

Annual Report



For the period from 1 January 2021
to 31 December 2021



HONG KONG
ACADEMY of LAW
香港法律專業學會



ANNUAL REPORT

1 January 2021 to 31 December 2021

AIMS

Hong Kong Academy of Law Limited (“Academy”) was incorporated on 2 September 2008 as a company limited by guarantee and its charitable status was confirmed by the Inland Revenue Department shortly after its incorporation.

The Academy is promoted by The Law Society of Hong Kong (“Society”) and is dedicated to reaching out and promoting law through education and training to the Society Members and to the local and international communities.

The main aims of the Academy are:

- (i) to raise public awareness of the rule of law and other core values of the legal profession;
- (ii) to enhance public interest in the learning of law and to promote law as a “public profession”;
- (iii) to nurture social awareness of the connection between law and other community development; and
- (iv) to provide pathway guidance to law students and quality development programmes for the profession.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Article 37 of the Articles of Association of the Academy provides that the management of the Academy and its funds and properties is vested in the Board.



Incumbent Directors of the Academy are: (first row from left to right) Ms. Melissa K. Pang, Chairperson; Mr. Brian W. Gilchrist (resigned in August 2021); Mr. Denis G. Brock (resigned in August 2021); Mr. C. M. Chan; (second row from left to right) Mr. Pierre T. H. Chan (resigned in August 2021); Ms. Heidi K. P. Chu; Mr. Warren P. Ganesh; Ms. Doreen Y. F. Kong (joined in October 2021); (third row from left to right) Mr. Roden M. L. Tong; Ms. Careen H. Y. Wong and Mr. Christopher K. K. Yu (joined in August 2021)

COURSES CONDUCTED

In fulfillment of its aims, the Academy conducted 259 Continuing Professional Development (“CPD”) and Risk Management Education (“RME”) courses during the year which were presented by 92 presenters and attended by 25,646 participants.

The courses may be broken down into the following categories:

- (i) Courses on new or amended legislation and legal developments included the following: *Mainland Judgements in Matrimonial and Family Cases (Reciprocal Recognition and Enforcement) Bill 2021*; Mutual recognition of and assistance to insolvency proceedings between the courts of the Mainland and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region ("HKSAR"); Important Amendments to *the Solicitors (Professional Indemnity) Rules*; New Family Court Procedures since 1 September 2021 under *Practice Direction SL 10.4*;
- (ii) Courses on updated existing law and practice included the following: Update on Personal Injuries Claims; Professional Practice 2021; COVID-19: the Doctrine of Frustration and the Operation of Force Majeure in Hong Kong; Update on Conveyancing Cases 2021; Update on Contract Cases 2021; Property Law Cases 2021; Anti-Money Laundering (“AML”) and Counter Terrorist Financing Update; AML Update; Negligence 2021; Update on Competition Law; Update on the Legal Aid Schemes.
- (iii) Apart from providing courses on new legislation and updates on existing law and practice, the Academy provided courses covering different areas of practice to empower practitioners to maintain their competitive edge in legal practice and provide them with the opportunities for networking, exchange of experiences with local and foreign professionals, and develop new skills and practice areas. The areas covered by the courses included: legal tech, company and commercial law, practice management, litigation, wills and probate, corporate finance, professional ethics, building and property management, AML, lawyering skills, tort, arbitration, mediation, mental health, insolvency, Chinese law, anti-discrimination law, conveyancing and risk management.

Please click [here](#) for details of the presenters and the courses.

Some of the highlights are:

Family Law

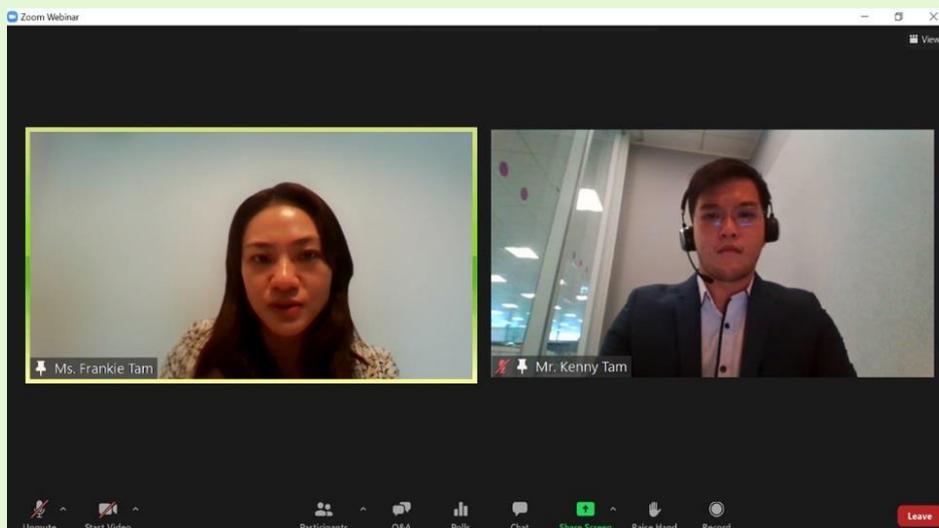
The new *Practice Direction SL10.4 (Guidance Note on Case Management and Time Tabling in Children and Ancillary Relief Proceedings)* (“PDSL10.4”) introduced the Family Court’s new time tabling scheme, which applies to all new cases involving children proceedings and ancillary proceedings filed on or after 1 September 2021. The purpose is to enhance effective case management and timetabling. The Academy conducted a seminar on 26 October to introduce practitioners to the new practice and procedure under *PDSL10.4*. The seminar attracted over 420 participants.



Mr. Dennis Chi Kuen Ho, Chairman of the Family Law Committee of the Society (left) and His Honour Judge C.K. Chan, Principal Family Court Judge (right) delivered the seminar “New Family Court Procedure since 1 September 2021 under PDSL 10.4” on 26 October.

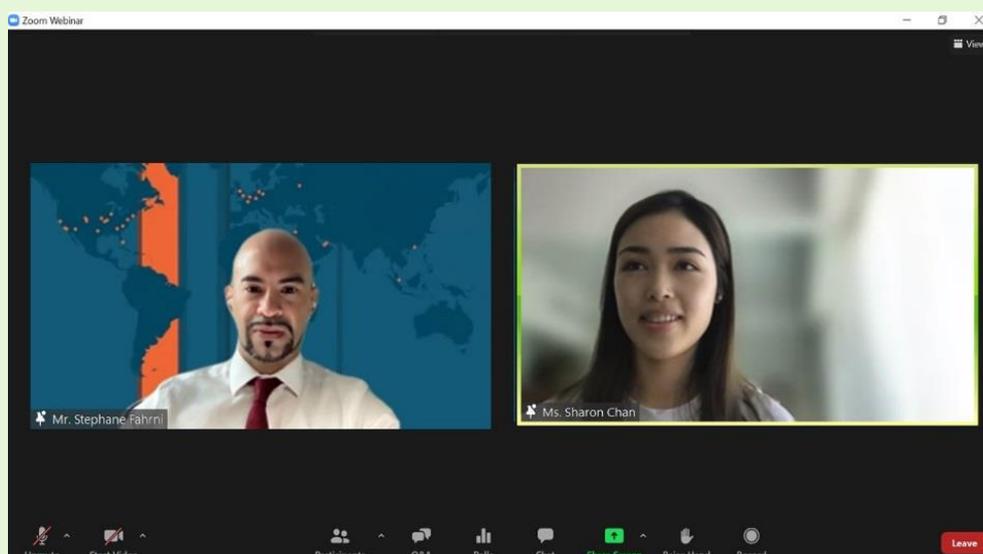
Data Security Law and Personal Data Protection Law

The Data Security Law and the Personal Information Protection Law of the People’s Republic of China (“PRC”) came into effect on 1 September and 1 November 2021 respectively. The Academy conducted a seminar on “How will the New PRC Data Laws Affect You?” on 23 November. The seminar discussed the data protection and cybersecurity regime in the PRC in the light of the new laws, the impacts of the new laws on organisations, and the practical steps for organisations to implement the new laws. Over 300 participants attended the seminar.



Ms. Frankie Tam, Of Counsel, Commercial & TMT, Eversheds Sutherland (left) and Mr. Kenny Tam, Associate of Commercial & TMT, Eversheds Sutherland (right) presented the seminar “How will the New PRC Data Laws Affect You?” on 23 November.

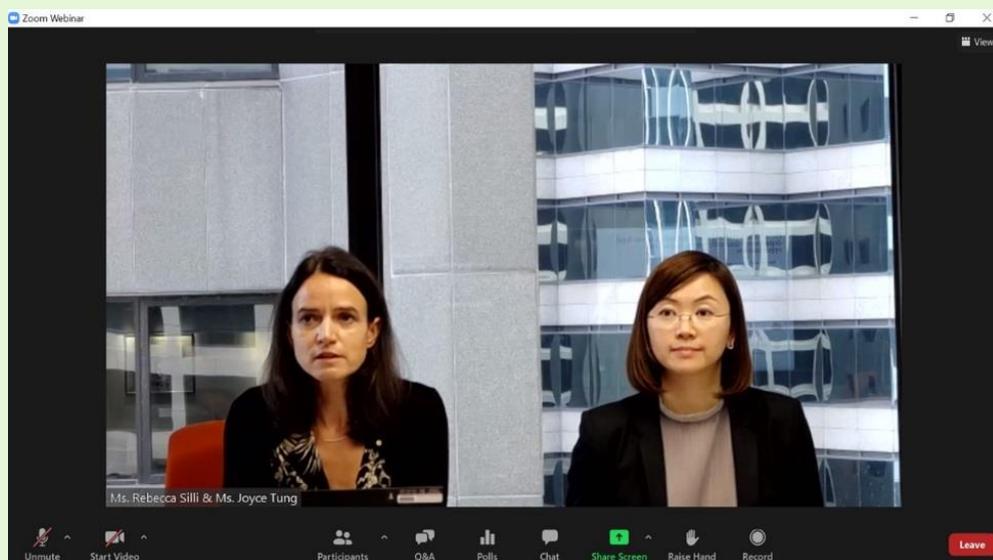
The Academy conducted a seminar on “Data Protection and Direct Marketing” on 20 October. The seminar introduced the six data protection principles and discussed how these principles apply in direct marketing and the relevant rules governing direct marketing including the *Unsolicited Electronic Messages Ordinance Cap. 593*. The seminar also discussed the data and personal information collected by tracking technology on websites and from social media. The seminar attracted over 190 participants.



Mr. Stephane Fahrni, Legal and Regulatory Counsel Asia & EMEA of Bryan Cave Leighton Paisner LLP (Singapore) (left) and Ms. Sharon Chan, Associate of Bryan Cave Leighton Paisner LLP (Hong Kong) (right) presented the seminar “Data Protection and Direct Marketing” on 20 October.

Legal Tech

To enable practitioners to capitalise on the latest developments in legal technology, the Academy conducted numerous seminars covering productization of legal services, robotics process automation, artificial intelligence in the legal sector, big data in e-discovery and document review, InsurTech, blockchain, digital forensics in intellectual property theft investigations, regulations of cryptocurrencies and non-fungible tokens, bitcoin and blockchain for lawyers, technology support for legal operations, new cyber ID in the expanding digital market and managing data breach. Over 3,060 participants attended these seminars.



Ms. Rebecca Silli and Ms. Joyce Tung, Partners of Tiang & Partners, presented the seminar “Technology Support for Legal Operations – How Technology can Support Legal Operations for In-house Teams (Including Automation Tools)” on 30 September.

Mediation

Mediation has become one of the primary means of alternative dispute resolution in Hong Kong with *Practice Direction 31* coming into effect on 1 January 2010.

The Academy and the Mediation Committee of the Society conducted 6 sharing sessions on mediation. Topics discussed included *UN Convention on Mediation*, victim-offender mediation, how to choose the best mediator for the job, the impact of innovative technologies and contemporary practices in healthcare on medical law, shared decision-making and mediation, how to effectively support your client in an online/hybrid mediation process, and how much time to allocate for a mediation. Over 1030 participants attended these sharing sessions.



Dr. Wendy Lui, Assistant Professor, Department of Law and Business of Hong Kong Shue Yan University (left) and Mr. Iu Ting Kwok, Consultant, Kwok of Ng & Chan (right) delivered the sharing session “Mediation Sharing Session on Victim Offender Mediation” on 27 July.

AML

The Society and the Academy held two seminars on AML jointly with the Narcotics Division, Security Bureau of the HKSAR Government on 22 June and 4 November. The seminars briefed practitioners on the major provisions of the *Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorist Financing Ordinance Cap.615*, the statutory client due diligence and record keeping requirements when practitioners are engaged in specified transactions, and the statutory obligations on suspicious transaction reporting. The seminars also provided practitioners with an overview of the latest developments in international and domestic AML and counter-terrorist financing. 649 participants attended the seminars.



Mr. Michael Lintern-Smith, Chairman of the AML Committee of the Society (left) and Mr. Alan Linning, Member of the AML Committee of the Society (right) delivered the “AML Seminar for Lawyers” on 22 June.

Apart from a regular RME elective on AML conducted by the Academy under the *RME Programme* of the Society, the accredited RME course providers of the Society delivered another four RME electives for practitioners on AML for the Academy under the Society’s RME Provider Accreditation Scheme. 550 participants attended these electives.

Legal Aid

On 29 September, the Academy conducted a seminar on “Update on the Legal Aid Schemes” to provide practitioners with general information on application and eligibility for legal aid, the scope of service of the Legal Aid Department and an update on the *Ordinary Legal Aid Scheme* and the *Supplementary Legal Aid Scheme*. The seminar also highlighted the role of assigned lawyers and the tips on handling assigned out legal aid cases. The seminar attracted over 310 participants.



Mrs. Christina Hadiwibawa, Assistant Principal Legal Aid Counsel, Legal and Management Support Division, Legal Aid Department of the HKSAR Government, presented the seminar "Update on the Legal Aid Schemes" on 29 September.

Pathway Guidance

A sharing session with law students working as interns in law firms was conducted on 13 July. A panel of speakers from private practice, the Judiciary, the Department of Justice ("DoJ") and the commercial sector shared their insights in the various career options open to law students. 67 interns and law firm staff participated in the sharing session.



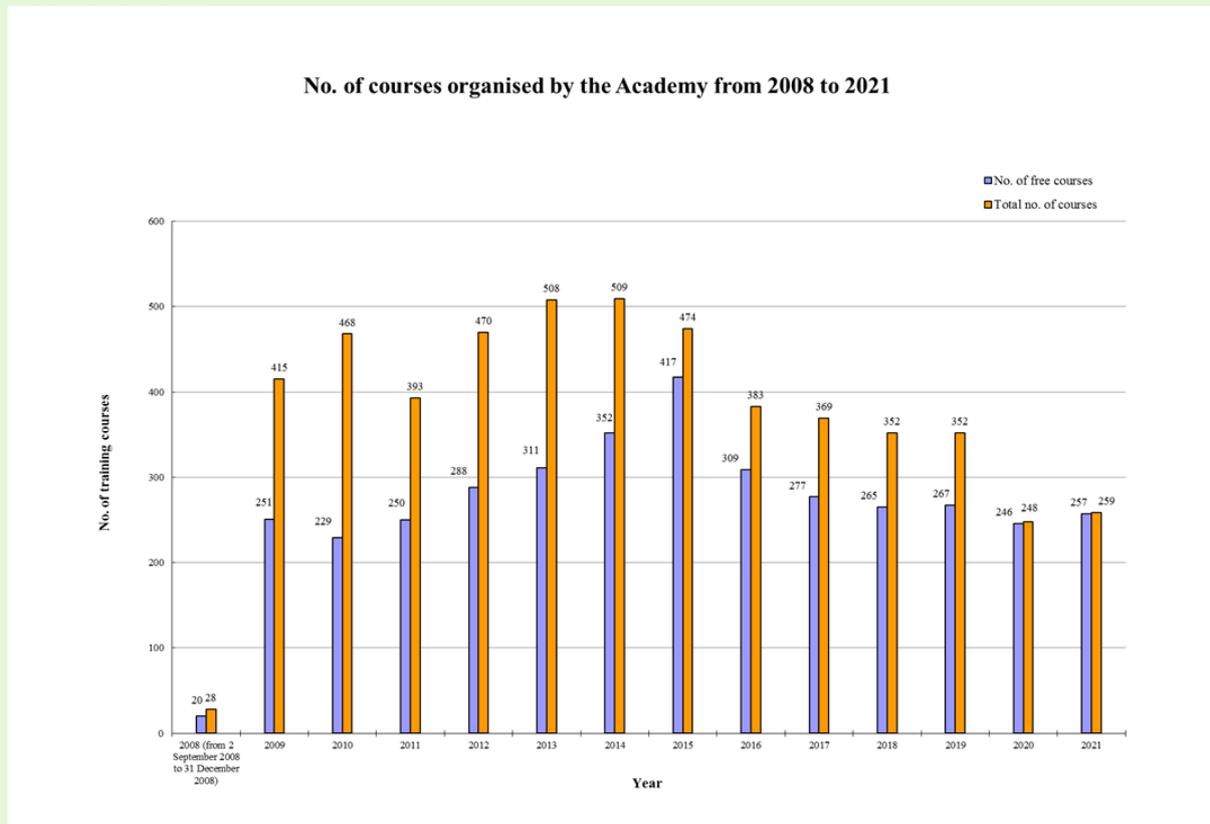
Mr. Amirali B. Nasir, Vice-President of the Society (first from left), Mr. Lung Gwun Ting, Bryan, Adjudicator, Small Claims Tribunal (second from left), Mr. Wesley Wong, SC, JP, Solicitor General, Constitutional and Policy Affairs Division, DoJ (second from right) and Ms. Serina Chan, Legal Counsel, Insurance Authority (first from right) shared their experiences as a practitioner in their respective fields in the “Sharing Session with Law Firm Interns” on 13 July.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and to reduce the risk of transmission, the majority of the CPD and RME on-site courses were suspended and were conducted via webinars. In addition, the Council of the Society resolved to waive the registration fees of all general CPD courses as part of the relief measures for the COVID-19 pandemic to alleviate the financial burden of legal practitioners arising from the economic downturn caused by the pandemic.

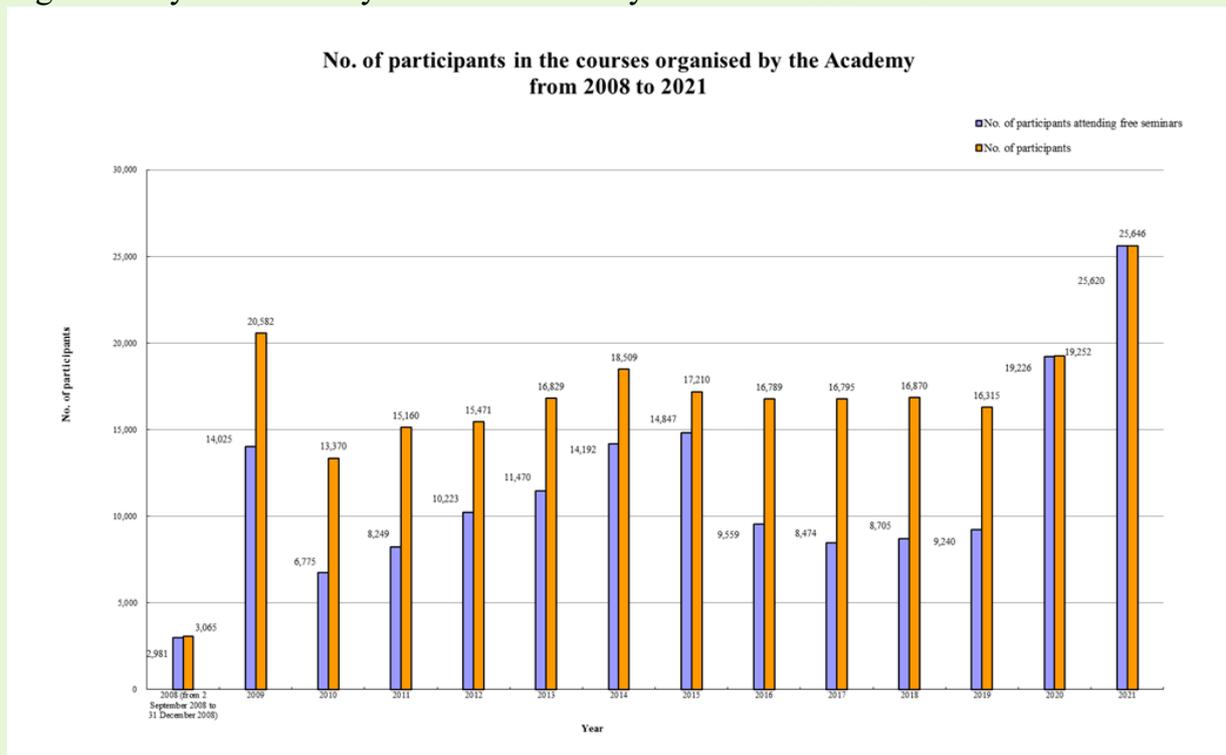
STATISTICS

RME electives under the *RME Programme* have since 1 November 2008 been offered free of charge to those participants who have to fulfil their RME obligations in the relevant RME practice year and who have not attended any other RME electives during that year. Free core courses have also been offered by the Academy to all trainee solicitors since 1 November 2009. With effect from 1 November 2014, to mark the 10th Anniversary of the *RME Programme*, the Principals’ Core Courses, Non-Principals’ Core Courses, Registered Foreign Lawyers’ Core Courses and the Compulsory First Elective Courses for Trainee Solicitors are also offered free of charge. Accordingly, all courses within the *RME Programme* are free.

The total number of courses and free courses in each of the 14 years from 2008 to 2021 are as follows:



The total number of participants and the number of participants attending free courses organized by the Academy in each of the 14 years from 2008 to 2021 are as follow:



SPONSORSHIPS, DONATIONS, SCHOLARSHIPS AND BURSARIES

In fulfilment of its aim of promoting the learning of law, the Academy made available the following:

- (i) The Peter Alan Lee Vine Memorial Scholarship;
- (ii) Bursaries;
- (iii) Sponsorships for attending local and international conferences.

Details of the applications and the eligibility criteria for applying for sponsorships, scholarships and bursaries are posted on the website of the Academy.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS AND LOOKING FORWARD

In order to attract reputable international legal and dispute resolution services bodies to set up offices and/or provide services in Hong Kong as well as to consolidate and enhance Hong Kong's status as an international centre for legal, deal-making and dispute resolution services in the Asia-Pacific region, the HKSAR Government established the Hong Kong Legal Hub ("Legal Hub") which was officially opened in November 2020.

The Legal Hub comprises part of the West Wing of the former Central Government Offices ("CGO"), the former French Mission Building, part of Two Exchange Square, and offices of DoJ which are housed in the Main, East and part of the West Wing of the CGO.

The Legal Hub creates a favourable environment and acts as a cradle for law-related organisations ("LROs") to develop their services.

The Academy is proud to be one of the 23 LROs situated in the Legal Hub.

Since moving into the Legal Hub in March, the Academy has been able to utilize its strategic position to advance its aims, in particular, the promotion of law through education and training for the benefit of the local and international communities.

The facilities provided by the Legal Hub together with the advancement of technology have made it cost-effective for the Academy to maintain the quality of services whilst expanding the number and variety of courses offered. Indeed, notwithstanding the pandemic, the Academy was able to increase the number of courses conducted by over 4% and the number of participants by over 33% during the year.

Other LROs situated in the Legal Hub include the Asian Academy of International Law Limited, the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators (East Asia Branch), the China International Economic and Trade Arbitration Commission Hong Kong Arbitration Center, the China Maritime Arbitration Commission Hong Kong Arbitration Center, the DOJ Project Office for Collaboration with UNCITRAL, eBRAM International Online Dispute Resolution Centre Limited, the Financial Dispute Resolution Centre, the Global Chinese Speaking Lawyers' Association Limited, the Hague Conference on Private International Law Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, the Hong Kong Advocacy Training Council Limited, the Hong Kong Institute of Arbitrators, the Hong Kong International Arbitration Centre, the Hong Kong Maritime Arbitration Group, the Hong Kong Mediation Accreditation Association Limited, the Hong Kong Mediation Centre Limited, the Hong Kong Society of Notaries, the International Advocacy Training Council Limited, the Mainland – Hong Kong Joint Mediation Centre, the Secretariat of the International Court of Arbitration of the International Chamber of Commerce Asia Office, the Legal Education Fund Limited and the Vis East Moot Foundation Limited.

The concentration of a vast pool of legal and dispute resolution talents creates opportunities for exchange of skills and know-how, sharing of facilities and collaboration on matters of common interests. The Academy was able to benefit from such synergy to enhance and improve its services.

In addition, the Academy is able to gain publicity and exposure through the Legal Hub website to promote and publicize its work and aims.

Going forward and in alignment with the policy objectives and visions of the Society, the Academy strives to provide relevant and updated courses to the solicitors' profession and the wider community, to maintain cost-effectiveness in the provision of courses whilst ensuring their quality, to capitalize on the use of technology in the development and delivery of the courses, to ensure a safe environment for the delivery of courses in the light of the prevailing public health condition, to prioritize and devote resources to updating the legal community and equipping them to meet the changing developments in the legal landscape, in particular, in relation to the increased application of legal tech to legal practice, the opportunities in the Belt and Road Initiative and the Greater Bay Area and the necessity to strengthen the community's understanding and compliance with the rule of law.