

Should the government have any role in choosing a university council chairman?

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Samantha Mak, 12, Tak Nga Secondary School

Yes, they should! Here's why:

First, the government can fund the additional administrative costs associated with such an important appointment.

Second, while the university is going through many changes, the government can financially support the institution, which could prove to be crucial.

So I believe the government should have a role in choosing a university council chairman.



Jessica Liang, 14, Tak Nga Secondary School

Yes, the government should supervise the choosing of a university council chairman. As most of the universities in Hong Kong are funded by the government, it has the right to have a say.

Besides, choosing an outstanding person as chairman will always be good for the future development of the university.

Not only does the government have the right to choose the chairman, but it also has the responsibility to ensure that person is qualified and responsible enough.



Naz Iraj, 17, St Margaret's Girls' College

I don't think the government should have any role in choosing a university council chairman. I think it's best if people from within the university are responsible for it, as they are familiar with the environment and the university's needs. This would be a better way to select the most suitable candidate to become the university's chairman.

Besides, the government has other important issues to think about rather than worrying about who the next university council chairman is going to be.



Jon Chan, 15, Pui Kiu College

I strongly believe the government should play a role in choosing a university council chairman. This right should be retained on the basis that it does not allow the government to have absolute control over the choice.

Since the university is funded by the government, there's a responsibility to ensure taxpayers' money is well spent.

The government also has the duty to ensure the university remains independent.

Of course, these two responsibilities often come into conflict. This is why the government should treat the election in an unbiased way, to balance the interests of different stakeholders.

The current system of direct appointment is causing lots of controversy, so I think it needs to change.

Of course, there's no perfect solution, but the government could consider a compromise, where it retains the right to nominate an existing member of the university's council to stand for election for the chairman's post.



Hazel Book Tsz-yiu, 14, Tak Nga Secondary School

The government shouldn't have any role in choosing the university council chairman. This is an election in a university, and most of the universities are not under the government. So the government doesn't have the right to choose the council chairman of a university.

A university is an educational institution which should be politically neutral. In a university, students learn different subjects with no political elements involved. That is why the council is generally formed by people from different fields in society. The involvement of the government brings in political opinions to the council that would interfere with university policies.



When "Talking Points" returns in January, we'll discuss: How can Hong Kong change to be a better city in 2016? We are now accepting answers from readers for this new topic. To take part, email your answer with your name, age and school, along with a nice, clear selfie (make sure it's not blurry), to yp@scmp.com by Monday lunchtime next week.