

Corporate Development

The HKEAA has continued to put effort in the professional development of its employees. A series of initiatives have been introduced to enhance operational efficiency and the long-term development of the Authority.



A Caring Organisation

To encourage work-life balance, a five-day work week was officially implemented from September 2018. As a family-friendly employer, we have decided to extend paid paternity leave from three to five days, and paid maternity leave from 10 to 14 weeks effective from 1 January 2019, well before they became mandatory by law.

All Staff Meetings were held to exchange ideas and share updates, including the latest developments of the HKEAA and human resource policies. To boost staff morale, we continued to recognise and present awards to some distinguished and long-serving staff members.

In 2018/19, the assessment literacy training programme has continued to raise staff's knowledge of research design and methodology, management of a diverse range of examinations and assessments, and computer-based testing.

To ensure a sustainable development of our workforce, we have formulated a talent management strategy for the HKEAA's succession plan, and rolled out a new phase of the Leadership Development Programme. Customised leadership training workshops and individualised development plans for potential successors were undertaken in late 2018.

Other training programmes on problem solving, critical thinking and communication skills, as well as project and time management were offered to staff members across the board. A total of 1,100 participants attended various training activities with an average of 13 training hours devoted to each staff member during the year. Meanwhile, professional bodies, including the Equal Opportunities Commission, the Independent Commission Against Corruption and the Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data were commissioned to deliver training programmes to raise and maintain legal compliance awareness among staff.

Corporate Social Responsibility

The HKEAA has been upgrading its Onscreen Marking System (OSM) and computers to enhance the quality and efficiency of marking scripts. As a socially responsible organisation, the HKEAA donated 89 used OSM computers and accessories to the HKSZYCIA Wong Tai Shan Memorial College and Yan Chai Hospital Wong Wha San Secondary School in June 2019. Both schools play host to our on-campus assessment centres. Going forward, we will donate used computers on a larger scale to local secondary schools in the 2019/20 school year.



Students of HKSZYCIA Wong Tai Shan Memorial College talked to Dr So Kwok-sang, Secretary General of the HKEAA, on how they deploy new operating system on the used computers for learning

To move towards being a more environmentally friendly organisation, we engaged in a 'paperless' drive in business operation, such as conducting 'paperless' meetings. We also moved away from providing print version of publications like Examination Report and Handbook for Candidates of the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination (HKDSE). In 2019, around 121,000kg of printed materials and used paper were collected for recycling.

The HKEAA encouraged staff participation in volunteering through a number of programmes, such as Christmas gift packing to make personalised educational craft kits for needy children; the Wetland Guided Tour to learn more about the wetland and preservation of the ecosystem; as well as the 'Reuse and Recycling of Lai See packets' campaign.



As a socially responsible organisation, the HKEAA staff members took part in a volunteer service in December 2018, to prepare educational Christmas presents for needy children

Enhancing Information Technology Governance and Infrastructure

Stringent measures are in place to ensure seamless operation of various examination systems. At the same time, the HKEAA developed a guideline on handling breaches of personal data security in June 2019 to better equip its staff with the necessary alertness and knowledge.

On top of the compliance audits of ISO 27001 Information Security Management System and ISO 20000 Information Technology Service Management, the HKEAA also engaged an independent consultant to conduct a comprehensive review of its IT-based operation from an information security perspective. The objective is to raise the Authority's robustness of information security and capability in handling threats.

The HKEAA has established a partnership with the Cyber Security and Technology Crime Bureau of the Hong Kong Police Force to conduct a drill exercise by simulating cyber-attacks on an annual basis. The first-ever drill on 'Combating DDoS Attacks' was conducted in May 2019.

Technology Refresh

Apart from the timely updates and improvement made to the HKDSE Examination System, a technological revamp began in April 2018. The first stage to tackle the 'end-of-service-life' issues of the Mark Processing and Grading application in the system was completed and facilitated the smooth migration to the new system in the 2019 HKDSE examination. The implementation of the project will continue by phases in 2020 and 2021, allowing a complete transition of the existing hardware and application modules to updated technology.

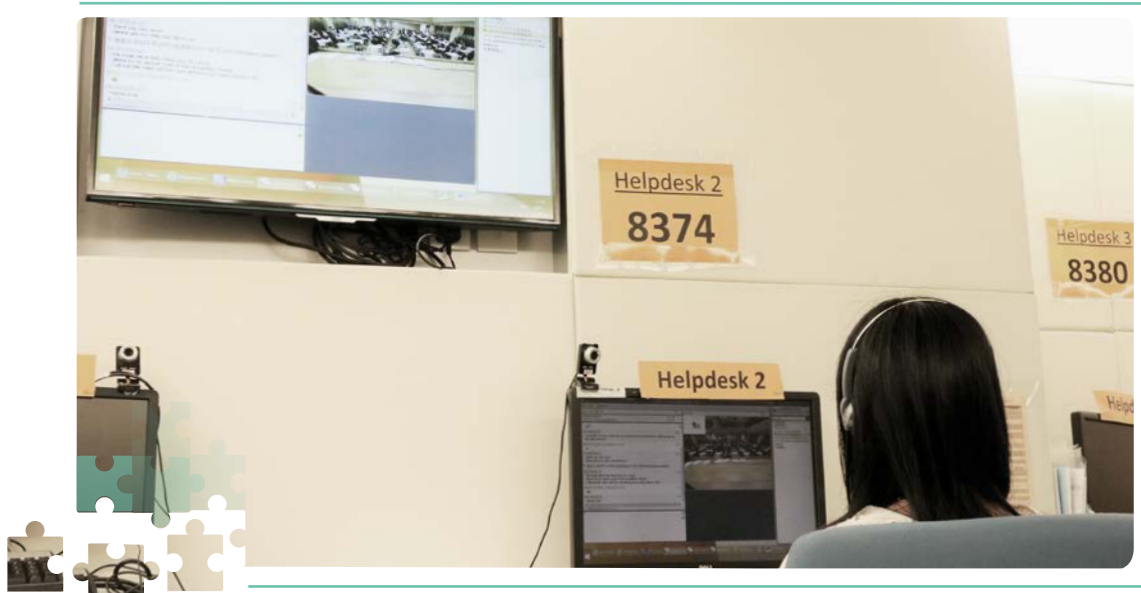


IT system deployed to enhance efficiency of attendance taking in examination centres

The Second Generation Public Examination Support System

Introduced in 2008, the Public Examination Support System is a consortium of systems supporting live communication between examination centres and the HKEAA's Command Centre. It also takes count of candidates' attendance and answer scripts, and provides video capturing function in speaking examinations.

The replacement of the ageing system components with mobile technology is progressing as planned. Smartphones have been adopted in the HKDSE and Language Proficiency Assessment for Teachers speaking examinations in 2019. Given the satisfactory results, smartphones will be used in the written and speaking examinations for candidates with special educational needs in the 2020 HKDSE.



The Public Examinations Communication and Support System (PECSS) enabled real-time communication and strengthened support to centre supervisors

Enhancing the International and Professional Examination System

The International and Professional Examination System Migration Project was completed in August 2019. Various online services, including dispatching admission tickets, releasing examination results and rescheduling examination timeslots have been enhanced.

The development work of this first-ever multifunctional system underpinning operations on various fronts of the Authority will span over two years. In the course of development, multifaceted business processes will be reviewed for the sake of efficiency gain.

Development of an Integrated Corporate Services System

In order to enhance the operational efficiency of the HKEAA, we spearheaded the development of an Integrated Corporate Services System in August 2019 to support corporate-wide administration in respect of human resources management, financial management, document management, and procurement processes.

Finance

The HKEAA is an independent, statutory body with its income mainly derived from examination fees and other assessment services. We adopt a prudent financial management approach, as well as proactive measures to reduce expenditure and boost capacity through continuous review of facilities and human resources management.

In view of the continuously declining candidature of the HKDSE Examination, approval had been sought from the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council for a non-recurrent four-year funding commitment of \$360.8 million in support of the HKEAA's operation until 2021/22. A sum of \$50.4 million was transferred to the HKEAA in the fourth quarter of the financial year 2018/19 to cope with cash flow requirements.

Following the transfer, the reserve balance of the HKEAA stood at HK\$207.5 million as of

31 August 2019, representing a rise of HK\$22.7 million from the previous financial year. Taking out the sum of HK\$50.4 million, a deficit of HK\$27.7 million was recorded for 2018/19. The deficit came mainly from the decline in the HKDSE's candidature, and rising costs of special examination arrangements in support of candidates with special educational needs. Total expenditure increased by 5% compared to last year, mainly due to the hiring of extra staff for some projects, IT maintenance from certain examination systems, and one-off items including the replacement of obsolete workstations and monitors for onscreen marking as well as the repair work for assessment centres damaged by Super Typhoon Mangkhut.

To sustain future operations, a joint Task Force on Long-term Funding has been set up with the Education Bureau to explore possible long-term funding options for the HKEAA. The Task Force aims at identifying possible options for consultation with relevant stakeholders by 2020.

2018/19 Financial Highlights

Total Income for the year	HK\$ 469,512,206
Total Expenditure for the year	HK\$ 446,846,466
Surplus for the year	HK\$ 22,665,740
Reserve Balance (as at 31 August 2019)	HK\$ 207,452,798