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Second chance for students

Education | Trista Yeung May 23, 2017



To meet the surging demand of Hong Kong students studying abroad, educational consultant Arch Education has launched Hong Kong's first International Foundation Programme partnering with the University of London.

The one-year program, which is also offered worldwide, gives a second chance to students who have marginally missed their IB, HKDSE or A-level requirements for top British universities.

Jennifer Ma, founder and director of Arch Education, explained that most British universities accept successful completion of the IFP as meeting their entry criteria for certain courses and would consider the applications of students who have this qualification.

"Since it was launched globally in 2013, 57 percent of 293 students progressed to the University of London International Programmes, while 43 percent progressed to complete undergraduate degrees at other universities in the UK, including the London School of Economics and Political Science, King's College London, and Durham University," Ma said.

She said the program equips high-school graduates with the skills and knowledge required for undergraduate study with a structured learning experience guided by top tutors from the University of London.

The IFP curriculum comprises one core module in mathematics and statistics, and three optional ones, including economics; international relations; politics; social psychology; sociology and pure mathematics.

Additional new courses will be introduced in 2018, including accounting and finance; business and management; computing; law; and statistics.

"This program is special because it is one of the world's top foundation programs on offer," Ma said.

"This means students can attend a high-quality course in the convenience of their hometown, and at a more economical fee rate. At the same time, they can boost their chances of getting into the top universities in the UK, as well as in other countries."

Students in the past had successfully applied to universities in the United States, Canada and Australia, with one in particular getting into the Ivy League institution Columbia University.

"Many international students have found that the year-long foundation program significantly improves their chances for success at university, whether in the UK or another country," Ma said. "Our vision has always been to connect Hong Kong students to a bright future. We are confident that the program provides an excellent alternative to certain students and we guarantee admission to the first year of an undergraduate program or a full refund of the course fees."

Learning materials and resources are developed by academics from the University of London. A virtual learning environment will be provided, containing interactive resources, discussion forums and news alerts. Minimum class size is 20 students per class, which allows more interactions with the tutors.

The program is accepting applications before December 31 from students who are aged 17 or over and have passed a minimum of four separate subjects at General Certificate of Secondary Education or General Certificate of Education O level with grades A-C or the equivalent, as well as the ability to demonstrate fluency in academic English with qualifications such as International English Language Testing System at 6.5 overall.

Students who want to find a place in a university in Britain should prepare themselves well.

"We advise students to do a lot of research into which university and which course would be best for them. There is a large variety of universities and courses to choose from, with different offerings including one-year study abroad, or adding a language component," Ma said "Also, it is important for them to enhance their language skills, whether they are pursuing sciences or humanities, as students are often required to write a thesis at university level."