

## HONG KONG CERTIFICATE OF EDUCATION EXAMINATION 2009 REGULATIONS

### INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination ("the Examination") is a public examination conducted by the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority ("the Authority") in accordance with the provisions of the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority Ordinance.
- 1.2 The primary purpose of the Examination is to measure the attainment of students who have completed a full-time five-year secondary school course. The Examination is conducted annually, mainly in April and May.

### SUBJECTS OF THE EXAMINATION

- 2.1 The subjects of the Examination are as follows:

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Language in which subject is to be examined</b>
* + Accommodation and Catering Services	Chinese or English
Additional Mathematics	Chinese or English
* Biology	Chinese or English
+ Buddhist Studies	Chinese only
* Chemistry	Chinese or English
Chinese History	Chinese only
Chinese Language	Chinese only
Chinese Literature	Chinese only
Commerce	Chinese or English
* Computer and Information Technology	Chinese or English
* + Design and Technology	Chinese or English
* + Design and Technology (Alternative Syllabus)	Chinese or English
+ Economic and Public Affairs	Chinese or English
+ Economics	Chinese or English
* Electronics and Electricity	Chinese or English
English Language	English only
* + Fashion and Clothing	Chinese or English
▲ French	French and English
Geography	Chinese or English
+ Government and Public Affairs	Chinese or English
* Graphical Communication	Chinese or English
History	Chinese or English
* + Home Economics (Dress and Design)	Chinese or English
* + Home Economics (Food, Home and Family)	Chinese or English
Integrated Humanities	Chinese or English
Literature in English	English only

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Language in which subject is to be examined</b>
Mathematics	Chinese or English
Music	Chinese or English
* Physical Education	Chinese or English
* Physics	Chinese or English
Principles of Accounts	Chinese or English
Putonghua	Chinese only
+ Religious Studies	Chinese or English
Science and Technology	Chinese or English
Social Studies	Chinese or English
* + Technological Studies	Chinese or English
Travel and Tourism	Chinese or English
Visual Arts	Chinese or English
* Word Processing & Business Communication (English)	English only

Notes: + Forbidden combination : See Regulation 2.3

\* Practical subject : See Regulations 2.5, 2.6 and 2.7

▲ This subject will be examined using question papers of the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) Foreign Language French Examination of the University of Cambridge International Examinations (CIE).

2.2 In any subject with a syllabus examinable in both Chinese and English, only one language version may be entered for in the same Examination.

2.3 In each of the following groups of subjects, only one may be entered for in the same Examination:

Accommodation and Catering Services  
Home Economics (Food, Home and Family)

Buddhist Studies  
Religious Studies

Design and Technology  
Design and Technology (Alternative Syllabus)  
Technological Studies

Economic and Public Affairs  
Economics

Economic and Public Affairs  
Government and Public Affairs

Fashion and Clothing  
Home Economics (Dress and Design)

- 2.4 No candidate may enter for more than 10 subjects at any one Examination.
- 2.5 A school candidate (see Regulation 3.2) may enter for a practical subject only if the school has obtained permission to present candidates for that subject under Regulation 3.3(2), or under the following circumstances:
- (1) the candidate can produce evidence of having sat the subject in a previous Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination or in an equivalent public examination; and
  - (2) centres and facilities for the examination of the subject are available.
- 2.6 A private candidate (see Regulation 4.1) may enter for a practical subject only if
- (1) the candidate can produce evidence of having sat the subject in a previous Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination or in an equivalent public examination; and
  - (2) centres and facilities for the examination of the subject are available.
- 2.7 Notwithstanding Regulation 2.6, the Authority will not accept entries from private candidates for Word Processing & Business Communication (English).
- 2.8 Private candidates may enter for the following subjects if they have sat the same examination as school candidates within two years. Their previous teacher-assessed result on project/course work will be carried forward to constitute the current year's project/course work result:
- Design and Technology
  - Design and Technology (Alternative Syllabus)
  - Electronics and Electricity
  - Fashion and Clothing
  - Graphical Communication
  - Technological Studies
- 2.9 Private candidates who enter for Computer & Information Technology and Science & Technology may opt to use their previous teacher-assessed mark to substitute the requirement for submission of independent study/coursework, provided that the teacher-assessed mark is obtained in the same subject examination within two years.
- 2.10 Private candidates who enter for Chinese History, History and Integrated Humanities may opt to use their previous teacher-assessed mark obtained within two years to substitute the requirement for school-based assessment (SBA). If they do not opt to use their previous SBA results, or if they do not have previous SBA results, their written paper score will be proportionally adjusted to form the total subject mark.
- 2.11 Private candidates who enter for Chinese Language and English Language may not opt to use their previous school-based assessment mark. Their subject result will be based entirely on their public examination mark and will be stated on the certificate.

### **PARTICIPATION IN THE EXAMINATION BY SCHOOLS**

- 3.1 The participation of schools in the Examination shall be subject to the prior approval of the Authority. At the time of application for participation, the school should provide evidence that it is a registered school and that it is running courses and operating classes in accordance with the Education and Manpower Bureau's registration requirements; and that the school agrees to comply with the examination regulations. The Authority may seek advice from the Education and Manpower Bureau where necessary. In its consideration and determination of an application, the Authority reserves the right to refuse such an application and to make such conditions, in addition to those conditions contained within these Regulations, as it considers appropriate.
- 3.2 Only bona fide Secondary 5 students of registered schools approved for participation may be entered as school candidates. The students must be studying at the registered address of the schools. The principal's certification to this effect will be required at the time of registration.
- 3.3 Schools wishing
  - (1) to enter candidates for the first time; or
  - (2) to enter candidates for a practical subject for the first time,must make written application to the Secretary General of the Authority ("the Secretary General") for approval not later than 1st June, two years preceding the Examination.
- 3.4 The Secretary General will notify schools of the decisions of the Authority under Regulations 3.1 and 3.3, normally not later than 31st August, two years preceding the Examination. Any appeal against the Authority's decisions under Regulations 3.1 and 3.3 should be made in writing to the Secretary General within 30 days from the date of the above notification.
- 3.5 Under exceptional circumstances, a school may be given provisional approval for participation in the Examination or in a practical subject; the final approval being subject to the school fulfilling the conditions under which the provisional approval was given.
- 3.6 Participation in the Examination and in practical subjects will be subject to annual review by the Authority. The Secretary General will inform schools of any decision of the Authority to withdraw permission for the schools to participate or to impose conditions for continued participation, normally not later than 31st August, two years preceding the Examination.
- 3.7 Notwithstanding Regulation 3.6, the Authority may by notice rescind the participation of any school upon receipt of notification from the Education and Manpower Bureau that:
  - (1) the registration of the said school under the terms of the Education Ordinance (Cap. 279) has been cancelled; OR
  - (2) registration of the premises or part of the premises of the said school under the terms of the Education Ordinance (Cap. 279) has been refused; OR
  - (3) the said school has been found to be operating in premises all or

part of which are not registered under the terms of the Education Ordinance (Cap. 279).

The participation of any such school shall cease with effect from the date of the said notice, or with effect from such other date as the Authority may specify in the said notice.

- 3.8 Should permission to participate be withdrawn under Regulation 3.6 or 3.7, a school may make application to participate again in accordance with Regulations 3.1 and 3.3 as if applying to enter candidates for the first time.
- 3.9 Entry forms for school candidates will be available in September in the year preceding the Examination. These forms must be completed and the examination fees must be paid on or before the date specified by the Authority.
- 3.10 Schools presenting candidates for the Examination must place their staff at the reasonable disposal of the Authority as may be required for the conduct of the Examination. In particular, schools must provide centre supervisors and/or invigilators in relation to the number of entries. Schools which are unable to provide the required number of invigilators may, at the discretion of the Secretary General, be allowed the option of paying the cost of hiring invigilators.
- 3.11 Schools presenting candidates for the Examination must make their school buildings, furniture and facilities available to the Authority as may be required for the conduct of the Examination.
- 3.12 Compliance by schools with Regulations 3.10 and 3.11 will be regarded as a condition of participation in the Examination.
- 3.13 A list of schools approved for participation in the Examination together with approved practical subjects is available at the Authority's offices, District Offices and the Authority's web site ([www.hkeaa.edu.hk](http://www.hkeaa.edu.hk)) from 1st July in the year preceding the Examination.

#### **PARTICIPATION IN THE EXAMINATION BY PRIVATE CANDIDATES**

- 4.1 A person may enter for the Examination as a private candidate provided he/she has satisfied the requirements set out at (1) or (2) or (3) below:
  - (1) The person has sat a previous Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination.
  - (2) The person has reached the age of 18 by 1st January in the year of the Examination.
  - (3) The person has completed or is currently pursuing a non-HKCEE curriculum equivalent to Secondary 5 in the year preceding the Examination.
- 4.2 The Authority may consider applications from persons possessing other qualifications or pleading special circumstances. Applications under this regulation must be made in writing to the Secretary General before 1st September in the year preceding the Examination.
- 4.3 Entry forms for private candidates will be available in September in the year preceding the Examination. Registration arrangements will be

announced in the press.

- 4.4 Examination fees must be paid on or before the date specified by the Authority.

#### **GENERAL**

- 5.1 The subjects of the Examination will be examined in accordance with a timetable, which will normally be announced in September in the year preceding the Examination. A provisional examination timetable will be provided to participating schools in May or June.
- 5.2 Although the Authority will endeavour to ensure that all examinations will be conducted on the dates and at the times specified in the examination timetable, it cannot guarantee that this will be so. In the event of an examination having to be rescheduled or cancelled, the Authority will not accept any liability in respect of claims for expenses or other damages. However, it may at its discretion refund the whole or part of the fees paid in respect of an examination which has to be cancelled.
- 5.3 Examination fees will be announced before September in the year preceding the Examination.
- 5.4 All candidates shall pay the same subject fees. Private candidates shall pay an additional initial fee.
- 5.5 Candidates may not submit more than one entry for the Examination, whether for the same or different subjects, and whether as school or private candidates.
- 5.6 The Authority reserves the right to reject an application for entry to any examination conducted by the Authority if it is satisfied that the applicant has been involved in any serious irregularity, misconduct or dishonesty in any examination conducted by the Authority, or in connection with certificates, statements of results or similar documents.
- 5.7 Under special circumstances the Authority may at its discretion,
- (1) admit a candidate after the normal closing date for entry, on payment of a supplementary fee in addition to the normal examination fee;
  - (2) allow the addition or substitution of a subject or subjects to a candidate's entries after they have been accepted, on payment of a supplementary fee (For the purpose of this regulation, a change of language version will be regarded as a change of subject.);
  - (3) allow changes in a candidate's choice of paper, or sections within a paper, on payment of a supplementary fee;
  - (4) accept a script submitted by a candidate in a language medium other than that for which the candidate entered, or for a subject/syllabus other than that for which he/she entered, on payment of a supplementary fee;
  - (5) permit a school candidate who has ceased to attend the school which submitted the candidate's entry to change his/her status to that of a private candidate (subject to his/her satisfying the relevant entry requirement), on payment of the initial fee and a supplementary fee.

- 5.8 Candidates with special needs may apply for exemption from part(s) of the requirements in an examination or special examination arrangements. Such applications must be made in writing (via schools in the case of school candidates) to the Secretary General within a period prescribed by the Authority together with full supporting documents (e.g. medical certificates).
- 5.9 Entries of candidates will not be regarded as having been accepted until the fees payable have been received in full by the Authority.
- 5.10 A copy of the (1) Candidate Entry Information Checklist and a copy of the (2) Instructions to Candidates will be issued to schools and private candidates in early December in the year preceding the Examination. Candidates will be responsible for checking their entry data to see that the entries they made at the time of registration have been correctly processed. The Secretary General must be notified in writing before 16th December of any discrepancies discovered. In the absence of such notification, the entry data will be regarded as having been confirmed. Any subsequent request for changes will be subject to the provisions of Regulation 5.7.
- 5.11 Applications for amendments to a candidate's personal particulars received after 15th December in the year preceding the Examination may be accepted at the discretion of the Secretary General.
- 5.12 A candidate withdrawing from the Examination may receive a partial refund of the fees paid provided that the Secretary General is notified in writing of the candidate's withdrawal before 16th December in the year preceding the Examination. The Authority may, at its discretion, consider special applications of exceptional circumstances. There will be no refund for partial withdrawal. Examination fees are not transferable from one examination to another, nor from one person to another. Examination fees will not be refunded to candidates who are disqualified (see Regulation 6.1).
- 5.13 Admission forms will be issued to candidates (via schools in the case of school candidates) in March in the year of the Examination. Schools should not, for whatever reasons, withhold the admission forms of their students.
- 5.14 On application by a candidate, a duplicate admission form may be issued to replace one which has been lost, subject to payment of a supplementary fee.
- 5.15 Electronic calculators, including programmable calculators, may be used in any examination session provided that the calculators are battery-powered, silent in operation and with neither print-out nor graphic/word-display facilities and do not use dot-matrix technology in the main display.
- 5.16 All answer scripts submitted by candidates, including the practical work in practical examinations, shall be the property of the Authority and as such, shall be handled by the Authority at any time and in any way it deems appropriate. While the Authority will exercise reasonable care to protect and preserve the scripts, in the event of any loss or damage, as a result of which the candidate's performance cannot be assessed based on the scripts, the candidate concerned will waive all claims, if any, against the Authority.

5.17 Personal data of candidates will be used for the purpose of conducting the Examination. The personal data, including examination results, may also be used for the following purposes:

- (1) assisting tertiary institutions and other government/public organizations in their admission processes;
- (2) assisting government/public organizations in respect of their requests for information in granting scholarships;
- (3) certifying candidates' examination results in response to legitimate requests; and
- (4) conducting educational research and analysis in an anonymous format in which the identities of candidates are not traceable.

In compliance with the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance, access to all personal data will be made available, on payment of a fee, to anyone who can establish his/her right to be informed of such data as are retained by the Authority.

5.18 All correspondence should be addressed to the Secretary General. (Address : Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority, 12th Floor, Southorn Centre, 130 Hennessy Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong.) School candidates should normally write to the Authority via their schools.

#### **DISQUALIFICATION**

6.1 A candidate may be disqualified from part or whole of the Examination or suffer a mark or grade penalty, without refund of the examination fees paid if the candidate

- (1) is not a bona fide Secondary 5 student of the school which presented him/her for the Examination;
- (2) provides false personal particulars in his/her entry form;
- (3) improperly obtains knowledge of examination papers prior to the Examination;
- (4) is found to have unauthorized article(s) on/in the examination desk or on his/her person;
- (5) communicates or attempts to communicate improperly with any person inside or outside the examination room during an examination session;
- (6) copies from notes, books or materials stored in electronic devices brought into the examination room or from the answers of another candidate during an examination session;
- (7) attempts to take away from the examination room any examination material, such as answer sheets, backing sheets or graph paper;
- (8) leaves the examination room without permission;
- (9) starts to work on the question paper before being instructed to do so or continues to write after being told to stop writing at the end of an examination session;
- (10) passes off work done by someone else as his/her own, in any part of a project/SBA/Teacher Assessment Scheme where original work is

- required;
- (11) breaks any of the examination instructions as laid down in the Instructions to Candidates referred to in Regulation 5.10 (2);
  - (12) disobeys the instructions of the centre supervisor or an invigilator;
  - (13) disregards the Authority's written warning in connection with misbehaviour in any examination conducted by the Authority.
- 6.2 Appeals against decisions to disqualify or to refuse entry to examinations within the purview of the Authority should be made in writing to the Secretary General.

## RESULTS

- 7.1 Except for the subjects of Chinese Language, English Language and French, the performance of candidates in individual subjects will be recorded in terms of six grades, namely, A, B, C, D, E and F, of which A is the highest and F the lowest. Achievements below grade F will be designated as "unclassified".
- 7.2 For the subjects of Chinese Language and English Language, the performance of candidates will be recorded in terms of five levels, with Level 1 being the lowest and Level 5 the highest. Achievements below Level 1 will be designated as "unclassified". Level 5 candidates with the best performance will have their results indicated by the symbol\*.
- 7.3 For the subject of French, the grades awarded will be in accordance with the IGCSE Scheme (Notes under 2.1 refer). Achievements in this subject will be indicated by grades A\*(a\*), A(a), B(b), C(c), D(d), E(e), F(f) and G(g). Achievements below grade G will be designated as "ungraded".
- 7.4 Grade C or above in all subjects except Accommodation & Catering Services and Fashion & Clothing, whether taken in Chinese or in English, is recognised as the equivalent of an "O" level pass in a British G.C.E. overseas examination.
- 7.5 The results in Chinese Language and English Language will be recognized as equivalent to the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) results as follows:

Levels in HKCEE	5*	5	4	3
Grades in IGCSE	A*	A	B	C

- 7.6 The results will normally be issued in mid August in the year of the Examination.
- 7.7 A results notice will be issued to each candidate (via schools in the case of school candidates) at the time of the publication of results. This will record
  - (1) the results obtained in individual subjects sat; and
  - (2) subjects entered for, but not sat. (For the subject of French, a candidate who is absent from any one paper of the core curriculum will be recorded as absent from the subject.)

The language medium used by candidates will not be recorded on the results notice.

- 7.8 Each school will receive a list showing the results obtained by its candidates.
- 7.9 Applications for appeal must be submitted within a period prescribed by the Authority. Each candidate may apply for full appeal (rechecking of marks and remarking of scripts) and rechecking of marks only for a number of subjects as stipulated by the Public Examinations Board. A fee will be charged per subject rechecked and/or remarked. The fee will be refunded if the candidate's result is upgraded. Applications from school candidates will be accepted only if they are supported by the candidates' school principals. Applications from private candidates must be supported by adequate reasons.
- 7.10 Certificates are normally issued to candidates (via schools in the case of school candidates) in October in the year of the Examination.
- 7.11 Grades or levels awarded for individual subjects will be recorded on the certificate. The language medium used by candidates in the Examination will not be recorded. Subjects for which the candidate was absent and subjects with results designated as "unclassified" (or below grade F for the subject of French) will not be recorded. Component grades/levels for Chinese Language, English Language, Computer and Information Technology, Design & Technology, Design & Technology (Alternative Syllabus), Electronics & Electricity, Graphical Communication, Home Economics (Food, Home and Family), Home Economics (Dress and Design), Physical Education, Putonghua, Science & Technology and Technological Studies will be reported on the certificate. Candidates who were absent from all subjects or who obtained unclassified results in all subjects will not be issued a certificate.
- 7.12 Where a candidate has been exempted from part(s) of the requirements of an examination, his/her results for the affected part(s) will be assessed. The details of any such assessment will be listed on a second page to the candidate's certificate, and an indication will be printed on the first page that a second page has been used. However, the reason for granting the exemption will not be recorded on the certificate. In the case of special assistance (e.g. extra time allowance, provision of braille or enlarged question papers), such assistance provided will not be recorded on the certificate as long as the candidate has completed the full requirements of the examination.
- 7.13 School principals are required to return all unclaimed certificates to the Authority at the time when certificates for the Examination in the following year are collected. Certificates unclaimed by 31st December, two years after the Examination, will be destroyed.
- 7.14 On application by a candidate, a duplicate results notice may be issued to replace one which has been lost, subject to the payment of a fee.
- 7.15 On application by a candidate, a statement of results may be issued,

subject to the payment of a fee.

- 7.16 School candidates who are unable to take the examinations because of hospitalisation as a result of accident or serious illness, or because of special circumstances, may, with the support of the school principal, apply for special consideration. Subject to the application being approved by the Authority, the assessed results of the subjects concerned, which will be either grade C or grade E or limited to the maximum of Level 4 for Chinese Language and English Language, will be listed on a second page to the normal certificate, and an indication will be printed on the first page that a second page has been used.
- 7.17 A copy of the Examination Report will be issued to all participating schools and will be available for sale to the general public, normally in December in the year of the Examination.

#### **AMENDMENTS TO REGULATIONS**

- 8.1 The Regulations are subject to revision.
- 8.2 Major amendments to the Regulations will be published before 15th September in the year preceding the Examination. Candidates will be notified of subsequent amendments, if any.