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Dear Principal

Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination 2015 Guidelines for Processing Public Examination Irregularities

Each year, the HKEAA (the Authority) reviews and updates the public examination procedures and regulations in light of the circumstances where candidates failed to comply with the stipulated rules and procedures in the previous examination. Minor changes or fine-tuning of the examination procedures, regulations and instructions are made annually if necessary. To ensure the smooth conduct of the examinations, the major changes are expressly stated in the Handbook for Candidates and highlighted in the Video for Candidates.

All complaints and irregularities related to public examinations are dealt with by the Standing Committee of the Authority in accordance with a set of guidelines approved by the Public Examinations Board (PEB). The Authority has been disclosing the magnitude of mark penalties and mark adjustments on cases of individual candidates and such information is conveyed to the candidates concerned before the release of examination results. To foster public understanding of the ways in which examination irregularities are handled, the Authority has produced a simplified version of the Guidelines, namely **“The Equitable Treatment of Examination Irregularities”** and a leaflet entitled **“Irregularities in Public Examinations”** with a view to informing major stakeholders, i.e. schools, candidates and parents, of the rationale for processing examination irregularities and the circumstances under which the guidelines are applied. A set of the updated irregularity guidelines for the 2016 examinations will be available from the HKEAA website (http://www.hkeaa.edu.hk/DocLibrary/HKDSE/Irregularities_Leaflet_E.pdf) in early December 2015.

Penalty cases for 2015 HKDSE

In the 2015 HKDSE, the PEB made decisions on 758 penalty cases for breaching examination regulations. A breakdown of these cases is listed below:

- (a) Zero mark plus subject downgrading was imposed on 1 case for serious plagiarism in school-based assessment (SBA) / externally marked portfolio of the subject concerned.
- (b) Subject downgrading was imposed on 34 cases involving more serious offences, such as mobile phones being turned on and found on candidates' body or desk and public display of barcode labels removed from examination centres.
- (c) Mark penalties were imposed on 723 cases for breaking the examination regulations. The levels of penalty are 1%, 2% and 5% of the maximum paper mark depending on the seriousness of the offences.

Attached for your information is a list showing the number of penalty cases in the 2015 HKDSE.

If you have any questions, please contact Mr KW Lok on 3628 8950.

Yours sincerely



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Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination 2015

Penalties for not following examination regulations

Severe penalties which involve zero marks, subject downgrading or disqualification

- 0 - Cheating
- 1 - Plagiarism in School-based Assessment / externally marked projects / portfolios
- 26 - Mobile phone in operating mode found on the desk / body during written examinations
- 3 - Brought into the examination centre unauthorised materials capable of giving unfair assistance (e.g. notes or formulae written on the calculator cover / jacket / candidate's palm)
- 0 - Unauthorised public display of barcode label(s) removed from the examination room
- 4 - Took photographs inside the examination centre / Reporting Room of speaking examinations and displayed them publicly
- 1 - Took away the question paper before the end of an examination session

Mild penalties which involve mark deduction

- 475 - Took the listening test without bringing any radios (at radio-broadcast centres), batteries or earphones, arrived at the examination centre more than 30 minutes after the reporting time or brought in a prohibited electronic device other than a radio
- 21 - Mobile phones in non-operating mode under the chair / in the bag / on the desk / body sounded / vibrated during written examinations
- 3 - Mobile phones in operating mode found on the desk / body sounded during written examinations with reasonable explanations given by the candidates
- 7 - Mobile phones rang / vibrated / being used in the Reporting Room / Preparation Room / Examination Room of speaking examinations
- 12 - Removed any remaining barcode labels from the examination centre or found to have stuck the labels of previous examination sessions on their personal belongings
- 66 - Brought into the examination centre unauthorised materials from which advantage might be gained (e.g. question paper of a previous examination session)
- 83 - Disobeyed centre supervisors' time instructions (i.e. started working / reading the question paper before being instructed to do so, continued to work after the "Stop working" announcement or continued to look at the question paper / write on the notecard after the end of the preparation time in speaking examinations) and other instructions
- 3 - Failed to mark the multiple-choice (MC) answers on the appropriate places in the QA Book as instructed
- 5 - Revealed candidate's own identity on the answer scripts
- 43 - Failed to stick any barcode label(s) on any answer books / question-answer books / MC answer sheets used in an examination
- 0 - Brought into the examination centre a prohibited calculator
- 3 - Talked in the corridor before entering the examination room in speaking examinations
- 1 - Drew on the white bond paper instead of the cartridge paper provided by the HKEAA in Visual Arts examination
- 1 - Took a photograph inside the examination centre and displayed it publicly (a mark penalty was given to the candidate on medical ground)

Note: The figures represent the total number of penalties for the corresponding offences in the 2015 HKDSE.