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## \$120m in aid for <sup>12.9</sup> schools' research

THE five tertiary schools will get \$120 million over the next three years to enable them to contract out research work to industry.

The grant was announced by Financial Secretary Piers Jacobs who said the Government had earmarked the money to help the schools develop their research capabilities.

He told a graduation ceremony at Shue Yan College that research and development was probably the most important area of collaboration between industry and the tertiary bodies.

"If Hongkong is to move away from its traditional reliance on labour intensive assembly work, manufacturers will have to devote a greater proportion of their efforts and resources to product innovation and development, as well as research into processes to increase efficiency and output," he said.

"Quality assurance will also have a significant part to play."

Mr Jacobs said the Government played an important role in promoting interaction between industry and the tertiary institutions.

"One positive step is already being taken by the Industry Department through the introduction of an 'industrial extension service scheme,'" he said.

Officers of the Industry Department visit industrialists to promote the institutes' services and the opportunities for contract research, he said.

Mr Jacobs said the Industry Development Board which he chaired was also aware of the potential for mobilising talent to help industry to develop, and had commissioned a number of research projects.

One of the most recent was a joint undertaking by the University of Hongkong and the Chinese University to develop hardware and software for local industry's use in computer-aided design and manufacture, he said.

Mr Jacobs said he expected industry to move away from labour intensive methods into those involving higher levels of technology and fewer unskilled workers.

"The key to the transition will be the ready availability of knowledge and an adequate supply of highly trained manpower," he said.