

# Academic body to recruit overseas

By C.K. LAU

A planning committee to be formed to consider the details of establishing a local degree validation body is likely to be chaired by an overseas member.

Local academics also believe that the Hongkong Council for Academic Awards (HKCAA) might also be headed by an overseas member in its initial years.

The Government yesterday announced that it had accepted in principle the need for a local degree validation body, tentatively known as the HKCAA.

A press release said the planning committee would comprise local and overseas academics and local lay members, but no names were mentioned.

The committee will report to the Government within nine months of its establish-

ment.

Academics contacted yesterday said they believed the planning committee would be headed by an overseas member because few local academics had the necessary experience.

A university lecturer said some local academics had experience as members of validation teams sent here by the United Kingdom's Council for National Academic Awards to assess degree proposals.

Others might have some knowledge of degree validation through their membership on the University and Polytechnic Grants Committee, which advised the Government on the funding of universities and polytechnics.

However, their number was not large.

Since the HKCAA would have to win international recognition, it would probably be

chaired by a high-powered overseas member during its early years, said another academic.

Yesterday's Government release said the HKCAA planning committee would consider how full local validation of degrees awarded by non-university educational institutions might best be arranged and managed.

Quoting a Government spokesman, the release explained that degree course proposals from the Hongkong Polytechnic are now forwarded to the UPGC which determines whether the CNAAC should be asked to assess the proposals.

"If the assessment is favourable and if the UPGC decides to support a particular degree course proposal, the Government will submit the proposal to the Executive Council for advice," he said.

"Degree course proposals

approved by the Governor-in-Council have to be re-validated after six years."

Besides the two existing universities and the Hongkong Polytechnic, the City Polytechnic and Baptist College are expected to offer degree courses in the 1986-87 academic year.

The spokesman said that the number of degree course proposals from non-university higher education institutions requiring validation and the subsequent demand for revalidation would increase significantly.

It would therefore be difficult to ask the CNAAC, an overseas body, to devote a substantial part of its resources solely to the validation and revalidation of degree courses in Hongkong.

But a local validation body established for the purpose can be called upon, as of right, to do the job, he said.