

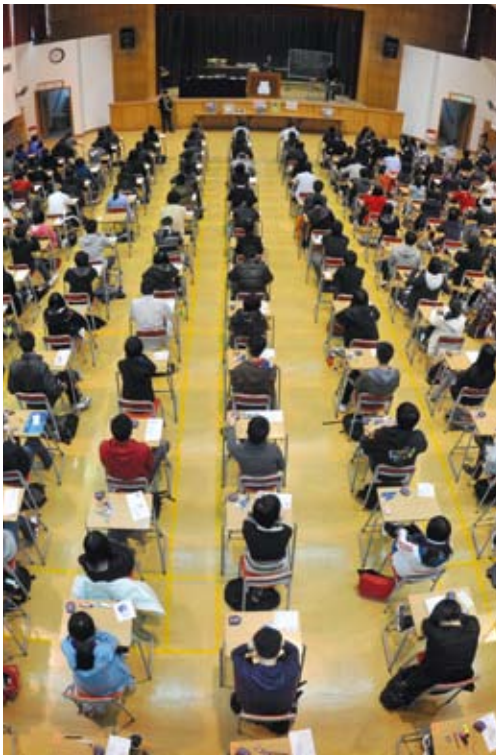
Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination Quality Assurance Framework



Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination Quality Assurance Framework

Introduction

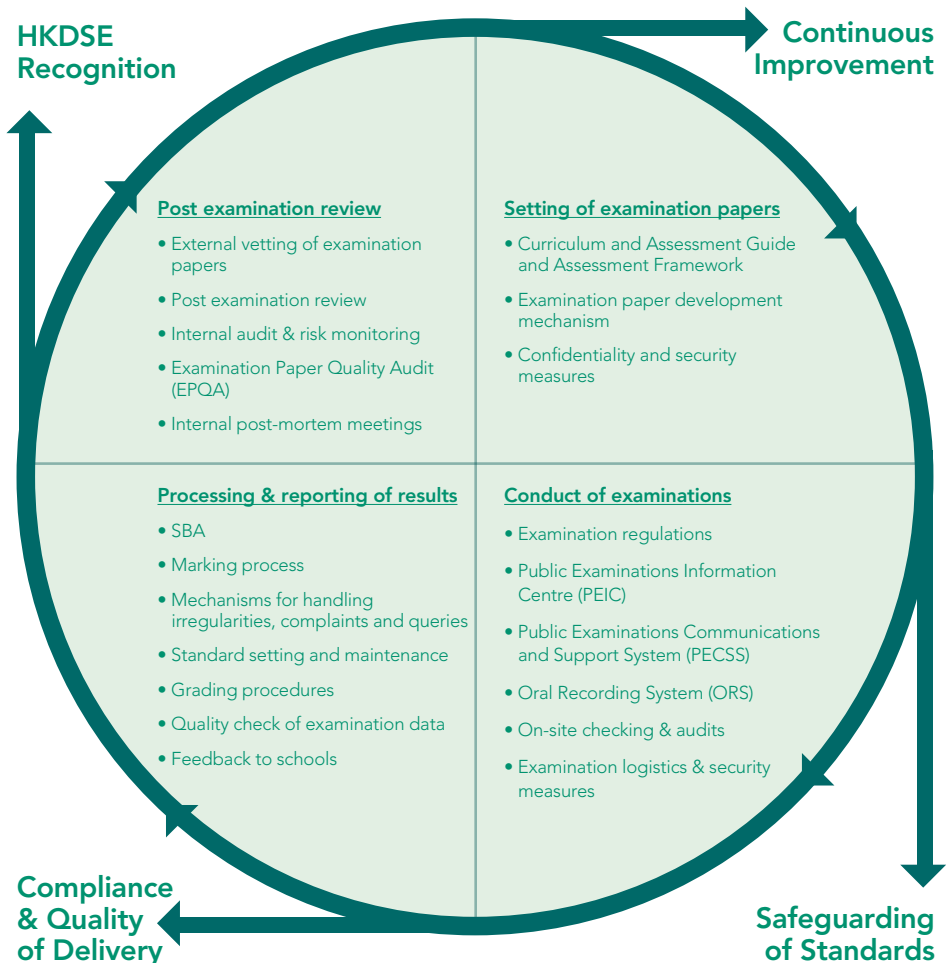
The Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) Examination has been developed to cater to the requirements of the new senior secondary curriculum. The first examination will be held in 2012.



The HKDSE Examination is administered by the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA). The quality assurance of this new examination is very important for the whole community of Hong Kong as public examinations are an integral part of our education system, and fairness and quality of provision are essential for candidates taking public examinations in Hong Kong.

Over the past decades, the HKEAA has built a solid foundation of knowledge and expertise in delivering different types of public assessments to a high professional standard. Robust and rigorous quality assurance practices are in place and strictly observed throughout the different stages of examination provision. All these good practices will be continually enhanced and applied in the HKDSE Examination.

Overview of the HKDSE Quality Assurance Framework



Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination

Quality Assurance Framework

Objectives of the Quality Assurance Framework

Safeguarding of standards	To ensure that the standards of the examination papers are consistently upheld at the expected and required level.
Compliance and quality of delivery	To ensure that the examinations are conducted in compliance with established regulations and guidelines, so that fairness and reliability can be maintained.
Recognition of the HKDSE	To ensure that examination data and results are processed and reported appropriately, at the necessary standards of reliability and integrity in order to achieve both local and international recognition.
Continuous Improvement	To ensure that feedback is collected from and provided to stakeholders by conducting regular reviews and quality audits in order to improve our service continuously.

HKDSE Examination - Quality Assurance for Core Processes

The HKDSE quality assurance framework is process-driven. Different quality assurance measures are implemented in the four core examination processes*:

- 1. Setting of examination papers**
- 2. Conduct of examinations**
- 3. Processing and reporting of results**
- 4. Post examination review**

* For Applied Learning (ApL) subjects, the HKEAA is mainly responsible for the moderation of assessment results submitted by individual course providers to assure comparability of assessment results within individual subject areas. The core examination processes described above are therefore not fully applicable to ApL subjects.

Setting of examination papers

All examination papers are developed according to the Curriculum and Assessment (C&A) Guides and Assessment Frameworks for different HKDSE subjects. Moderation committees are established for the setting of examination papers. These committees comprise professionals with an appropriate balance of expertise from university academics, secondary school teachers, curriculum officers and subject experts. A specification grid, which specifies the relationship between assessment objectives and the scheme of assessment, is used to check whether the paper accurately reflects the weighting of the learning outcomes or assessment objectives.

Furthermore, a rigorous mechanism for checking and proof-reading of the examination paper is in place, to ensure that the questions are workable and free from any printing, spelling, labelling or other errors.

As the setting of question papers is highly confidential in nature, stringent security measures are in place to govern the handling of all secret documents involved, including requirements for coding, filing, record keeping, storage and movement.

Conduct of examinations

There is a set of HKDSE examination regulations for candidates to observe and comply with to ensure the fairness of the HKDSE Examination. Different communication channels and support systems are provided to facilitate both candidates and schools in handling examination-related matters efficiently and appropriately. These include the operation of the Public Examinations Information Centre (PEIC), the Public Examinations Communications & Support System (PECSS) and the Oral Recording System (ORS).



The examinations are administered by trained professionals with requisite knowledge and are monitored by on-site checks and audits. There are security measures to ensure confidentiality of the examinations at different stages of the examination process (e.g. in the printing, packing, storage and delivery of examination papers, and the marking processes).

Processing and reporting of results

Examination results are processed accurately throughout different stages. For instance, marking schemes are prepared so that markers are able to mark consistently according to agreed standards. The increased use of onscreen marking (OSM) enables better monitoring of progress and marking quality in real time. As a result, timely and effective feedback can be provided by examiners to markers if necessary. Moreover, double-marking (each script being marked independently by two markers) will be adopted for more examination papers to enhance marking reliability. School-based assessment (SBA) scores are moderated as appropriate to ensure the reliability and consistency of assessment standards.

There are rigorous mechanisms for standard setting and grading of results. Standards-referenced reporting (SRR) is adopted. Candidates' results are reported against a set of level descriptors which illustrates the typical performance of candidates at each level. Judge panels comprising subject experts are responsible for setting the cut scores for different levels of performance based on the level descriptors. In the grading process, various factors are considered and expert judgments are made based on candidates' actual performance, examination statistics and the recommended cut scores derived from the application of statistical models. This ensures that grading standards are held constant each year. For ApL subjects, the HKEAA is responsible for the moderation of assessment results submitted by course providers in order to ensure the consistency of assessment standards.

Before the reporting of results, quality check of examination data at different critical stages of examination data processing is conducted. "System logic detectors" are in place and any errors detected must be eliminated before proceeding to the next stage. As a result, the accuracy of examination data processing can be assured.

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Post examination review

The quality of examination papers is reviewed by means of psychometric analysis. There is an Examination Paper Quality Audit (EPQA) mechanism which aims to identify areas for improvement with regard to the validity, reliability and equitability of the examination papers. In addition, external overseas vetting of examination papers is conducted to ensure

that the HKDSE standards are comparable with those of overseas examinations in order to maintain international recognition. Internally, post examination reviews and different types of internal audits are carried out to identify areas for improvement and to ensure that key risks associated with the provision of the HKDSE Examination can be monitored and managed at an acceptable level.



On-going development and Communication

The HKEAA will continue to review and enhance the quality assurance framework. In addition, regular and on-going communication with parents, teachers, the school sector and various other stakeholders will be maintained to provide and collect feedback in order to further improve the quality of provision of the HKDSE Examination.

Enquiries

If you have any enquires regarding the contents of the Quality Assurance Framework, please contact us by email at: qa@hkeaa.edu.hk