C. **Response to concerns over SBA**

1. **Why is it necessary to implement SBA?**

SBA has been implemented in a number of subjects (some since 1978) where teachers assess students’ performance in specific areas. Examples are the laboratory work of Biology and Chemistry, reading programme of Chinese Language and Culture, and projects of engineering sciences and liberal studies.

Certain components of some curricula cannot be assessed within the context of a written examination, and this can be complemented by SBA. An even more compelling reason for SBA is that it emphasizes the assessment of a wide range of abilities of students including the process of their learning and growth, thereby strengthening the tie between assessment and teaching and utilizing assessment as a support to teaching. The validity of assessments is therefore greatly improved. Teachers are undoubtedly the most suitable people to assess the process of students’ learning and growth. SBA can also help reduce the pressure of “one-off examination” on students and affirm the professional judgment of teachers.

2. **How will teachers and students understand the rationale for SBA?**

The assessment guidelines for each subject spell out the aims of SBA of the subject so that teachers and students understand the rationale for its implementation. The following serves as examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subjects</th>
<th>Aims</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Science subjects</td>
<td>• To enhance the ability of planning and performing experiments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• To enhance the ability of designing scientific research and report writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese Language and Culture</td>
<td>• To enhance students’ interest in extra-curricular reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• To assess the learning outcome reasonably through a number of assignments during the learning process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• To enhance self-learning ability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal studies</td>
<td>• To enhance self-initiated research and organizing ability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• To enhance various generic skills</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. **How does the HKEAA ensure uniformity in SBA?**

Guidelines issued by the HKEAA give detailed explanation on assessment tasks and criteria so that teachers know how assessment and marking are carried out. The marking handbook for the assessment of extra-curricula reading programme of Chinese Language and Culture, for example, expounds on the assignment format and marking criteria as follows:

**Assignment format**

- Written assignments should normally be given except under special considerations like the need to address the characteristics of a book or for specific teaching needs, in which case other means of presentation like an album of duly captioned photos, video cassette, audio cassette or oral presentation could be accepted. However, such non-written assignments must not be given more than once each year.
• Teachers are encouraged to design their own assignment formats, taking into account the characteristics of a book, the interest and ability of students, and the feasibility and reliability of the assessment method. Assignment formats that could be used include reading report, discussion, quiz, open-book or closed-book test, and project.

• The assessment on extra-curricular reading could be scheduled flexibly to coincide with the teaching of other components of the subject. For example, if the main theme of a book is related to an issue on Chinese culture being discussed in class, then the timing and format of the assessment on that book would be aligned.

Marking criteria

• A 10-point system is adopted with 10 being the highest and 0 the lowest, and all figures need to be rounded up to the nearest mark.

• Regardless of the assignment format, three aspects of student performance, namely, “Level of comprehension”, “Depth of response” and “expressiveness” have to be assessed. The marking criteria are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of comprehension</th>
<th>Depth of response</th>
<th>Expressiveness</th>
<th>Mark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Able to draw inferences and form one’s own opinion</td>
<td>Comprehensive and in-depth, able to give personal view</td>
<td>Fluent and clear, with expression technique matching well with the subject matter</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Show thorough understanding of the text</td>
<td>Comprehensive and in-depth</td>
<td>Fluent and clear</td>
<td>7-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Show basic understanding of the text</td>
<td>Complete and reasonable</td>
<td>Clear</td>
<td>4-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Show fragmented understanding of the text</td>
<td>Superficial or unreasonable</td>
<td>Unclear or inarticulate</td>
<td>1-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fail to finish or hand in the assignment, or found cheating</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above marking criteria in fact originate from the 3-tier scheme comprising nine levels—7 to 9 marks represent the upper three levels, 4 to 6 marks the middle three levels, and 1 to 3 marks the lower three levels. 10 marks are awarded only to flawless works, and 0 mark to cases of plagiarism, cheating or evasion, both being the exception rather than the norm.

4. How does the HKEAA ensure uniformity of marking standard among all schools?

Marks from SBA are collected by HKEAA and computer-analyzed. Marks given by an individual teacher, if found deviating from other teachers, will be moderated. Such moderation, however, is intended to eliminate the difference in marking standard of teachers only; the ranking of the students under individual teachers will not be affected.

Moderation of SBA results is teacher-based and the public examination results of the students under the same teacher serve as the reference point. In other words, the marks
of students in different classes but taught by the same teacher are to be moderated collectively. Once the moderation index mark is available from the relevant examination, comparison between the mean mark of the school-based assessment results of all students taught by the same teacher and that of the moderation index mark of the students can be made.

Currently, for most of the subjects, SBA results are counter checked by staff appointed by the HKEAA. If the grading is found to be highly inappropriate, the HKEAA will collect the relevant assignments for remarking (staff appointed by the HKEAA may conduct school visit for remarking if necessary). The remarker’s marks may be used to replace the original marks or may serve as reference for mark adjustment.

5. How does the HKEAA ensure that the assessments made by teachers are fair?

Teachers are professionals who discharge their duties with professional ethics, and the public should view such with confidence. In SBA, however, teachers also play the role of a marker and should therefore be subject to the system of “declaration of interests” like any public examination markers. Hence, teachers are required to make declaration of interests.

Besides, the HKEAA will issue administrative guidelines to schools to ensure SBA is implemented fairly, for example:

Teachers need to adhere to the following measures if they adopt test as the assignment format for assessment:

- Question papers should be printed under security;
- After printing, the original of the question paper should be immediately returned to the teacher-setter for retention. Printed question papers should be sealed immediately and forwarded to the teachers concerned for storage. Defective copies and related information must be properly disposed of (say shredded immediately);
- Access to the printing room should be restricted to authorized persons.

Students’ creative writing exercises and reading assignments must be authentic. Teachers should give 0 mark to cases of cheating and inform the HKEAA via school principals.

6. How does the HKEAA help teachers to become effective assessors?

Currently, there are regular meetings for teachers of different subjects. The HKEAA will also organize training courses on SBA to enhance teachers’ knowledge on assessment. The government has allocated funds for this purpose.

7. Is there an appeal mechanism?

An appeal mechanism is in place for written examinations. The HKEAA will discuss with EMB and school representatives to make SBA more transparent. Possible measures include:

- Putting the marking guidelines on the HKEAA website so that students know the criteria for marking and related procedures;
- Discussing with EMB and school representatives with a view to further strengthening the current appeal mechanism.
8. **Will SBA increase teachers’ workload?**

The answer depends on the teachers’ value judgment on their professional work. SBA should be so designed that it forms an integral part of the teaching curriculum and not an “add-on”. For example, the project in a technology subject is meant to assess the outcome of students’ practical skills on the work site, and the SBA component in a science subject mainly assesses how students perform experiments in a laboratory, which is an important component of the subject.

9. **Is it realistic to maintain 40 students in a class?**

The new senior secondary curriculum will facilitate the implementation of SBA since the total teaching hours for every subject increase compared with the current arrangement, which in turn means an increase of contact hours between teachers and students.