8 November 2011

To: Principals of HKDSE Participating Schools

Dear Principal

Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) Examination 2012
Delivery of Practice Papers for 24 New Senior Secondary (NSS) Subjects

Thank you for your confirmation of the requirements for the practice papers of the 2012 HKDSE subjects offered by your school and the special question papers required by your SEN students, where applicable. This letter is to inform you of the logistics arrangements for the delivery of practice papers in early January 2012.

Delivery arrangements

To preserve the security of the question papers, the practice papers will be packed in sealed carton boxes and delivered to schools by a courier company between 7:00 am and 8:30 am from 4 January to 16 January 2012 (17 and 18 January 2012 being reserve dates). The delivery timetable for the 24 NSS subjects is given again in Annex 1 for your ease of reference. Schools are requested to deploy a responsible staff member to be on duty at school during the specified time and period to receive the carton boxes and place them under safe custody.

Schools may decide whether to use the practice papers for internal examinations or for students' practice. As a large number of schools will be using the practice papers for conducting the mock examinations on the dates of delivery of the respective subjects/papers, in order not to jeopardise the confidentiality of the practice papers, schools are requested NOT to distribute the practice papers to their teachers or students on the delivery day if they are not using them for mock examinations. Your cooperation in this respect is greatly appreciated.

Sample Answer Books/Answer Sheets

Schools will be provided with the Question Papers and/or Question-Answer Books for the practice papers but not answer books/answer sheets. To help schools prepare the answer books/answer sheets needed by their students for the practice papers of various subjects, a summary of the requirements at paper level for individual subjects is enclosed as Annex 2 for your reference.

To familiarise your students with the format of the answer books to be used in the 2012 HKDSE Examination, two sets of sample answer books and answer sheets will be made available for collection by schools around late November 2011. Schools will be informed of the collection arrangements by mid-November. In the meantime, schools may visit the HKEAA website at http://www.hkeaa.edu.hk to view the samples of the cover and inner pages of the HKDSE answer books for reference. Alternatively, Principals and School Examinations Officers may access the information from the “Practice Papers” main page of the HKDSE Examination Online Services at https://www.hkdse.hkeaa.edu.hk from 28 November 2011.
Uploading of marking schemes and practice papers

The marking schemes of the practice papers of respective subjects will be uploaded to the HKDSE Examination Online Services at https://www.hkdse.hkeaa.edu.hk by 5:00 pm on the next working day after delivery. Principals and School Examination Officers have to login their designated user account to access and download the marking schemes. Schools are requested to note that the marking schemes are restricted for teachers’ reference only and should not be disclosed to their students and the public. It should also be noted that the marking schemes to be uploaded are the preliminary versions before the normal standardisation process and some revisions may be necessary after actual samples of performance have been collected and scrutinised by the HKEAA. Teachers are strongly advised to conduct their own internal standardisation procedures before applying the marking schemes.

For the reference of schools and private candidates, the HKEAA will upload the practice papers and marking schemes of the 24 NSS subjects (including the audio files for the listening tests of the two language subjects) to the HKEAA website and the HKDSE Examination Online Services in early February 2012.

Support to teachers

In order to provide teachers with more information about the practice papers, briefing sessions will be organised in February 2012 for each of the 24 subjects to discuss the requirements of the practice papers, the marking criteria, samples of performance, and common errors made by students. This will provide useful feedback to teachers and students in preparation for the 2012 HKDSE examination. Further details regarding these briefing sessions will be sent to schools in due course.

Special question papers for SEN candidates

The quantities and types of special question papers for individual subjects to be provided (Annex 3) are based on the schools’ confirmation of the requirements in June 2011. As explained in our Examination Circular No. 5 dated 14 September 2011, applications for special examination arrangements (SEA) from candidates with special needs submitted in September/October 2011 or subsequent requests for changes to the SEA made would be processed at a later stage, with the notification of results in mid-end January 2012. In this connection, we plead your understanding that additional question papers in special format would not be provided for late applicants due to time constraints.

Regarding the listening tests for the two language subjects, two additional sets of practice listening CDs for Chinese Language Papers 3 & 5 and English Language Paper 3 will be provided if the candidates with special needs in your school have been notified of the approved SEA in March/April 2011 or they have submitted their applications through the SEN Online Services in September/October 2011. Please draw your subject teachers’ attention to the fact that, unlike the live examinations, prolonged pauses have NOT been included in the practice listening CDs. To facilitate schools in the administration of the listening tests to SEN candidates, each practice listening CD will be accompanied by a set of tapescripts tailor-made for different types of prolonged pauses in the listening tests. In January 2012, the schools concerned will also be provided with a list of SEN candidates indicating the type of tapescripts to be adopted for individual candidates, after the endorsement of the provision of SEA by the Committee on Special Needs Candidates and/or the Task Group on Special Examination Arrangements for Candidates with Specific Learning Disabilities.

Checklist of practice papers to be delivered

Based on your confirmation of the requirements for the practice papers in June 2011, we have prepared a checklist (Annex 4) which indicates the number of packets of practice
papers for respective NSS subjects to be delivered to your school each day from 4 January to 16 January 2011.

Schools are requested to note that the requirements they submitted to the HKEAA in end June / July 2011 have been treated as final. In case schools are in need of additional practice papers due to extenuating circumstances, they should contact the HKEAA immediately. For schools that have not confirmed / indicated their requirements for the practice papers beforehand, we regret that we are unable to entertain additional requests at this very late stage as the practice papers are already being printed.

In case of queries about the above arrangements, please contact us on 36288950 (for normal question papers) and 3628 8917 (for special question papers).

Yours sincerely

Margaret Hui (Ms)
General Manager
School Examinations and Assessment Division