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Ref.: DSE/CM 6B/2013

18 October 2013

Dear Principal

Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination 2013 Guidelines for Processing Public Examination Irregularities

Each year, the HKEAA (the Authority) reviews and updates the public examination procedures and regulations taking into account circumstances where candidates failed to comply with the stipulated rules and procedures in the previous examination. Minor changes or fine-tuning of the examination procedures, regulations and instructions are made annually if necessary. To ensure the smooth conduct of the examinations, the major changes are expressly stated in the Handbook for Candidates and highlighted in the Video for Candidates.

The Standing Committee of the Authority processes all complaints and irregularities related to public examinations in accordance with a set of guidelines approved by the Public Examinations Board (PEB). To increase its openness and transparency, the Authority has been disclosing the magnitude of mark penalties and mark adjustments on cases of individual candidates from the 2011 examinations. The information is conveyed to the candidates concerned before the release of examination results. To foster public understanding of the ways in which examination irregularities are handled, the Authority has produced a simplified version of the Guidelines, namely **“The Equitable Treatment of Examination Irregularities”** and a leaflet entitled **“Irregularities in Public Examinations”** with a view to informing major stakeholders, i.e. schools, candidates and parents, of the rationale for processing examination irregularities and the circumstances under which the guidelines are applied. A set of the updated irregularity guidelines for the 2014 examinations will be available from the HKEAA website (http://www.hkeaa.edu.hk/DocLibrary/HKDSE/Irregularities_Leaflet_E.pdf) in early December 2013.

Penalty cases for 2013 HKDSE

In the 2013 HKDSE Examination, the PEB made decisions on 976 penalty cases for breaching examination regulations. A breakdown of these cases is listed below:

- (a) Subject disqualification was imposed on one candidate for cheating in the examination.
- (b) Zero marks were imposed on 26 candidates for plagiarism in the school-based assessment (SBA) component of the subjects concerned. The HKEAA would like to reiterate the serious consequence of plagiarism and has disseminated a set of revised guidelines for handling SBA plagiarism in the 2014 HKDSE Examination vide a letter on 15 October 2013.
- (c) Subject downgrade was imposed on 42 candidates for offences of a more severe nature, such as mobile phones being turned on and found on candidates' body or desk, bringing in unauthorised materials capable of giving unfair advantage and public display of barcode labels removed from examination centres.
- (d) Mark penalties were imposed on 907 candidates for breaking the examination regulations. The levels of penalty are 1%, 2% and 5% of the maximum paper mark depending on the seriousness of the offences.

Attached for your information is a list showing the number of penalty cases due to various offences in the 2013 HKDSE Examination.

If you have any questions, please contact Mr KW Lok on 3628 8950.

Yours sincerely



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Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination 2013

Penalties for not following examination regulations

Severe penalties which involve zero marks for SBA component, subject downgrading or disqualification

- 2 - Cheating
- 26 - Plagiarism in School-based Assessment
- 1 - Wrote foul language in the answer script
- 30 - Mobile phone in operating mode and / or found on desk / body during an examination
- 7 - Brought into the examination centre unauthorised materials capable of giving unfair assistance (e.g. handwritten notes or formulae on the calculator cover / packet)
- 3 - Unauthorised public display of barcode label(s) removed from the examination room

Mild penalties which involve mark deduction

- 529 - Took the listening test without bringing any radios (at those centres where broadcast is done by radio), batteries or earphones, arrived at the examination centre more than 30 minutes after the reporting time or brought in a prohibited electronic device other than a radio, walkman, Discman or radio-cassette player
- 51 - Mobile phones (e.g. alarm function) / sound-emitting articles under the chair sounded during an examination
- 5 - Removed any remaining barcode labels or stuck the labels on their personal belongings
- 140 - Brought into the examination centre unauthorised materials from which advantage might be gained (e.g. question paper of a previous examination session)
- 117 - Disobeyed centre supervisors' time instructions (i.e. started working / reading the question paper before being instructed to do so, continued to work after the "Stop working" announcement or continued to look at the question paper after the end of the preparation time in speaking examinations) and other instructions
- 1 - Failed to mark the multiple-choice (MC) answers on the MC answer sheets as instructed (i.e. marked the MC answers on the question-answer book or elsewhere instead of the MC answer sheet)
- 4 - Revealed candidate's own identity on the answer scripts
- 34 - Failed to stick any barcode label(s) on any answer books / question-answer books / MC answer sheets used in an examination
- 7 - Brought into the examination centre a prohibited calculator
- 17 - Left early in the examination session without acceptable reason(s) for which early leave is not allowed / Left during the first 30 minutes of an examination session without permission / Left early in the examination without the consent of an invigilator
- 0 - Took photographs, audio recorded or video recorded inside the examination room during an examination
- 2 - Disturbed or communicated with other candidates during the examination
- 0 - Consulted books / notes / reference material including those in the drawer of the examination desks in the preparation room for Speaking examinations or the examination room for written examinations.

Note: The figures represent the total number of penalties for the corresponding offences in the 2013 HKDSE.