in jobs relevant to their training programmes for at least three months prior to the Survey; and
- (b) agree that their employers are surveyed.

2.16 The Survey of Employers' Views covers the employers of graduates of full-time programmes and part-time day programmes. Audit examined the Surveys conducted for the employers of graduates of 2016 to 2018 and noted that there was room for improvement in the coverage of the Surveys (see Table 4):

- (a) 824, 901 and 847 graduates of 2016, 2017 and 2018 respectively were employed in jobs relevant to their training programmes. Less than half of such graduates of 2016 agreed that their employers were surveyed. While the situation improved in 2017 and 2018, the percentage was still not more than 60%;

Note 14: *The level of employer satisfaction was collected from the annual Survey of Employers' Views on YC graduates of the 41 full-time programmes and part-time day programmes. Of the 41 programmes, the trend in performance of 11 programmes could not be identified because the programmes were not covered at least twice during the period.*

Management of training programmes

- (b) as a result, although the response rates were as high as 66% to 71%, the Survey only collected employers' views on about 30% to 39% of the graduates employed in jobs relevant to their training programmes; and
- (c) 43, 47 and 49 programmes in 2016, 2017 and 2018 respectively had graduates. The employers' views on graduates from 14 (33%) programmes in 2016, 9 (19%) in 2017 and 18 (37%) in 2018 were not collected by the Survey due to reasons such as graduates not agreeing to survey their employers or the employers not responding to the Survey.

Table 4

**Employers covered in Survey of Employers' Views
(2016 to 2018)**

	2016	2017	2018
No. of graduates employed in jobs relevant to their training programmes (a)	824	901	847
No. of graduates agreeing to survey their employers (b)	390	540	490
Percentage of graduates agreeing to survey their employers (c) = (b) ÷ (a) × 100%	47%	60%	58%
No. of questionnaires sent (Note) (d)	348	524	473
No. of questionnaires returned (e)	247	345	328
Response rate (f) = (e) ÷ (d) × 100%	71%	66%	69%
Percentage of graduates with employers' views collected (g) = (e) ÷ (a) × 100%	30%	38%	39%

Source: Audit analysis of YC records

Note: The number of questionnaires sent was less than the number of graduates who agreed that their employers were surveyed because in some cases, the employers' contact information was incorrect or incomplete.

2.17 According to YC, the information collected from the Survey of Employers' Views is very useful to YC. Audit considers that YC needs to take measures to collect employers' views on more graduates, such as encouraging more graduates to agree to survey their employers and reminding them to give accurate contact information of their employers.

Audit recommendations

2.18 Audit has *recommended* that ED, VTC should:

- (a) **step up efforts to enhance performance of training programmes which have not met the targets for enrolment rate, retention rate or employment rate or have shown a declining trend in performance; and**
- (b) **take measures to collect employers' views on more graduates in the Survey of Employers' Views.**

Response from the Vocational Training Council

2.19 ED, VTC agrees with the audit recommendations.

Workplace learning

2.20 One of the objectives of the full-time DVE programmes is to prepare students for employment (see para. 1.5(a)). In 2014/15, YC launched the Earn and Learn Scheme (E&L Scheme) in three full-time DVE programmes for S3-S5 school leavers to provide on-the-job training for the students while they continue their study. The E&L Scheme integrates vocational education and on-the-job training with clear progression pathways to attract talents for industries and trades with a keen demand for labour. Since 2016/17, E&L Scheme has been extended to eight full-time DVE programmes for S3-S5 school leavers (Note 15). Students of the programmes may

Note 15: *The eight full-time DVE programmes offering E&L Scheme are: (a) Automotive Technology; (b) Building Services Engineering; (c) Electrical Engineering; (d) Electronic and Computer Engineering; (e) Gas Services Engineering; (f) Mechanical Engineering ; (g) Print Media; and (h) Watch and Clock.*

Management of training programmes

choose whether to join E&L Scheme after they have completed the first year study. For those students who have joined E&L Scheme:

- (a) they will enter an apprenticeship contract with an employer as registered apprentice under the Apprenticeship Ordinance (Cap. 47) and receive on-the-job training;
- (b) they will continue to study in part-time day mode in the second to fourth year. They will obtain DVE qualification upon completion of the programme; and
- (c) during their apprenticeship contract (i.e. the second to fourth year study), the students will receive a total amount of \$30,800 as subsidy in addition to a guaranteed monthly salary of not less than \$8,000 from their employers, and a monthly allowance from the Government, ranging from \$2,000 to \$3,000.

2.21 In 2018/19, VTC set Workplace Learning and Assessment (WLA) as a strategic initiative in its Strategic Plan to raise the quality of training and strengthen collaboration with the industries. Through WLA, VTC aims to facilitate integration of school-based learning and workplace learning by including learning and assessment at workplace as part of the curriculum requirement. According to VTC, WLA has the following features and benefits:

- (a) it provides students with an opportunity for learning within a work setting as an integral part of the student's Vocational and Profession Education and Training curriculum;
- (b) it is a process of assessing the students' professional skills, knowledge and attributes on the job in an authentic workplace;
- (c) participating employers can observe and understand students' ability and performance by taking a series of systematic assessments; and
- (d) the assessment standards are designed in accordance with the industrial requirements and international standards. Therefore, the student's abilities being assessed are widely recognised.

Since 2019/20, to implement the strategic initiative in the Strategic Plan of VTC, YC has incorporated WLA into the eight DVE full-time programmes offering E&L Scheme. YC encourages the employers participating in E&L Scheme to join WLA.

Need to encourage more employers to join WLA

2.22 At present, only the employers participating in E&L Scheme are eligible to join WLA (Note 16) to provide training and assessment to students they employed under the apprenticeship contract of E&L Scheme. Audit analysed the number of employers participating in WLA in 2019/20 and 2020/21 and noted that not many employers joined WLA. Of the 112 employers in 2019/20 and the 116 employers in 2020/21 participating in E&L Scheme, only 52 (46%) and 59 (51%) respectively joined WLA.

2.23 In September 2020, online surveys were conducted to collect the feedback from the students and employers participating in WLA. The students were generally satisfied with WLA and expressed that WLA had helped them understand more about the work requirements on the job and identify areas for improvement. The employers also agreed that WLA could improve workplace training in a structured manner and was effective in assessing the students' competencies. To enable more students to benefit from WLA, Audit considers that YC needs to take measures to encourage more employers to join WLA.

Need to explore the feasibility of extending E&L Scheme and WLA to more DVE programmes

2.24 Since 2016/17, E&L Scheme has been extended from three full-time DVE programmes to eight (see para. 2.20). Since 2019/20, YC has incorporated WLA into the eight DVE full-time programmes offering E&L Scheme (see para. 2.21).

Note 16: *Employers participating in WLA need to provide structured workplace learning and assessment for students and nominate their staff to take up the role of trainers, verifiers and assessors of students. Such employers will receive a subsidy of \$36,000 per trainee upon the completion of the workplace assessment.*

Management of training programmes

2.25 E&L Scheme provides students with on-the-job training at the participating employers' workplaces as registered apprentices, whereas WLA provides students with an opportunity for learning within a work setting and assessment by experienced practitioners on their competencies. Both E&L Scheme and WLA add value to the training programmes and are complementary to each other in enhancing the employability of the students. Audit noted that, in 2020/21, YC offered 19 full-time DVE programmes for S3-S5 school leavers. YC has not extended E&L Scheme or WLA from the 8 programmes to the remaining 11 programmes. In order to benefit more students, Audit considers that YC needs to explore the merits and feasibility of extending E&L Scheme and WLA to more full-time DVE programmes for S3-S5 school leavers.

Need to take measures to ensure that academic qualifications of WLA assessors are properly assessed

2.26 Under WLA, the participating employers need to nominate qualified staff to take up the role of assessors to provide assessments on the students. The assessors should be experienced practitioners who play a key role to judge the students' competency at the workplace. The key roles of assessors include:

- (a) plan and prepare the assessment process with the trainees;
- (b) make judgement on the assessment evidence against the standards;
- (c) provide timely and direct feedback to trainees on their performance; and
- (d) complete assessment records for submission to YC.

2.27 To ensure that the workplace assessors possess the necessary skills and knowledge to conduct the assessments, DVE Programme Board has approved with effect from June 2019 that the assessors are required to possess one of the following academic qualifications and industry experience:

- (a) a recognised higher diploma in relevant field and three years' relevant industry experience; or

- (b) a Qualifications Framework Level 3 qualification and eight years' relevant industry experience; or
- (c) a Qualifications Framework Level 2 qualification and twelve years' relevant industry experience.

VTC has established a WLA project team to assess the qualifications of the assessors nominated by employers. After the assessment, a list of assessors having passed the assessment is submitted to DVE Programme Board for approval of their nominations.

2.28 As at 30 June 2021, there were 362 assessors. Audit examined the academic qualifications and industry experience of 30 of them and found that the academic qualifications of 3 (10%) assessors were awarded by overseas institutions and another 6 (20%) assessors were awarded by local institutions not in the Qualifications Register. Audit noted that there was no documentary evidence showing the justifications for the WLA project team to accept the qualifications of the 9 assessors as having met the qualification requirements. Audit considers that YC needs to take measures to ensure that the academic qualifications of WLA assessors are properly assessed.

Audit recommendations

2.29 **Audit has *recommended* that ED, VTC should:**

- (a) **take measures to encourage more employers to join WLA;**
- (b) **explore the merits and feasibility of extending E&L Scheme and WLA to more full-time DVE programmes for S3-S5 school leavers; and**
- (c) **take measures to ensure that the academic qualifications of WLA assessors are properly assessed.**

Response from the Vocational Training Council

2.30 ED, VTC agrees with the audit recommendations.

PART 3: CAMPUS MANAGEMENT

3.1 This PART examines issues related to campus management, focusing on the following areas:

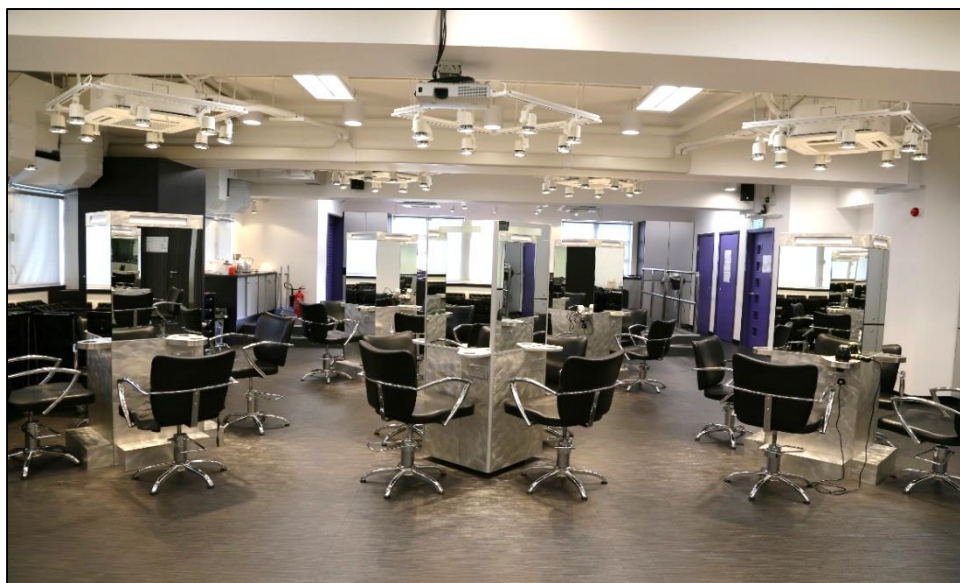
- (a) management of campus facilities (paras. 3.3 to 3.14);
- (b) campus safety management (paras. 3.15 to 3.22); and
- (c) campus environmental protection performance (paras. 3.23 to 3.27).

Background

3.2 To provide skill-based training, YC's campuses are equipped with training facilities for students to acquire practical skills. Apart from regular classrooms, YC's campuses provide specialised teaching and learning facilities, such as hairdressing workshops, beauty care workshops and computer laboratories (see Photographs 1 to 3).

Photograph 1

A hairdressing workshop at YC (Yeo Chei Man)



Source: YC records

Photograph 2

A beauty care workshop at YC (Yeo Chei Man)



Source: YC records

Photograph 3

A computer laboratory at YC (Tin Shui Wai)



Source: YC records

Management of campus facilities

Need to improve utilisation of some teaching and learning facilities

3.3 YC uses a computerised timetabling system to manage and record the allocation of timeslots of its teaching and learning facilities (i.e. timetabling) and manage booking of the facilities by staff and students for teaching and learning activities outside classes. Timeslots that are not allocated for classes are available for booking by staff and students.

3.4 According to YC, due to the outbreak of COVID-19, many face-to-face classes, and teaching and learning activities outside classes were suspended in 2019/20 and 2020/21 to comply with the social distancing requirement. Consequently, the

utilisation rates (Note 17) of teaching and learning facilities in these two years were affected (only 44% in both years). Audit analysed the utilisation rates of the 211 teaching and learning facilities in 2018/19 and noted that:

- (a) the utilisation rates of the 211 facilities averaged 48%; and
- (b) the utilisation rates of 105 (50%) facilities were below 50% (see Table 5).

Table 5

**Utilisation rates of teaching and learning facilities
(2018/19)**

Utilisation rate	No. of facilities	Percentage
< 10 %	18	9 %
10 % to < 20 %	4	2 %
20 % to < 30 %	13	6 %
30 % to < 40 %	23	11 %
40 % to < 50 %	47	22 %
50 % to < 60 %	41	19 %
60 % to < 70 %	43	20 %
≥ 70 %	22	11 %
Total	211	100 %

Source: Audit analysis of YC records

Note 17: YC defined utilisation rate as percentage of the number of hours timetabled or booked by staff and students through the computerised timetabling system, out of the total number of hours available for timetabling and booking. The total number of hours available was 1,600 per year, calculated by 8 hours (8:30 am to 5:30 pm excluding 1 hour of cleaning break) × 5 days × 40 academic weeks.

3.5 Among the 211 teaching and learning facilities, there were 145 (69%) facilities under three major categories of facilities that were available in every YC campus, namely classrooms, computer laboratories and language laboratories. Audit analysed the utilisation rates of the 145 facilities in 2018/19 and found that there was room for improving the utilisation of some teaching and learning facilities:

- (a) **Classrooms.** There were 89 classrooms in the 8 YC campuses, ranging from 2 to 21 in each campus:
 - (i) the utilisation rates of individual classrooms ranged from 1% to 98%, averaging 57%;
 - (ii) the utilisation rates of 29 (33%) classrooms were below 50%; and
 - (iii) in YC (Kowloon Bay), which had the largest number of classrooms (21), the utilisation rates of individual classrooms ranged from 25% to 81%, averaging 59%;
- (b) **Computer laboratories.** There were 36 computer laboratories in the 8 YC campuses, ranging from 1 to 10 in each campus:
 - (i) the utilisation rates of individual laboratories ranged from 25% to 79%, averaging 53%;
 - (ii) the utilisation rates of 13 (36%) laboratories were below 50%; and
 - (iii) in YC (Kwai Fong), which had the largest number of computer laboratories (10), the utilisation rates of individual laboratories ranged from 37% to 66%, averaging 52%; and
- (c) **Language laboratories.** There were 20 language laboratories in the 8 YC campuses, ranging from 2 to 4 in each campus:
 - (i) the utilisation rates of individual laboratories ranged from 15% to 77%, averaging 41%;
 - (ii) the utilisation rates of 15 (75%) laboratories were below 50%; and

- (iii) in YC (Kwai Chung), which had the largest number of language laboratories (4), the utilisation rates of individual laboratories ranged from 25 % to 47 %, averaging 35 %.

3.6 Audit considers that YC needs to explore ways to improve the utilisation of teaching and learning facilities, e.g. by rationalising the facilities with low utilisation.

Guidelines on hire of facilities not complied with

3.7 In addition to usage by YC staff and students, and other VTC member institutions, YC facilities are also hired to organisations outside VTC. In the period from 2015/16 to 2019/20, there were 91 hires (Note 18). The total amount of hire charges was \$1 million. According to VTC's guidelines:

- (a) in calculating the hire charges, fractions of a hiring hour are charged as a full hour;
- (b) all hire charges should be collected in advance. Hirers are required to present the payment receipts to YC's staff before using the facility; and
- (c) applications for waiver of hire charges should be made in writing by the hirers, providing justifications for YC's consideration.

3.8 Audit examined the 91 hires and found that:

- (a) in 24 (26%) hires, instead of charging on an hourly basis (see para. 3.7(a)), hire charges were calculated on a half-hourly basis, contrary to VTC's guidelines. The shortfalls in hire charges received ranged from \$160 to \$1,400 per hire, averaging \$640. The total amount of hire charges undercollected was \$15,500;

Note 18: *Most of the 91 hires were hires of halls and hires of conference rooms, which were not classified as teaching and learning facilities.*

Campus management

- (b) the rates of hire charges were revised at the beginning of every academic year. In 2 (2%) hires, the revised rates were not used, resulting in hire charges of \$210 and \$670 undercollected respectively;
- (c) in 27 (30%) hires, the hire charges were not collected in advance and the hirers were allowed to use the facilities without presenting the payment receipts (see para. 3.7(b)):
 - (i) in 6 hires, invoices for hire charges were issued 3 to 30 days after the start dates of the hiring periods. In these hires, the due dates for payments were 18 to 43 days after the start dates of the hiring periods and the hire charges were collected 6 to 48 days after the start dates of the hiring periods;
 - (ii) in 14 hires, notwithstanding that invoices were issued prior to the hiring periods, the payment due dates were 1 to 17 days after the start dates of the hiring periods. The hire charges were collected 1 to 80 days after the start dates of the hiring periods; and
 - (iii) in the remaining 7 hires, notwithstanding that the invoice issue dates and payment due dates were before the start dates of the hiring periods, hire charges were collected 2 to 60 days after the start dates of the hiring periods; and
- (d) there were 6 cases of waiver of hire charges:
 - (i) in 2 cases, instead of applying in writing (see para. 3.7(c)), the hirers only made verbal applications for waiver of hire charges by phone; and
 - (ii) in 4 cases, there was no documentary evidence showing that the hirers had applied for waiver of hire charges.

3.9 Audit considers that YC needs to take measures to ensure that guidelines on hire of facilities are complied with.

Need to enhance monitoring of physical fitness rooms

3.10 Each YC campus has one or more physical fitness rooms for conducting physical education classes for students. Students and staff using the physical fitness rooms in unallocated timeslots are required to present a fitness room user card, record the time of entry and exit, their name, class or department, fitness room user card number or student/staff number and sign in the log book.

3.11 Audit reviewed the physical fitness room log books of four YC campuses covering the period from 2018/19 to 2019/20. The review revealed that of the 4,467 entries, 549 (12%) were incomplete with one or more items of the required information missing (name, class, student/staff number, etc.). In 38 (7%) of the 549 entries, the user could not be identified because the user's name, fitness room user card number and the student/staff number were either missing or illegible.

3.12 Audit considers that YC needs to take measures to ensure that entries in the physical fitness room log books are properly completed by users.

Audit recommendations

3.13 Audit has *recommended* that ED, VTC should:

- (a) **explore ways to improve the utilisation of teaching and learning facilities, e.g. by rationalising the facilities with low utilisation;**
- (b) **take measures to ensure that guidelines on hire of facilities are complied with; and**
- (c) **take measures to ensure that entries in the physical fitness room log books are properly completed by users.**

Response from the Vocational Training Council

3.14 ED, VTC agrees with the audit recommendations.

Campus safety management

3.15 In the Safety Management Framework, VTC promulgated its safety and health policies, guidelines, procedures, and staff's roles and responsibilities in safety and health matters. In accordance with the Framework, each YC campus promulgated a Campus Safety Management Manual.

Room for rationalising requirements in Campus Safety Management Manuals

3.16 Audit examined the requirements stipulated in the 8 Campus Safety Management Manuals and found that there were variations in the requirements between the Manuals. Moreover, some requirements in the Manuals were not compatible with the Safety Management Framework and/or legal requirements:

Accident reporting and investigations

- (a) 4 Manuals stipulated that all accidents should be reported to the campuses' College Secretariats within 2 days. The remaining 4 Manuals stipulated that all accidents should be reported to the principals without specifying the timeframe;
- (b) for accidents which resulted in incapacity of an employee:
 - (i) for incapacity period exceeding 3 days, 6 Manuals stipulated the submission of the required notice under the Employees' Compensation Ordinance (Cap. 282) to VTC headquarters in less than 4 days and 2 stipulated less than 3 days (versus less than 3 calendar days stipulated in the Framework); and
 - (ii) for incapacity period not exceeding 3 days, 7 Manuals stipulated the submission of the required notice in less than 7 days while 1 stipulated less than 3 days (versus less than 7 calendar days stipulated in the Framework);
- (c) only 5 of the 8 Manuals stipulated the requirements for reporting to the Commissioner for Labour within 24 hours accidents resulting in the death of an employee and accidents involving dangerous occurrences defined by

the Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance (Cap. 509). Moreover, none of the Manuals stipulated the other pertinent reporting requirements under the Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance (Note 19);

- (d) 2 Manuals stipulated that investigation reports for accidents involving dangerous occurrences and serious injuries should be submitted to the principals within 7 days. The remaining 6 Manuals did not stipulate a deadline; and

Health and safety inspections

- (e) different frequencies of health and safety inspections per year were stipulated in the 8 Manuals, ranging from 1 to 18. While 2 Manuals did not stipulate the timeframe for taking follow-up actions, 6 Manuals stipulated that follow-up actions should be taken within 7 to 14 days (versus within 7 days stipulated in the Framework). None of the Manuals stipulated the requirement on keeping inspection records (versus keeping inspection records for at least 3 years stipulated in the Framework).

3.17 Audit considers that YC needs to:

- (a) rationalise the variations in the requirements on accident reporting and investigations, and health and safety inspections stipulated in the Campus Safety Management Manuals of different campuses; and
- (b) take measures to ensure that requirements stipulated in the Campus Safety Management Manuals are compatible with the Safety Management Framework and legal requirements.

Note 19: *Under the Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance:*

- (a) *a report must be made to the Commissioner for Labour, within seven days of its occurrence, of any occupational accident which causes injury to any employee, where the injury results in the employee being absent from work for three days or more; and*
- (b) *if an accident results in serious bodily injury, the Commissioner for Labour must be informed within 24 hours of the accident.*

Requirements in Safety Management Framework and Campus Safety Management Manuals not complied with

3.18 Requirements on accident reporting and investigations not complied with.

In the period from 2016/17 to 2019/20, the 8 YC campuses reported 53 accidents. Audit examined the accident reporting and investigation records of the 53 accidents and found the following issues:

- (a) for the 4 campuses which did not stipulate a timeframe for accident reporting (see para. 3.16(a)), the time taken for reporting the 25 accidents ranged from less than 1 day (i.e. reported on the same day) to 14 days. For the 4 campuses which required accidents to be reported within 2 days (see para. 3.16(a)), 10 (36%) of the 28 accidents were reported 1 to 62 days later than the Manuals' stipulated deadlines;
- (b) there were 10 accidents involving work injuries, and YC campuses reported to VTC headquarters 4 (40%) of such accidents later than the deadlines stipulated in the Safety Management Framework (see para. 3.16(b)). The delays ranged from 2 to 13 days. Subsequently, the notices for these 4 accidents were submitted to the Commissioner for Labour later than the requirements of 14 days stipulated in the Employees' Compensation Ordinance and the delays ranged from 1 to 10 days; and
- (c) for 17 (32%) of the 53 accidents, while there was no documentary evidence showing whether the accidents involved dangerous occurrences or serious injuries and hence investigation reports needed to be compiled (see para. 3.16(d)), accident investigations had not been conducted and no investigation reports had been compiled. For the 2 campuses which required accident investigation reports to be submitted to the principals within 7 days (see para. 3.16(d)), 1 (50%) of their 2 accident investigation reports was submitted 37 days later than the deadline.

3.19 Requirements on health and safety inspections not complied with.

According to requirements stipulated in the 8 Campus Safety Management Manuals, a total of 57 health and safety inspections should be conducted by YC each year (see para. 3.16(e)). Audit examined YC's inspection records for 2019 and found that, for 14 (25%) of the 57 inspections, there was no documentary evidence showing that the inspections had been conducted.

3.20 Audit considers that YC needs to take measures to ensure that requirements stipulated in the Safety Management Framework and the Campus Safety Management Manuals are complied with.

Audit recommendations

3.21 Audit has *recommended* that ED, VTC should:

- (a) **rationalise the variations in the requirements on accident reporting and investigations, and health and safety inspections stipulated in the Campus Safety Management Manuals of different campuses;**
- (b) **take measures to ensure that requirements stipulated in the Campus Safety Management Manuals are compatible with the Safety Management Framework and legal requirements; and**
- (c) **take measures to ensure that requirements stipulated in the Safety Management Framework and the Campus Safety Management Manuals are complied with.**

Response from the Vocational Training Council

3.22 ED, VTC agrees with the audit recommendations.

Campus environmental protection performance

3.23 YC campuses are required to meet environmental targets to reduce waste and consumption of resources. The targets are as follows:

- (a) ***Environmental targets on consumption of water, electricity and paper.*** Using the actual consumptions in the reference year as the basis, each campus should achieve a specified percentage of reduction in consumption of water, electricity and paper. From 2017/18 onwards, environmental targets have been set every year. Before 2017/18, environmental targets were set for alternate years. Therefore, in the period from 2015/16 to 2019/20, environmental targets were not set for 2016/17 (see Table 6); and

Table 6

**Environmental targets on consumption of water, electricity and paper
(2015/16 to 2019/20)**

Academic year	Reference year	Reduction targets (%)
2015/16	2013/14	5.0
2016/17 (Note)	N/A	N/A
2017/18	2015/16	3.0
2018/19		4.5
2019/20	2018/19	1.5

Source: Audit analysis of YC records

Note: Environmental targets were not set for 2016/17 (see para. 3.23(a)).

- (b) ***Environmental target on the use of recycled paper.*** Recycled paper should account for at least 20% of the paper consumption.

3.24 Audit examined the achievements of environmental targets by individual YC campuses in the period from 2015/16 to 2019/20 and found that every year there were campuses not meeting the environmental targets (see Table 7).

Table 7

**Achievements of environmental targets by 8 campuses
(2015/16 to 2019/20)**

	Number of campuses				
	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20 (Note 1)
Water consumption					
Target met	2	N/A (Note 2)	5	6	7
Target not met	6		3	2	1
Total	8		8	8	8
Electricity consumption					
Target met	3	N/A (Note 2)	2	4	8
Target not met	5		6	4	—
Total	8		8	8	8
Paper consumption					
Target met	6	N/A (Note 2)	7	4	8
Target not met	2		1	4	—
Total	8		8	8	8
Use of recycled paper					
Target met	4	6	5	7	7
Target not met	4	2	3	1	1
Total	8	8	8	8	8

Source: Audit analysis of YC records

Note 1: According to YC, many face-to-face classes were suspended in 2019/20 to comply with the social distancing requirement due to the outbreak of COVID-19.

Note 2: Environmental targets were not set for 2016/17 (see para. 3.23(a)).

Campus management

3.25 Audit considers that YC needs to step up efforts in facilitating the achievement of environmental targets.

Audit recommendation

3.26 Audit has *recommended* that ED, VTC should step up efforts in facilitating the achievement of environmental targets.

Response from the Vocational Training Council

3.27 ED, VTC agrees with the audit recommendation.

PART 4: OTHER ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES

4.1 This PART examines other administrative issues of YC, focusing on the following areas:

- (a) staff management (paras. 4.2 to 4.15);
- (b) inventory management (paras. 4.16 to 4.31); and
- (c) student support services (paras. 4.32 to 4.37).

Staff management

Need to encourage staff to attain more Continuous Professional Development (CPD) hours

4.2 CPD Scheme aims to encourage staff to upgrade and update their professional knowledge and skills through professional training and development activities. It operates on a non-mandatory basis and covers all teaching staff and some designated non-teaching staff (Note 20). Staff are encouraged to attain not less than 40 CPD hours (Note 21) within a CPD cycle of 24 months.

4.3 Audit examined the attainment of CPD hours by YC staff covered by CPD Scheme in two CPD cycles from 1 October 2015 to 30 September 2017 and from 1 October 2017 to 30 September 2019 respectively. Audit noted that:

Note 20: *Examples of designated non-teaching staff include Student Affairs Officers, Education Development Officers and Technicians.*

Note 21: *CPD hours include time spent on attending training courses, conferences and seminars. Time spent on other activities such as reading of relevant professional journals and voluntary services to professional bodies can also be counted as CPD hours.*

Other administrative issues

- (a) for the first CPD cycle, 54 (12%) of the 444 staff (i.e. 35 (10%) of the 352 teaching staff and 19 (21%) of the 92 non-teaching staff) attained less than 40 CPD hours; and
- (b) for the second CPD cycle, 62 (15%) of the 426 staff (i.e. 47 (14%) of the 333 teaching staff and 15 (16%) of the 93 non-teaching staff) attained less than 40 CPD hours.

4.4 Audit considers that YC needs to step up efforts in encouraging staff to actively participate in CPD training and activities and attain not less than 40 CPD hours in each CPD cycle.

Guidelines on further employment of staff not complied with

4.5 According to VTC guidelines:

- (a) each case of further employment beyond the age of 60 will be considered on its own merits based on a set of prescribed criteria, for example, difficulty in recruiting staff for that particular post, whether extension of service would cause promotion blockage to VTC's eligible staff in the lower ranks and whether the applicants seeking further employment are physically fit; and
- (b) a written application for further employment beyond the age of 60 should be submitted at least seven months prior to the staff's 60th birthday. The applicant would be informed of the result of application in writing normally four months before his retirement date or the day on which his extended service expires.

4.6 In the period from 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2021, there were 17 approved applications for further employment. Audit's examination of the 17 approved cases revealed that:

- (a) in 1 (6%) case, the application was submitted only 6 months prior to the staff's 60th birthday, i.e. one month later than the deadline stipulated in VTC guidelines (see para. 4.5(b));
- (b) according to the requirement stipulated in the application form, if the principal supports the application, he needs to provide an action plan/succession plan for filling the post when the extended service expired. In 8 (47%) cases, the principals supported the applications but had not provided the action plans/succession plans as required;
- (c) in 2 (12%) cases, there was no documentary evidence showing that consideration had been given to whether the applicants' extension of service would cause promotion blockage to VTC's eligible staff in the lower ranks (see para. 4.5(a));
- (d) in 13 (76%) cases, of which the approved period of further employment ranged from 1 to 14 months, there was no documentary evidence showing that the physical fitness of the applicants had been considered (see para. 4.5(a)); and
- (e) in 10 (59%) cases, the dates of informing the applicants of the results of applications were only 16 days to 3 months (less than the specified 4 months) before the retirement date or the day on which the extended service expired (see para. 4.5(b)).

4.7 Audit considers that YC needs to process applications for further employment of staff beyond the age of 60 in a timely manner and take measures to ensure that the requirements stipulated in VTC guidelines are complied with.

Need to avoid prolonged acting appointments

4.8 According to VTC guidelines:

- (a) acting appointments are made to enable a full-time staff under Old/New Remuneration Package terms to undertake the duties of a vacant post or to cover the temporary absence of the substantive post holder;

Other administrative issues

- (b) there are three types of acting appointments:
 - (i) **Acting-up.** A staff undertakes the duties of a post in a higher rank;
 - (ii) **Doubling-up.** A staff undertakes the duties of a post in a higher rank in addition to the full duties of his own post; and
 - (iii) **Doubling-sideways.** A staff undertakes the duties of a post in the same or comparable rank in addition to the full duties of his own post;
- (c) an acting allowance may be granted to a staff who undertakes acting appointment for a minimum of 30 consecutive calendar days;
- (d) prolonged acting-up and doubling-up appointments may result in singling-out the staff concerned in future substantive appointment of a post at a higher rank; and
- (e) prolonged doubling-up and doubling-sideways appointments are not desirable and sustainable as the arrangements involve staff undertaking duties of the acting posts in addition to their own for a prolonged period.

4.9 In the period from financial years 2016-17 to 2020-21, 146 staff undertook 223 acting appointments (including acting-up, doubling-up and doubling-sideways) with acting period of 1 month or longer. The total acting allowance paid in the 5-year period was \$12.3 million, ranging from \$1.7 million to \$4.5 million per year. Audit noted that in 18 (8%) of the 223 acting appointments, the staff undertook 2 consecutive acting appointments without a break. Therefore, there were 9 acting periods for the 18 acting appointments and in total, there were 214 acting periods for the 223 acting appointments. The durations of the 214 acting periods ranged from 1 month to 3.4 years (see Table 8).

Table 8

**Acting period of YC staff
(Financial years 2016-17 to 2020-21)**

Duration of acting period (Years)	Number of acting periods
≤ 0.5	154 (72.0%)
> 0.5 to 1	38 (17.7%)
> 1 to 2	19 (8.9%)
> 2 to 3	2 (0.9%)
> 3	1 (0.5%) (Note)
Total	214 (100%)

Source: Audit analysis of YC records

Note: The longest acting period was 3.4 years.

4.10 Audit noted that no guidelines were promulgated on the length of prolonged acting appointments that would be considered as undesirable and unsustainable and hence should be avoided (see para. 4.8(d) and (e)). Audit considers that there is room for enhancing the guidelines on prolonged acting appointments. YC also needs to take measures to ensure that prolonged acting appointments are avoided as far as practicable.

Results of sexual conviction record checks not documented

4.11 According to VTC guidelines:

- (a) sexual conviction record check is required for all new recruits of teaching positions in YC. The objective is to ascertain whether the prospective appointees have any criminal conviction records against a specified list of sexual offences; and

Other administrative issues

- (b) staff designated for handling appointment matters is required to record the result of the check in writing and file it as a formal appointment record.

4.12 In the period from financial years 2018-19 to 2020-21, YC recruited 125 new staff for teaching positions. Audit examined the appointment records of 20 new recruits and noted that for 3 (15%) new recruits, the sexual conviction record check results had not been documented as required by VTC guidelines.

4.13 Audit considers that YC needs to take measures to ensure that results of sexual conviction record checks for new recruits in teaching positions are documented according to the requirements stipulated in VTC guidelines.

Audit recommendations

4.14 **Audit has *recommended* that ED, VTC should:**

- (a) **step up efforts in encouraging staff to actively participate in CPD training and activities and attain not less than 40 CPD hours in each CPD cycle;**
- (b) **process applications for further employment of staff beyond the age of 60 in a timely manner and take measures to ensure that the requirements stipulated in VTC guidelines are complied with;**
- (c) **enhance the guidelines on prolonged acting appointments and take measures to ensure that prolonged acting appointments are avoided as far as practicable; and**
- (d) **take measures to ensure that results of sexual conviction record checks for new recruits in teaching positions are documented according to the requirements stipulated in VTC guidelines.**

Response from the Vocational Training Council

4.15 ED, VTC agrees with the audit recommendations.

Inventory management

4.16 VTC has promulgated a Stores Manual for staff dealing with stores matters. According to VTC Stores Manual:

- (a) the principal is responsible for appointing a Stores Controlling Officer to assist him in supervising all stores and procurement matters within his purview; and
- (b) the Stores Controlling Officer is responsible for:
 - (i) inspecting each store unit under his direct control at least once every two years and reporting the results of the inspection to the principal; and
 - (ii) carrying out surprise stock and security checks at irregular intervals at least once every year.

Need to conduct annual stocktaking exercise and submit stocktaking reports in a timely manner

4.17 As of 31 July 2021, YC had an inventory of 12,248 items with total purchase costs of \$80.5 million. The inventory was mainly comprised of 9,768 (79.8%) items of computer equipment, 1,399 (11.4%) items of audio-visual equipment, and 442 (3.6%) items of workshop and laboratory equipment. Every year, VTC headquarters issues a memo to YC setting out the requirements and procedures of the annual stocktaking exercise and the deadline for the submission of the stocktaking reports to VTC headquarters.

4.18 In the six financial years from 2015-16 to 2020-21, YC conducted four annual stocktaking exercises (Note 22). Audit examined the 32 (8×4)

Note 22: *The annual stocktaking exercise in financial year 2016-17 was conducted by an external auditor and YC was not required to conduct the annual stocktaking exercise or submit the stocktaking report. The annual stocktaking exercises in financial years 2019-20 and 2020-21 were combined due to special circumstances arising from the public order events and the outbreak of COVID-19.*

Other administrative issues

stocktaking reports submitted to VTC headquarters by the 8 YC campuses for the 4 annual stocktaking exercises. Audit found that:

- (a) 16 (50%) of the 32 reports were submitted late. The delays ranged from 6 days to 5.1 months, averaging 2.1 months; and
- (b) in 13 (81%) of the 16 cases, the stocktaking exercises were completed even after the stocktaking report submission deadlines, ranging from 6 days to 4.8 months.

4.19 Audit considers that YC needs to take measures to ensure that annual stocktaking exercises are conducted in a timely manner and stocktaking reports are submitted to VTC headquarters before the deadlines.

Need to enhance guidelines on valuable and attractive stores

4.20 According to the recommendations of the review on stocktaking procedures conducted by VTC headquarters in 2017, with effect from financial year 2017-18, YC is required to complete a full stocktaking on all valuable and attractive stores every two years and submit a list of valuable and attractive items checked to VTC headquarters.

4.21 Audit noted that 4 campuses did not classify any of their inventory items as valuable and attractive stores and hence no stocktaking on valuable and attractive stores had been conducted. Audit examined the stocktaking records on valuable and attractive stores submitted by the remaining 4 campuses for the two cycles of financial years 2017-18 to 2018-19 and 2019-20 to 2020-21 respectively. Audit found that in the cycle of 2019-20 to 2020-21, 2 (50%) of the campuses did not conduct the full stocktaking exercise on all valuable and attractive stores.

4.22 Audit also reviewed the inventory lists of the 8 YC campuses and noted that there were inconsistencies among the 8 YC campuses in their criteria for classifying valuable and attractive stores (see Appendix J for examples).

4.23 Audit considers that YC needs to issue guidelines on the criteria for classifying store items as valuable and attractive stores. YC also needs to take measures to ensure that the requirement for conducting full stocktaking exercise on all valuable and attractive stores is complied with.

Need to ensure that surprise stock and security checks are conducted

4.24 According to VTC guidelines:

- (a) surprise stock and security checks should be carried out at irregular intervals at least once every year and as a separate exercise from the annual stocktaking exercise;
- (b) the surprise checks and the annual stocktaking exercise should be carried out on staggered timeframe to optimise the overall effectiveness of stores control; and
- (c) the officer conducting the check should record the findings in the surprise inspection books. The surprise inspection books should be updated and kept by the responsible officer.

4.25 Audit examined 8 YC campuses' records of surprise stock and security checks for the six financial years from 2015-16 to 2020-21 and found that:

- (a) 6 (75%) campuses did not conduct surprise stock and security checks. Of these 6 campuses, 5 (83%) did not have a surprise inspection book; and
- (b) in 1 (50%) of the 2 campuses that had conducted surprise stock and security checks, the surprise inspection book only recorded briefly the results of the surprise stock and security checks. For example, it was recorded that 8 items of office equipment had been checked but it did not record which 8 items of office equipment had been checked.

4.26 Audit considers that YC needs to take measures to ensure that surprise stock and security checks are conducted and the results are properly recorded in the surprise inspection books.

Need to ensure that lost stores are written-off in a timely manner

4.27 According to VTC Stores Manual, where losses or deficiencies of stores are identified:

- (a) a schedule of discrepancies should be completed and submitted to VTC headquarters; and
- (b) an application for write-off of stores should be submitted for approval by the designated officers as soon as possible, with a copy of the application emailed to VTC headquarters for record purpose.

4.28 Audit examined 8 YC campuses' stocktaking exercise and write-off application records for the six financial years from 2015-16 to 2020-21 and found that:

- (a) 12 books with a total value of \$947 had been lost since 2010. However, the application for write-off of the lost items was not submitted and approved until July 2021 after Audit's enquiry; and
- (b) 3 books with a total value of \$114 were found lost in the annual stocktaking exercise in financial year 2018-19. The schedule of discrepancies and the application for write-off of stores were not submitted until April 2021, i.e. more than two years after the stocktaking exercise. The write-off application was subsequently approved in the same month.

4.29 Audit considers that YC needs to take measures to ensure that the schedules of discrepancies and applications for write-off of lost stores are submitted in a timely manner.

Audit recommendations

4.30 **Audit has recommended that ED, VTC should:**

- (a) **take measures to ensure that annual stocktaking exercises are conducted in a timely manner and stocktaking reports are submitted before the deadlines;**
- (b) **issue guidelines on the criteria for classifying store items as valuable and attractive stores and take measures to ensure that the requirement for conducting full stocktaking exercise on all valuable and attractive stores is complied with;**
- (c) **take measures to ensure that surprise stock and security checks are conducted and the results are properly recorded in the surprise inspection books; and**
- (d) **take measures to ensure that the schedules of discrepancies and applications for write-off of lost stores are submitted in a timely manner.**

Response from the Vocational Training Council

4.31 ED, VTC agrees with the audit recommendations.

Student support services

4.32 A Student Development Office is set up at each of YC's eight campuses to provide student support services for all-round student development. Student support services include:

- (a) counselling service;
- (b) career advisory service;
- (c) student development activities;
- (d) extra-curricular activities; and
- (e) other student affairs and related matters.

Need to make improvements in organising student activities

4.33 The Student Development Office organises various student activities for students. Some are joint campuses activities while some are arranged for students of individual campus. In 2020/21, there were 360 activities organised (see Table 9).

Table 9
Number of student activities organised
(2020/21)

Campus	No. of activities	No. of activity-hours
Kowloon Bay	62	120.8
Kwai Chung	25	130.0
Kwai Fong	26	109.5
Pokfulam	14	27.0
Tin Shui Wai	30	56.5
Tseung Kwan O	15	55.0
Tuen Mun	44	169.5
Yeo Chei Man	37	150.5
Joint activities (Note)	107	147.6
Total	360	966.4

Source: Audit analysis of YC records

Note: These activities were organised jointly among campuses for all YC students.

4.34 Audit analysed the student activities organised in 2020/21 and noted the following:

- (a) ***Number of activity-hours varied among campuses.*** The number of activity-hours varied among campuses, ranging from 27 in Pokfulam campus to 169.5 in Tuen Mun campus (see Table 9);
- (b) ***Target numbers of participants for some activities were not set.*** Of the 360 activities organised, target numbers of participants were not set for 40 (11%) activities;
- (c) ***Target numbers of participants for some activities were not met.*** Of the 320 activities with target numbers of participants set, the targets were not met in 225 (70%) activities. In particular, the participation rates of 40 (13%) activities were less than 50% (see Table 10); and

Table 10

**Participation rates of activities
(2020/21)**

Participation rate	No. of activities
≥ 100 %	95 (30%)
90 % to < 100 %	42 (13%)
80 % to < 90 %	49 (15%)
70 % to < 80 %	40 (12%)
50 % to < 70 %	54 (17%)
30 % to < 50 %	31 (10%)
< 30 %	9 (3%)
Total	320 (100%)

40 (13%)

Source: Audit analysis of YC records

Other administrative issues

- (d) *Evaluations were not conducted for some activities.* The Student Development Office has developed an evaluation form to collect students' opinion on the activities they participated. Evaluations were not conducted for 86 (24%) of the 360 activities.

4.35 Audit considers that YC needs to:

- (a) review the reasons for the variations among the 8 campuses in the number of students activities and the number of activity-hours, and take measures to rationalise the variations where necessary to ensure that the needs of the students of every campus are fully met;
- (b) set target number of participants for the student activities where appropriate;
- (c) for the student activities with participation rates significantly below targets, ascertain the reasons and draw on the experience gained with a view to improving future activities; and
- (d) conduct evaluation of the student activities, wherever appropriate.

Audit recommendations

4.36 Audit has *recommended* that ED, VTC should:

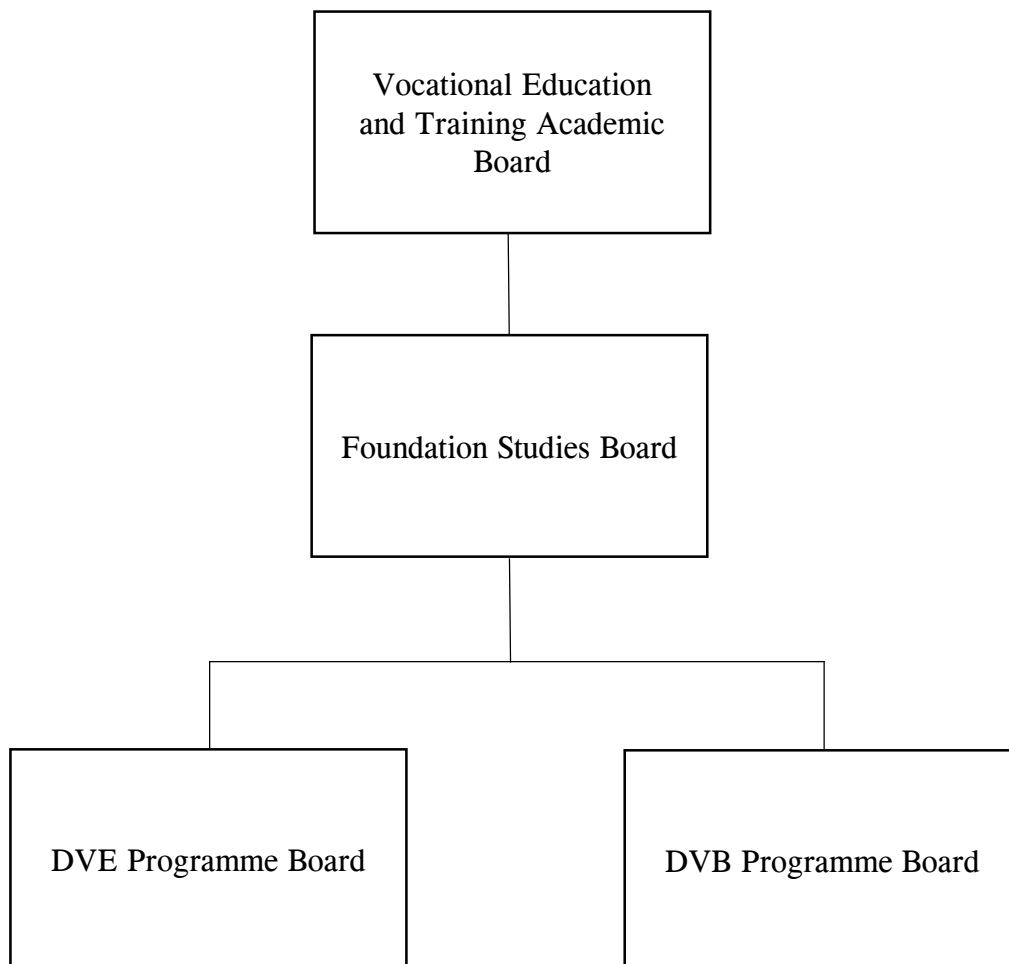
- (a) **review the reasons for the variations among the 8 campuses in the number of students activities and the number of activity-hours, and take measures to rationalise the variations where necessary to ensure that the needs of the students of every campus are fully met;**
- (b) **set target number of participants for the student activities organised by the Student Development Offices where appropriate;**
- (c) **for the student activities with participation rates significantly below targets, ascertain the reasons and draw on the experience gained with a view to improving future activities; and**

- (d) **conduct evaluations of the student activities organised by the Student Development Offices, wherever appropriate.**

Response from the Vocational Training Council

- 4.37 ED, VTC agrees with the audit recommendations.

**Boards responsible for academic matters of the Youth College
(30 June 2021)**



Source: Audit analysis of YC records

**Enrolment rates of training programmes
(2015/16 to 2019/20)**

Enrolment rate (%)	No. of programmes				
	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
0 to < 50	1 (2%)	0 (0%)	1 (2%)	1 (2%)	2 (4%)
50 to < 80	4 (9%)	2 (4%)	7 (16%)	5 (10%)	11 (25%)
80 to < 90	5 (11%)	5 (11%)	1 (2%)	8 (18%)	9 (20%)
90 to < 100	14 (31%)	7 (16%)	14 (31%)	7 (16%)	5 (11%)
100 (Target)	1 (2%)	1 (2%)	0 (0%)	4 (9%)	0 (0%)
> 100 to 110	6 (13%)	8 (18%)	6 (13%)	4 (9%)	10 (22%)
> 110 to 120	5 (11%)	10 (22%)	4 (9%)	6 (14%)	3 (7%)
> 120 to 150	6 (14%)	9 (20%)	9 (20%)	8 (18%)	4 (9%)
> 150 to 220	3 (7%)	3 (7%)	3 (7%)	2 (4%)	1 (2%)
Total	45 (100%)	45 (100%)	45 (100%)	45 (100%)	45 (100%)
Average enrolment rate for programmes with under-enrolment	87%	86%	83%	81%	77%
Average enrolment rate for programmes with over-enrolment	125%	125%	126%	129%	115%
Average enrolment rate for all programmes	104%	112%	104%	104%	92%

Source: Audit analysis of YC records

Remarks: For every programme, the target enrolment rate was 100%.

**Retention rates of full-time Diploma of Vocational Education
programmes for Secondary 3 to 5 school leavers
(2015/16 to 2019/20)**

Retention rate (%)	No. of programmes				
	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
80 to < 85	3 (21%)	1 (7%)	3 (21%)	3 (21%)	0 (0%)
85 to 100	11 (79%)	13 (93%)	11 (79%)	11 (79%)	14 (100%)
Total	14 (100%)	14 (100%)	14 (100%)	14 (100%)	14 (100%)
Average	88%	89%	87%	87%	95%
No. of programmes below target	3 (21%)	1 (7%)	3 (21%)	3 (21%)	0 (0%)

Source: Audit analysis of YC records

Remarks: For every full-time DVE programme for S3-S5 school leavers, the target retention rate was 85%.

**Retention rates of full-time Diploma of Vocational Education
programmes for Secondary 6 school leavers
(2015/16 to 2019/20)**

Retention rate (%)	No. of programmes				
	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
80 to < 90 (a)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (15%)	1 (8%)
90 to < 95 (b)	2 (15%)	6 (46%)	7 (54%)	5 (39%)	2 (15%)
95 to 100	11 (85%)	7 (54%)	6 (46%)	6 (46%)	10 (77%)
Total	13 (100%)	13 (100%)	13 (100%)	13 (100%)	13 (100%)
Average	95%	95%	94%	93%	97%
No. of programmes below target (c)=(a)+(b)	2 (15%)	6 (46%)	7 (54%)	7 (54%)	3 (23%)

Source: Audit analysis of YC records

Remarks: For every full-time DVE programme for S6 school leavers, the target retention rate was 95%.

**Retention rates of part-time programmes
(2015/16 to 2019/20)**

Retention rate (%)	No. of programmes				
	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
60 to < 70 (a)	1 (6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
70 to < 80 (b)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
80 to < 90 (c)	2 (11%)	2 (11%)	0 (0%)	1 (6%)	0 (0%)
90 to 100	15 (83%)	16 (89%)	18(100%)	17 (94%)	18(100%)
Total	18(100%)	18(100%)	18(100%)	18(100%)	18(100%)
Average	93%	94%	94%	94%	96%
No. of programmes below target (d)=(a)+(b)+(c)	3 (17%)	2 (11%)	0 (0%)	1 (6%)	0 (0%)

Source: Audit analysis of YC records

Remarks: For every part-time programme, the target retention rate was 90%.

**Employment rates of full-time graduates of
Diploma of Vocational Education programmes
(2015 to 2019)**

Employment rate (%)	No. of programmes				
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
0 to < 50 (a)	1 (4%)	1 (4%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
50 to < 70 (b)	3 (12%)	3 (12%)	2 (8%)	2 (8%)	2 (8%)
70 to < 85 (c)	7 (28%)	7 (28%)	5 (20%)	6 (24%)	7 (28%)
85 to 100	14 (56%)	13 (52%)	18 (72%)	17 (68%)	15 (60%)
Others (Note)	0 (0%)	1 (4%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (4%)
Total	25 (100%)	25 (100%)	25 (100%)	25 (100%)	25 (100%)
Average	82%	82%	88%	90%	88%
No. of programmes below target (d)=(a)+(b)+(c)	11 (44%)	11 (44%)	7 (28%)	8 (32%)	9 (36%)

Source: Audit analysis of YC records

Note: For some programmes, all graduates who replied to the Graduate Employment Survey indicated that they pursued further full-time study after graduation or they were not seeking employment. Therefore, the employment rate was not applicable to these programmes.

Remarks:

- (a) *For every full-time DVE programme, the target employment rate was 85%.*
- (b) *There were 27 full-time DVE programmes offered every year from 2015/16 to 2019/20. For two programmes, namely DVE (Fitness and Sports Studies) for S6 school leavers and DVE (Watch and Clock) for S3-S5 school leavers, the first batch of students graduated only in 2016 and 2017 respectively.*

**Pass rates of training programmes
(2015/16 to 2019/20)**

Pass rate (%)	No. of programmes				
	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
70 to <80	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (4%)	1 (2%)
80 to <90	7 (16%)	8 (18%)	7 (16%)	6 (14%)	17 (38%)
90 to 100	38 (84%)	37 (82%)	38 (84%)	37 (82%)	27 (60%)
Total	45 (100%)	45 (100%)	45 (100%)	45 (100%)	45 (100%)
Average	94%	94%	93%	92%	91%

Source: Audit analysis of YC records

Remarks: YC has not set a target on pass rate.

Student satisfaction of training programmes (2015/16 to 2018/19)

Level of satisfaction (10-point scale)	No. of programmes			
	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
5 to <6	1 (2%)	0 (0%)	1 (2%)	0 (0%)
6 to <8	33 (73%)	37 (82%)	37 (82%)	36 (80%)
8 to 10	11 (25%)	7 (16%)	7 (16%)	8 (18%)
Others (Note)	0 (0%)	1 (2%)	0 (0%)	1 (2%)
Total	45 (100%)	45 (100%)	45 (100%)	45 (100%)
Average	7.48	7.45	7.48	7.58

Source: Audit analysis of YC records

Note: The level of student satisfaction of part-time day programme on Certificate in Air-Conditioning and Refrigeration in 2016/17 and full-time programme on DVE (Gas Services Engineering) for S3-S5 school leavers in 2018/19 were not available in PQAR.

Remarks:

- (a) YC has not set a target on the level of student satisfaction.*
- (b) The level of student satisfaction was not available for 2019/20 because the student feedback questionnaire survey was not conducted due to the suspension of face-to-face classes in the year amid the COVID-19 epidemic.*

Employer satisfaction of full-time and part-time day programmes (2014 to 2018)

Level of satisfaction (10-point scale)	No. of programmes				
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
4 to < 5	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (5%)	1 (3%)	0 (0%)
5 to < 6	1 (4%)	1 (5%)	1 (5%)	0 (0%)	1 (4%)
6 to < 8	18 (72%)	15 (79%)	13 (59%)	24 (75%)	24 (89%)
8 to 10	6 (24%)	3 (16%)	7 (31%)	7 (22%)	2 (7%)
Total	25 (100%)	19 (100%)	22 (100%)	32 (100%)	27 (100%)
Average	7.33	7.11	7.3	7.17	6.94

Source: Audit analysis of YC records

Remarks:

- (a) *YC has not set a target on the level of employer satisfaction.*
- (b) *The Survey of Employers' Views on YC graduates was conducted one year after their graduation. Therefore, the employer satisfaction reported in any particular year of PQAR covers employers of graduates in the previous year.*
- (c) *The level of employer satisfaction was collected from the annual Survey of Employers' Views on YC graduates. There were 27 full-time programmes and 14 part-time day programmes (i.e. 41 programmes in total) offered every year from 2015/16 to 2019/20. However, for some programmes, there were no employers covered in the survey. Therefore, the number of programmes with level of employer satisfaction indicators was different in each year and was less than 41.*

**Examples of inconsistency in classification of
valuable and attractive stores
(Financial years 2017-18 to 2018-19)**

Inventory item	Classified as valuable and attractive stores		Not classified as valuable and attractive stores		Total no. of campuses having the inventory item
	No. of campuses	Original unit cost (\$'000)	No. of campuses	Original unit cost (\$'000)	
Projector	1	2.7 to 41.5	7	2.6 to 85.4	8
Hair salon nano steamer	1	72.0	1	72.0	2
Camera	4	2.0 to 26.5	4	2.3 to 34.9	8
Notebook computer	3	5.2 to 27.2	5	3.7 to 28.1	8

Source: Audit analysis of YC records

Acronyms and abbreviations

Audit	Audit Commission
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
DVB	Diploma of Vocational Baccalaureate
DVE	Diploma of Vocational Education
ED	Executive Director
E&L Scheme	Earn and Learn Scheme
HKCAAVQ	Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications
PIs	Performance indicators
PQAR	Programme Quality Analysis Report
Pro-Act	Pro-Act Training and Development Centres
S3-S5	Secondary 3 to 5
S6	Secondary 6
VTC	Vocational Training Council
WLA	Workplace Learning and Assessment
YC	Youth College