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Academics split on migrant criteria

By Patsy Moy

ACADEMICS differ as to whether family reunion should be give top marks in China's planned points system to streamline the issuance of one-way permits.

Dr Fernando Cheung Chiu-hung, a lecturer of City University of Hong Kong's division of social studies, said that based on humanitarian considerations, priority should be given to family reunions.

"But before determining which group of applicants is given priority, the Hong

Kong government must carry out a thorough study on the availability of education and other social services in Hong Kong to ensure there are enough resources for the new immigrants," Dr Cheung said.

He also agreed that of the daily quota of 150 new immigrants to enter into Hong Kong, some could be given to professionals from China, whom he believed, could benefit Hong Kong.

But the director of Hong Kong University of Science and Technology's Centre

for Economic Development, Dr Francis Lui Ting-ming, said at least half the quota should be given to professionals, with the rest family reunions.

"From the economic point of view, those professional people who carry the knowledge and technology along could benefit our society."

Dr Lui warned that even if all the 30,000 children from China were granted one-way permits, a queue would still remain if approval on reunion grounds was made too easy.