

## PRESS RELEASE

### Results of the Benchmarking Study between IELTS and HKDSE English Language Examination

The Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA) released today (30 April 2013) the results of a benchmarking study aiming at establishing the equivalence of standards between the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) and the 2012 Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) English Language Examination.

After the completion of the HKDSE Examination last summer, a sample of around 400 school candidates achieving levels 2 to 5\*\* in HKDSE English Language were selected to take IELTS, a test specially designed to assess the language proficiency of test takers who need to study or work with English as the language of communication. The results of this study will facilitate end users in their evaluation of HKDSE candidates' English proficiency.

Based on the study, candidates attaining level 2 in the HKDSE English Language Examination achieved an overall IELTS band score of 4.79 to 5.07 while level 5\*\* candidates achieved 7.51 to 7.77. Candidates with level 3 in HKDSE English Language, which is the minimum English Language requirement for admission to local universities, achieved an overall IELTS band score of 5.48 to 5.68, indicating that their standards are between those of Modest Users and Competent Users on the IELTS scale. According to IELTS, test takers receiving an overall band score of 1 are Non Users while those achieving an overall band score of 9 are Expert Users of English.

A summary of the major findings is given below:

| HKDSE English Language<br>Subject Level | Equivalent Range of<br>Overall IELTS Band Score |
|---|---|
| 5**                                     | 7.51 – 7.77                                     |
| 5*                                      | 7.16 – 7.32                                     |
| 5                                       | 6.81 – 6.99                                     |
| 4                                       | 6.31 – 6.51                                     |
| 3                                       | 5.48 – 5.68                                     |
| 2                                       | 4.79 – 5.07                                     |

The HKDSE English Language Examination is intended to measure the English attainment of Secondary Six students who have completed a full-time secondary curriculum in Hong Kong. A set of level descriptors is provided to facilitate understanding of the achievement of the candidates. Relevant subject information is available on the HKEAA website ([www.hkeaa.edu.hk/en/ir](http://www.hkeaa.edu.hk/en/ir)).

**Notes to editor:**

- The IELTS results of test takers are reported in the form of band scores on a scale from 1 to 9. The nine bands are as follows:

| <b>Band</b> | <b>Level of User</b>   |
|-------------|------------------------|
| 9           | Expert User            |
| 8           | Very Good User         |
| 7           | Good User              |
| 6           | Competent User         |
| 5           | Modest User            |
| 4           | Limited User           |
| 3           | Extremely Limited User |
| 2           | Intermittent User      |
| 1           | Non User               |

- Further information is available on the IELTS website: [www.ielts.org](http://www.ielts.org)

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