



Hong Kong Benchmarks for Career and Life Development Toolkit

**Supporting students to plan for continuous
self-improvement in an ever-changing world**

Promising Practice

Implemented by: CLAP@JC School Team (at the Education University of Hong Kong)

Where: Hong Kong, Special Administrative Region, China

Where: Started in 2020 and extended in 2025.

Summary: The Hong Kong Benchmarks for Career and Life Development (HKBM) has been developed by CLAP@JC, funded and co-created by the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust. It supports schools in evolving career development benchmarks which help their young people to establish clearer life directions to further/higher education and work transitions.

Overview

The Hong Kong Benchmarks for Career and Life Development (HKBM) comprises benchmarks for schools to self-evaluate their career and life development (CLD) provisions for young people. It was developed, piloted and implemented between 2020-2025 with 145 secondary schools by the Education University of Hong Kong, a UNEVOC Centre, under the CLAP@JC Project, funded and initiated by The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust (HKJC).

Key features include:

- A 10-benchmark framework for schools to assess and improve their CLD implementation.
- Adaptable resources for school-based application (including resources for teachers).
- Examples of successful application and what works.

The Benchmarks were created with international experts to support young people to develop the essential knowledge, confidence, skills that young people need to make well-informed choices and personal plans in transitioning smoothly into their future.¹ The Education University of Hong Kong (EdUHK) entered a two-year extension of the CLAP@JC project in September 2025 with The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust to further mainstream the HKBM framework.

Description

The Hong Kong Benchmarks for Career and Life Development toolkit is an online platform for educators and schools wishing to implement the framework. It provides a detailed description of each Benchmark with guidance on what high performance 'looks like' at school level. Guidance includes learning worksheets, self-reflection questions and examples which teachers and schools can examine and follow.

The 10 Benchmarks

Of the 10 benchmarks, two are **core**, four are **student-focused** and four are to engender an **enabling environment**. The **core** benchmarks are:

1. A Stable and Visible Career and Life Development Policy
2. Professional Competencies and Leadership

The **student-focused** benchmarks are:

3. Learning from Multiple Pathways Information
4. Address the Needs of Each Student
5. Student Engagement and Co-creation
6. Personal Guidance for Developing Career Roadmaps

The **enabling environment** benchmarks are:

7. Linking Curriculum Learning to Career and Life Development
8. Meaningful Encounters with the Workplace
9. Meaningful Encounters with Further and Higher Education
10. Parent Engagement and Support



Figure 1. Hong Kong Framework for Career and Life Development²

The Benchmark Resource Packs

There are two sets of benchmark resources, one for schools and one for educators and implementers. Resources were developed to align with international standards and are based on local piloting within schools, with parents and with employers.

School Resources

For each Benchmark, there is a description of:

- What 'good' looks like and why it matters
- Top tips for schools
- Working with partners
- Insights gained from the pilot schools

For example, for Benchmark 3 ('Learning from Multiple Pathways Information'), **what 'good' looks like** is: *Students are informed of sources of good quality information about multiple pathways including all academic, informal, and vocational, professional education and training pathways with a full spectrum from study, leisure and career options of both paid and unpaid work³.*

For Benchmark 3, these are:

- Promote students' exposure to up-to-date and a full spectrum of multiple pathways information.
- Provide training for students to learn how to find, process and analyze the up-to-date information about multiple pathways to make informed choices.
- Encourage students to identify at least three possible pathways to pursue after graduation to widen their possibilities and potential.
- Cultivate students' exploratory mindset for seeking information and advice to inform decisions about further learning and/or work.

¹ See Holman, John and Stephen YW Yip, 2020. Developing Benchmarks for Career and Life Development in the UK and Hong Kong, CLAP for Youth@JC Phase II Position Paper, p1, (<https://clap.hk/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/20201218-Position-Paper.pdf>)

² As depicted, see: <https://clap.hk/for-schools/hkbm/about-hkbm/>

³ See Benchmark 3

The guidance goes on to describe the benefits of these outcomes with tips on how to plan, implement and evaluate a suitable programme. There is guidance on which partners schools should engage with and how to evaluate if the Benchmark is achieved.

Educator Resource Packs

Educator Resource Packs are available for Benchmarks 3-10 comprising a more detailed set of resources. For Benchmark 3, this includes:

- Useful tips on the ways to disseminate study/career information.
- Guidance sheets on searching and analysing information.
- Worksheets for coaching students to devise three possible pathways.
- Strategies to cultivate students' exploratory mindset in making well-informed decisions regarding future learning and career paths.

Each benchmark has different resources tailored to its aim and expected outcomes.

Objectives

The HKBM was developed to support schools and educators through a structured framework of objectives which are a set of desired learning and social outcomes for young people. Each is underpinned by a package of resources for schools and educators. An overarching objective is to equalize the provision of CLD education across all Hong Kong schools to prepare young people for the transition from school into vocational, further and higher education and/or employment pathways. The benchmarks and their underpinning resources provide a reference point for schools and insights into how to continuously improve their CLD provision to their students. The resources are freely available online.

Outcomes and impact

The expected impact of the HKBM is for young people to have the personal, social and educational resources to take the next steps in their lives beyond secondary school. The purpose of the benchmarks is to equip schools to provide those resources to their students in a holistic way as part of their educational experience. The target outcomes across the benchmarks describe what schools should provide and what students should access.

Table 1. Target outcomes across the benchmarks

Benchmark	Expected outcome
3	Students are informed of sources of good quality information about multiple pathways including all academic, informal, and vocational, professional education and training (VPET) pathways with a full spectrum from study, leisure and career options of both paid and unpaid work.
4	Career and life development programmes should be tailored based on the needs of each and every student, to address diversity and equality throughout.

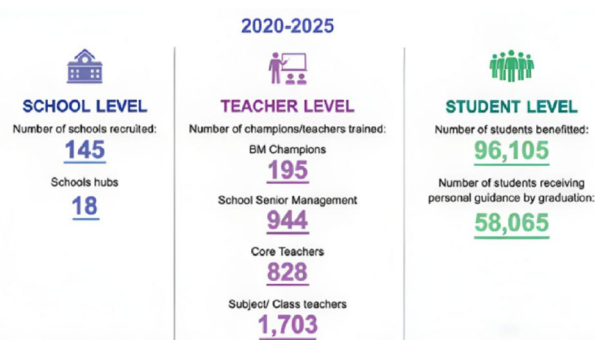
Benchmark	Expected outcome
5	Students should be the owner of his/her career and life development. Schools should engage and facilitate students to be CLD activity co-creators as well as their own career path creators.
6	Every student should receive personal guidance for identifying life goals, making their career roadmaps, whenever significant education or career choices are being made.
7	All teachers should link curriculum learning with career and life development. Subject teachers should highlight the relevance of the subjects for a wide range of future career and life pursuits.
8	School provides students with opportunities of workplace learning experiences at least twice (...) in their senior forms that allow them to gain understanding of the workplace and their degree of fit in different work environments.
9	Students should understand the full range of progression opportunities available to them, including both local and overseas academic and vocational pathways, in higher education, Vocational and Professional Education and Training (VPET) institutes and further education opportunities.
10	Schools should engage parents through various forms of formal and informal interaction, so that parents have access to good quality multiple pathways information and become positive agents and collaborative partners in providing support to their children's career and life development.

*<http://clap.hkbmtoolkit.hk>

Insights

145 schools participated in the pilot initiative (one-third of schools). Other participation figures are given below:

Figure 2. Participating schools, educators and students in HKBM 2020-2025⁴



The toolkit has been continuously evaluated. Results,⁵ include:

- Schools improved in achieving the benchmarks compared to a baseline score.
- 100% of schools agreed their 'knowledge management, engagement with school senior management, connections with external parties for career and life development' improved.

⁴ See p.5, <http://clap.hkbmtoolkit.hk/ebook/en/>

⁵ CLAP@JC (Schools) Team, The Education University of Hong Kong 2024a and 2024b

- 83% of teachers agreed that HKBM reduces workload by promoting a more efficient approach to career and life development.
- 100% of schools agreed the benchmarks were effective in enhancing school-based CLD education.

In evaluating impact on students, survey results showed career readiness increased. Close to 90% of students had identified their own career paths and career uncertainty dropped by 50%. Career preparedness was assessed within three categories: (1) skills and competence needed for the world of work; (2) confidence to lead their own path to the world of work; and (3) ability and attitude to working with others.⁶ Students at schools participating in the HKBM programme also outperformed their non-participant counterparts in career readiness measures.⁷

Teacher feedback: By fully embracing the HKBM, we've elevated student engagement, delivered tailored guidance, and forged impactful and meaningful workplace encounters. This holistic approach empowers our students to navigate their futures with unwavering confidence and purpose.⁸

⁶ Derived from the definition of Dodd et al., 2022 and Hanson et al., 2021.

⁷ See Yip, Wu and Chun. 2024

⁸ See p.43 (<http://clap.hkbmtoolkit.hk/ebook/en/>) in Testimonials of Schools: A Milestone Towards Ongoing Career and Life Development Transformation

Conclusions and next steps

A great deal of initial work went into the development of the Hong Kong Benchmarks for Career and Life Development. International experience provided useful lessons and ensured it aligned with existing standards. The long pilot period allowed a gradual scale-up and constant and continuous iteration of the resources which are available to schools and educators. Using an online platform has made materials more accessible and easier to update as has the creation of HKBM hubs to collect individual school experiences and feedback. Maintaining strong links has enabled quantitative data and methods to be designed to measure the impact of the framework on schools and students. The continuous input, feedback and review has encouraged user-engagement and a feeling of school ownership of the frameworks, Benchmarks and resources.

Learn more

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To learn more about the Hong Kong Benchmarks for Career and Life Development Toolkit, visit: <https://clap.hk/for-schools/hkbm/about-hkbm>

- For the toolkit for schools and educators, see: <http://clap.hkbmtoolkit.hk>
- For a video on the project, see: <https://clap.hk/for-schools/hkbm/about-hkbm/> or <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kLDZDgfNWGE&t=81s>

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