

LIBERAL STUDIES

INTRODUCTION

The assessment of this subject is based on the Curriculum and Assessment Guide (Secondary 4-6) for Liberal Studies (LS) jointly prepared by the Curriculum Development Council and the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority. Candidates have to refer to the Guide for the knowledge, understanding and skills that they are required to demonstrate in the assessment.

ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this assessment are to evaluate candidates' abilities:

- to demonstrate a sound understanding of the key ideas, concepts and terminologies of the subject;
- to make conceptual observations from information resulting from enquiry into issues;
- to apply relevant knowledge and concepts to contemporary issues;
- to identify and analyse the interconnectedness and interdependence amongst personal, local, national, global and environmental contexts;
- to recognise the influence of personal and social values in analysing contemporary issues of human concern;
- to draw critically upon their own experience and their encounters within the community, and with the environment and technology;
- to discern views, attitudes and values stated or implied in any given factual information;
- to analyse issues (including their moral and social implications), solve problems, make sound judgments and conclusions and provide suggestions, using multiple perspectives, creativity and appropriate thinking skills;
- to interpret information from different perspectives;
- to consider and comment on different viewpoints in their handling of different issues;
- to self-manage and reflect upon the implementation of successive stages of the enquiry learning process in terms of time, resources and attainment of the objectives of the enquiry;
- to communicate clearly and accurately in a concise, logical, systematic and relevant way;
- to gather, handle and analyse data and draw conclusions in ways that facilitate the attainment of the objectives of the enquiry;
- to demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of different cultures and universal values; and
- to demonstrate empathy in the handling of different issues.

The design of the examination is intended to emphasise the need for an enquiry approach in teaching and studying the subject. The question format is not meant to imply that candidates should aim to identify certain correct answers. On the contrary, the approach used should stress that most contemporary issues are much too complex to allow of simplistic solutions.

In order to understand an issue to the point where judgments can be made about it, it is necessary to have knowledge of a body of relevant facts. However, in this examination the emphasis is not intended to be on accumulating factual knowledge and great care will be taken in the examination papers to avoid questions which call for detailed factual recall. Instead, the emphasis will be on understanding and assessing the extent to which candidates can demonstrate possession of the appropriate thinking skills learnt in the subject.

Candidates will be awarded in the examination if they are able to:

- demonstrate a sound understanding of the key ideas, concepts and terminologies required to give an informed response to the question;
- identify concepts from and/or apply concepts to contemporary issues appropriately, and in the latter case provide examples/evidence to support arguments whenever appropriate;
- demonstrate an understanding of how certain themes/concepts are relevant to or manifested across the domains of self, society, nation, the world and the physical environment;
- provide reasons to justify the values they hold in analysing issues;
- identify the values underlying different views on contemporary issues, and differentiate among facts, opinions and value judgments;
- draw critically upon their relevant experience and encounters within the community, and with the environment and technology;
- identify contradictions and dilemmas, including those with moral and social implications, from information related to controversial issues, and consider such issues from a range of perspectives so as to draw conclusions;
- provide reasonable suggestions and appropriate solutions for problems;
- show openness and tolerance towards views, especially non-mainstream views that are supported by argument;
- respond in a way that reflects a proper understanding of the requirements of the questions in the examination paper;
- communicate clearly and accurately in a concise, logical and systematic manner;
- make effective use of data to describe, explain and deduce; and
- make judgments based on a sound rationale.

MODE OF ASSESSMENT

The table below outlines the various components of the public assessment of LS in 2021 HKDSE:

Component		Weighting	Duration
Public Examination	Paper 1: Data-response questions	50% → 56%	2 hours
	Paper 2: Extended-response questions	30% → 34%	1 hour 15 minutes
School-based assessment (SBA) (STREAMLINED)		20% → 10%	

PUBLIC EXAMINATION

Paper 1

This paper consists of data-response questions, all of which will have to be answered.

Data-response questions aim to assess abilities such as identification, application and analysis of given data. The data define the scope and reflect the complex or controversial nature of the issue involved; and such questions also reflect the cross-modular and multiple perspective nature of the curriculum.

Paper 2

This paper consists of three extended-response questions. Candidates will be required to answer one question only.

Extended-response questions with data as stimulus information provide a wider context for candidates to demonstrate various higher-order skills, such as drawing critically on relevant experience, creative thinking, and communicating in a systematic manner.

In the examination, the term data is to be interpreted in the broadest possible sense to mean any type of information. Candidates will have to respond to the information, which may be in many different formats, including:

- articles, news items, reports, memos, letters, and advertisements;
- written dialogues;
- tables, charts, graphs, maps; and
- cartoons, pictures, illustrations, etc.

SCHOOL-BASED ASSESSMENT (STREAMLINED)

SBA is compulsory for all school candidates.

The Independent Enquiry Study (IES) is adopted as the mode of SBA in Liberal Studies. The IES is an enquiry study in which candidates are required to demonstrate various skills such as problem-solving, data gathering and analysis, and communication. Each IES project should include a certain amount of subject matter based on candidates' reading, research and personal experiences. Candidates can carry out an enquiry-based project, and the main body of the project can be in written or non-written form. The latter should be accompanied by a short written text explaining the main idea of the project.

The IES provides a valuable opportunity for candidates to carry out a focused enquiry into a contemporary issue of interest with increased independence, and to present their views, ideas, findings and evaluations in a report. Candidates should document their investigations in a learning portfolio which illustrates the process of enquiry, the stages in its development, and their ongoing interpretations, analyses and reflections on the knowledge and understanding gained. Candidates are required to keep good custody of their work for inspection and authentication purpose until the release of the HKDSE results.

In carrying out the IES, candidates are expected to demonstrate they can:

- set goals and make plans, implement the plans and solve problems;
- develop a sense of exploration and discovery, and an ability to think independently;
- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of an issue affecting our society, the nation and/or the world;
- understand how social, national and global changes occur in response to competing demands;
- use analytical skills to investigate a contemporary issue from multiple perspectives;
- act in an informed way to suggest possible solutions and outcomes;
- understand how hypotheses and focusing questions are used to guide the investigation of an issue;
- reflect on and evaluate learning progress;
- present views and ideas; and
- show self-initiative.

(Remark: In the streamlining measure for 2021 HKDSE, candidates are only required to complete Parts A and B of the IES. Some of the above items may not be applicable.)

To ensure that candidates are able to carry out their IES systematically, a structured enquiry approach is provided for guiding candidates to complete the IES. The approach consists of the following four parts which outline the major components of an IES. In 2021 HKDSE, candidates are required to complete Parts (I) and (II) below:

- (I) Problem Definition
- (II) Relevant Concepts and Knowledge/ Facts/ Data
- ~~(III) In-depth Explanation of the Issue~~
- ~~(IV) Judgement and Justification~~

In order to facilitate candidates to understand and meet the requirements of IES, a set of guiding questions for each part is provided. The guiding questions indicate the essence of the enquiry in each part of the framework. Candidates are required to respond to the guiding questions in conducting their IES.

A set of analytic marking guidelines, covering ~~four~~ **three** domains, is used to assess the performance in IES. Candidates' performance in the process of conducting the IES is reflected in the domain "Initiative". The following table outlines the weighting of each domain of the marking guidelines:

Assessment Domain	Weighting
Problem Definition and Identification of Concepts/Knowledge	6%
Explanation and Justification (CANCELLED)	10%
Presentation and Organisation	2%
Initiative	2%
Total	20% → 10%

Private candidates need not complete the SBA component. Their subject result will be based entirely on the public examination result.

The detailed requirements, regulations, assessment criteria and guidelines are provided in the SBA Handbook for HKDSE Liberal Studies published by the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority.