

Mistakes void much of public survey on cultural district

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Mistakes made by pollsters gauging public opinion on the West Kowloon Cultural District have led to the dumping of much of the survey results, it was revealed last night.

A step that ensured a random sampling of interviewees was skipped in the poll, carried out for the government by Polytechnic University's public policy research institute.

The Home Affairs Bureau said last night it had received a complaint from a member of the public about the way the poll was conducted.

The bureau revealed institute staff had deviated from the professional guideline when conducting the poll and it has told the university to conduct an investigation and provide a report to the government.

Chung Kim-wah, deputy director of the university's centre for social policy studies, which assisted on the survey, said some pollsters had missed asking a sampling question between the survey's start late last month and December 4. The survey is scheduled to continue until today.

Data collected up to December 4 has been dumped, Mr Chung said.

He said the pollsters might have been too rushed in an attempt to complete the survey quickly.

Dr Chung denied staff had received any incentives to deliberately skip the sampling step. He said some pollsters might have wanted to decrease the chance of being turned down by

interviewees. The centre has stopped the team taking on new projects and launched an inquiry. It would not reveal last night how many pollsters or interviewees were involved.

Meanwhile, a pro-democracy public policy group called for a luxury villa development in the West Kowloon Cultural District to be reduced to make way for an art village for budding artists.

In an alternative plan for the future arts hub, the Professional Commons, made up of professionals, also urged the government to take a hands-off approach and let the arts develop.

The group said the self-financing principle had hindered development of the HK\$19 billion cultural hub.