

Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination
Examination Circular No. (3) 2020/2021
Revised Examination Regulations for 2021, 2022 and 2023 Examinations

1. This circular is to inform schools about the revisions made to the Examination Regulations for the 2021 Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination (HKDSE) which will be applicable to the 2022 and 2023 HKDSE. Details are as follows:

(a) HKDSE assessment based on Curriculum and Assessment (C&A) Guide

A new Section 1.3 is added to emphasise that the overall aim of the assessment is to evaluate candidates' achievement of the learning targets and objectives of the curriculum with the aims/learning objectives/learning targets of individual HKDSE subjects as detailed in respective C&A Guides jointly prepared by the Curriculum Development Council and the HKEAA for that particular subject.

(b) Changes in Examination timetable, cancellation of the Examination and restricting participation in the Examination due to special circumstances

The disclaimer regarding the Authority's discretion in making changes to the HKDSE examination timetable, cancellation of the Examination and restricting participation in the Examination due to special circumstances has been included in Sections 5.2 and 5.3 of the 2021 HKDSE Examination Regulations.

(c) Candidates' responsibility to comply with necessary statutory requirements for sitting the Examination

All candidates should ensure that they should comply with necessary statutory requirements for sitting the HKDSE in Hong Kong, such as applicable visa or stay conditions, quarantine requirements, etc. before the examinations. For details, please refer to Section 5.2 of the HKDSE Examination Regulations.

2. The electronic version of the updated 2021, 2022 and 2023 regulations at **Annexes 1, 2 and 3 respectively** have been posted on the HKEAA website (http://www.hkeaa.edu.hk/en/hkdse/admin/exam_regulations/) for reference of schools and the public.
3. As announced by the HKEAA on 1 September 2020, the examination timetable and Assessment Frameworks/Schemes of the Categories A and B subjects for the 2021 HKDSE have been revised owing to the teaching and learning schedule severely affected by the extended school suspension. Details have been promulgated vide Examination Circular No. (2) 2020/2021 and are available for viewing on the following HKEAA website:

Examination Circular No. (2) 2020/2021:

https://www.hkeaa.edu.hk/DocLibrary/Circulars/HKDSE/2020_21_Cir_No2_Revised_Exam_Timetable_and_Assessment_Frameworks_2021HKDSE_E.pdf

Revised examination timetable:

http://www.hkeaa.edu.hk/DocLibrary/HKDSE/Exam_Timetable/2021_DSE_Timetable.pdf

Revised Assessment Frameworks/Schemes:

http://www.hkeaa.edu.hk/en/hkdse/assessment/assessment_framework/

Action Required

4. Principals are requested to draw the attention of their teachers and students concerned to the 2021, 2022 and 2023 HKDSE Examination Regulations, as appropriate.
5. For enquiries, please contact Ms Gladys Cheng (Tel: 3628 8950).

MARGARET HUI (MS)
Head of School Examinations and Assessment

To: Principals of Participating Schools

2021 HONG KONG DIPLOMA OF SECONDARY EDUCATION EXAMINATION REGULATIONS (Revised in September 2020)

INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** The Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination (HKDSE) ('the Examination') is a public examination conducted by the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority ('HKEAA') in accordance with the provisions of the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority Ordinance (Cap. 261).
- 1.2** The primary purpose of the HKDSE is to measure the attainment of candidates who have completed a full-time three-year senior secondary course in Hong Kong. The HKDSE is conducted annually, mainly in March to May.
- 1.3** Each HKDSE subject is assessed based on the Curriculum and Assessment (C&A) Guide (Secondary 4 to 6) jointly prepared by the Curriculum Development Council and the HKEAA for that particular subject. The overall aim of the assessment is to evaluate candidates' achievement of the learning targets and objectives of the curriculum and so the learning outcomes that are assessed and examined through the HKDSE are aligned with the learning goals of the secondary curriculum in general, as well as with the aims/learning objectives/learning targets of individual HKDSE subjects as detailed in respective C&A Guides.

SUBJECTS OF THE EXAMINATION

- 2.1** There are three categories of subjects:

Category A

These refer to the Senior Secondary subjects.

Category B

These refer to the Applied Learning (ApL) subjects approved by the Education Bureau (EDB).

Category C

These refer to the other language subjects which will be examined using the question papers of Cambridge Assessment International Education (Cambridge International).

- 2.2** The Category A subjects are as follows:

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Language in which subject is to be examined</u>
Biology**	Chinese or English
Business, Accounting and Financial Studies	Chinese or English
Chemistry**	Chinese or English
Chinese History	Chinese only
Chinese Language	Chinese only
Chinese Literature	Chinese only
Design and Applied Technology**	Chinese or English
Economics	Chinese or English
English Language	English only
Ethics and Religious Studies	Chinese or English
Geography	Chinese or English
Health Management and Social Care	Chinese or English
History	Chinese or English
Information and Communication Technology	Chinese or English

Liberal Studies	Chinese or English
Literature in English	English only
Mathematics#	Chinese or English
Compulsory Part	
Extended Part	
Module 1. Calculus and Statistics	
Module 2. Algebra and Calculus	
Music	Chinese or English
Physical Education	Chinese or English
Physics**	Chinese or English
Science**	Chinese or English
Combined Science (Biology, Chemistry)	
Combined Science (Biology, Physics)	
Combined Science (Chemistry, Physics)	
Integrated Science	
Technology and Living**	Chinese or English
Tourism and Hospitality Studies	Chinese or English
Visual Arts	Chinese or English

Note:

In any Category A subjects examinable in both Chinese and English, only one language version may be entered for in the same Examination.

** Subjects that require laboratory/workshop facilities (see Regulation 3.4(3))

There are two parts in the subject of Mathematics: the compulsory part and the extended part. Candidates may choose to take either the compulsory part only or the compulsory part plus **one** of the modules of the extended part.

2.3 There are two streams in the subject of Science: Combined Science and Integrated Science. To ensure there is no overlap with Biology, Chemistry and Physics, only one subject in each of the following groups may be entered for in the same Examination:

Biology
Integrated Science
Combined Science (Biology, Chemistry)
Combined Science (Biology, Physics)

Chemistry
Integrated Science
Combined Science (Biology, Chemistry)
Combined Science (Chemistry, Physics)

Physics
Integrated Science
Combined Science (Biology, Physics)
Combined Science (Chemistry, Physics)

2.4 The Applied Learning subjects in Category B are grouped under six areas of studies:

Creative Studies
Media and Communication
Business, Management and Law
Services
Applied Science
Engineering and Production

Besides the six areas of studies, Applied Learning Chinese courses for non-Chinese speaking

students have been introduced.

An ApL subject is a two-year course offered by a course provider to students through schools. Entries from private candidates will normally not be accepted (but see Regulation 2.5). Normally, the first year of study (Y1) commences in the first or second term of Secondary 4 or the first term of Secondary 5, and the second year (Y2) is completed in Secondary 5 and/or Secondary 6. At the time of registration, candidates must indicate the name of the subject entered according to the list of subjects approved by the Education Bureau.

- 2.5** Students who repeat Secondary 4 or Secondary 5 in schools but will complete Y2 of ApL subjects may enter for ‘ApL subjects only’ as school candidates with the support of school principals and course providers. Such entries must be endorsed by the school principal during registration.

Special approval may be given to candidates entering for ‘ApL subjects only’ as private candidates under the following circumstances:

- (1) Students who have left schools at the end of Y1 but will complete Y2 with the support of course providers.
- (2) Students who have entered for the HKDSE as school candidates but left schools before the completion of Secondary 4, Secondary 5 or Secondary 6. These students, irrespective of whether they meet the entry requirements for private candidates (Regulation 4.1), may seek special approval from the HKEAA to enter for ApL subjects with the support of course providers if they can complete Y2.

- 2.6** The list of ApL subjects to be offered in 2021 is shown below:

Area of Studies	Course Cluster	Course
<i>Creative Studies</i>	1. Design Studies	Display and Jewellery Design Fashion Image Design Interior Design
	2. Media Arts	Computer Game and Animation Design
	3. Performing Arts	Taking a Chance on Dance The Essentials of Theatre Arts
<i>Media and Communication</i>	4. Films, TV and Broadcasting Studies	Film and Transmedia
	5. Media Production and Public Relations	Creative Advertising Magazine Editing and Production Public Relations and Communication
<i>Business, Management and Law</i>	6. Accounting and Finance	Accounting for e-Business
	7. Business Studies	Business Data Analysis Entrepreneurship for SME Marketing and Online Promotion
	8. Legal Studies	Law Enforcement in Hong Kong
<i>Services</i>	9. Food Services and Management	Pâtisserie and Café Operations Western Cuisine
	10. Hospitality Services	Hospitality Services in Practice Hotel Operations
	11. Personal and Community Services	Child Care and Development Child Care and Education Fundamental Cosmetology
<i>Applied Science</i>	12. Medical Science and Health Care	Animal Care Foundation in Chinese Medicine Health Care Practice Medical Laboratory Science
	13. Psychology	Applied Psychology Practical Psychology
	14. Sports	Exercise Science and Health Fitness Sports and Fitness Coaching

<i>Engineering and Production</i>	15. Civil, Electrical and Mechanical Engineering	Constructing Smart Cities Electrical and Energy Engineering
	16. Information Engineering	Computer Forensic Technology Internet of Everything Application
	17. Services Engineering	Aviation Studies Railway Studies
<i>Applied Learning Chinese (for non-Chinese speaking students)</i>		Chinese in Business Service Chinese in Practical Context Practical Chinese

There is no language indicator for entry to Applied Learning subjects.

2.7 The Category C subjects are as follows:

French
German
Hindi
Japanese
Spanish
Urdu

Advanced Subsidiary (AS) level question papers from Cambridge International will be used for these six language subjects to be offered in the November 2020 series. There is no speaking component for Hindi and Urdu examinations.

2.8 Candidates may take up to a maximum of eight subjects. These subjects may come from Categories A, B or C. If a candidate chooses to take the extended part of Mathematics, the result of the extended part will be reported separately from the compulsory part. The extended part is not regarded as an additional subject. For candidates choosing eight subjects, at least one of the subjects chosen must come from the following areas:

- (a) Ethics and Religious Studies/Music/Physical Education/Visual Arts in Category A
- (b) Applied Learning subjects in Category B
- (c) Other language subjects in Category C

2.9 A candidate may only enter for the Examination either as a school candidate or as a private candidate but not both in the same examination year.

PARTICIPATION IN THE EXAMINATION BY SCHOOLS

3.1 The participation of schools in the Examination shall be subject to the prior approval of the **HKEAA**. At the time of application for participation, the school should provide evidence that it is a registered school and is running courses and operating classes in accordance with the Education Bureau registration requirements; and that the school agrees to comply with the examination regulations. The **HKEAA** may seek advice from the Education Bureau where necessary. In its consideration and determination of an application, the **HKEAA** reserves the right to refuse such an application and to make such conditions, in addition to those conditions contained within these Regulations, as it considers appropriate.

3.2 Only bona fide Secondary 6 students of registered schools in Hong Kong approved for participation may be entered as school candidates. The students must be studying at the registered address of the schools. The principal's certification to this effect will be required at the time of registration.
Exceptional entry for Applied Learning subjects only at Secondary 4 or Secondary 5 is subject to the endorsement of school principals (see Regulation 2.5).

3.3 Schools wishing

- (1) to enter candidates for the first time; or
- (2) to enter candidates for any subject that requires laboratory/workshop facilities for the first time,

must make a written application to the Secretary General of the HKEAA for approval by 30 June, three years preceding the Examination.

3.4 Schools are required to apply for first participation in HKDSE and comply with the following conditions:

- (1) Schools will be required to make a declaration that they must make their school premises available as may be required for the conduct of examinations and place their teaching staff at the reasonable disposal of the HKEAA (see Regulation 3.5). For schools that cannot comply with the requirement, the HKEAA reserves the right to ask such schools to meet the costs incurred by hiring other examination venues and/or invigilators to accommodate their candidates.
- (2) Schools will have to submit the application by 30 June, three years before the Examination.
- (3) For some subjects, schools will have to declare that they can provide the laboratory/workshop facilities for practical work. These subjects include Biology, Chemistry, Design & Applied Technology, Physics, Integrated/Combined Science and Technology & Living.

3.5 Schools presenting candidates for the Examination must provide teaching staff to undertake invigilation duties in relation to the total number of subject entries. For schools that are unable to provide examination venues or teaching staff to serve as invigilation staff in a particular year, application for exemption must be made to the Secretary General before 30 September of the year preceding the Examination with valid reasons. Schools that do not have proper venues or cannot provide examination venues are required to provide extra invigilation staff. Schools that are unable to provide the required number of invigilation staff may, at the discretion of the Secretary General, be allowed the option of paying the costs of hiring invigilators.

3.6 For school candidates, there will be a School-based Assessment (SBA) component for the following subjects:

Biology
Chemistry
Chinese Language
Chinese Literature
Design and Applied Technology
English Language
Health Management and Social Care
Information and Communication Technology
Liberal Studies
Literature in English
Physics
Integrated/Combined Science
Technology and Living
Visual Arts

Schools are required to fulfill the SBA requirements for subjects entered by candidates of their schools. The HKEAA will not accept entries for subjects from candidates presented by schools which do not join the SBA scheme.

School candidates who repeat Secondary 6 in schools have to be re-assessed in S6 and meet the SBA requirements of the respective subjects entered. If the schools do not offer the elective subject(s) that the candidates wish to re-take in the examination, the candidates may apply for exemption from the SBA for the particular subject(s). The candidates' subject result

will be based entirely on their public examination result (see also Regulation 7.9). Special approval must be sought from the HKEAA prior to registration. This special exemption does not apply to the core subjects – Chinese Language, English Language and Liberal Studies.

- 3.7** Compliance by schools with Regulations 3.4 to 3.6 will be regarded as a condition of participation in the Examination.
- 3.8** The Secretary General will notify schools of the decisions of the HKEAA under Regulations 3.1 and 3.3, normally not later than 31 August, three years preceding the Examination. Any appeal against the HKEAA's decisions under Regulations 3.1 and 3.3 should be made in writing to the Secretary General within 30 days from the date of the above notification.
- 3.9** Under exceptional circumstances, a school may be given provisional approval for participation in the Examination or in a subject that requires laboratory/workshop facilities; the final approval being subject to the school fulfilling the conditions under which the provisional approval was given.
- 3.10** Participation in the Examination and in subjects that require laboratory/workshop facilities will be subject to annual review by the HKEAA. The Secretary General will inform schools of any decision of the HKEAA to withdraw permission for the schools to participate or to impose conditions for continued participation, normally not later than 31 August, three years preceding the Examination. Nonetheless, schools that have not presented candidates for three consecutive years will be removed from the list of participating schools for the following examination year.
- 3.11** Notwithstanding Regulation 3.10, the HKEAA may by notice rescind the participation of any school upon receipt of notification from the Education Bureau that:
- (1) the registration of the said school under the terms of the Education Ordinance (Cap. 279) has been cancelled; OR
 - (2) registration of the premises or part of the premises of the said school under the terms of the Education Ordinance (Cap. 279) has been refused; OR
 - (3) the said school has been found to be operating in premises all or part of which are not registered under the terms of the Education Ordinance (Cap. 279).
- The participation of any such school shall cease with effect from the date of the said notice, or with effect from such other date as the HKEAA may specify in the said notice.
- 3.12** Should permission to participate be withdrawn under Regulation 3.10 or 3.11, a school may make application to participate again in accordance with Regulations 3.1 and 3.3 as if applying to enter candidates for the first time.
- 3.13** The list of schools approved for participation in the Examination together with approved subjects that require laboratory/workshop facilities is available at the HKEAA's offices, District Offices and the HKEAA's website (www.hkeaa.edu.hk) from 1 June in the year preceding the Examination.

PARTICIPATION IN THE EXAMINATION BY PRIVATE CANDIDATES

- 4.1** A person may enter for the Examination as a private candidate provided he/she has satisfied the requirements set out at (a) or (b) or (c) below:
- (a) The person has sat the previous HKDSE or an equivalent examination, or
 - (b) The person has reached the age of 19 by 1 January of the year of the Examination, or
 - (c) The person has completed or is currently pursuing a non-HKDSE curriculum equivalent to Secondary 6 as determined by the HKEAA in the year preceding the Examination.
- 4.2** The HKEAA may consider applications from persons possessing other qualifications or pleading special circumstances. Persons who have sat other public examinations are

expected to demonstrate a suitable level of competence in the same subject(s) entered for the Examination and may be required to provide supporting documents from their schools, if applicable. Persons who are currently pursuing an HKDSE curriculum will not normally be considered for special entry to the Examination. Exceptional cases may be considered on a case-by-case basis. Applications under this regulation must be made in writing to the Secretary General before the normal closing date for entry.

- 4.3 A private candidate may enter for a subject which requires laboratory/workshop facilities (subjects in 2.2 marked with **) only if the candidate can produce evidence of having sat the subject in a previous HKDSE or in an equivalent public examination, or having completed or is currently pursuing the study of the subject up to a level equivalent to the HKDSE in the year preceding the Examination. [Notwithstanding this provision, the HKEAA will not accept entries from private candidates for Design and Applied Technology.]
- 4.4 For Category A subjects with an SBA component, private candidates are not required to complete the SBA component of the subjects entered (except Visual Arts). Their subject marks will be based entirely on their public examination results (see also Regulation 7.9). For Visual Arts in which the SBA component carries a weighting of 50%, private candidates will be required to submit a portfolio in lieu of the SBA.

GENERAL

- 5.1 The subjects of the Examination will be examined in accordance with a timetable, which will normally be announced in November in the year preceding the Examination. A provisional examination timetable will be provided to participating schools by May in the year preceding the Examination.
- 5.2 All the dates and times stated in the Regulations and the examination timetable are subject to change. Although the HKEAA will endeavour to ensure that all examinations will be conducted on the dates and at the times as specified in the relevant examination timetable, it cannot guarantee that this will be so. The HKEAA will also not be liable for any delay, non-performance, claim, complaint or dispute arising from circumstances or causes such as epidemic or pandemic, terrorist attack, demonstrations or riots, social unrest or public disorder; explosion, fire, natural disasters or inclement weather conditions; destruction, suspension, unavailability or break-down of transport, telecommunication, electricity or other public utility; labour disturbance including but without limitation to boycott and strike; quarantine measures or restrictions; immigration or border controls; compliance with any law or governmental order, rule, regulation or direction, etc. Candidates themselves shall be solely responsible for obtaining all necessary visa, entry permit, etc. to cover the Examination period and, in the event of any epidemic or pandemic situations in Hong Kong, for fulfilling all the prevailing entry and quarantine requirements in accordance with the laws of Hong Kong in order to take part in the Examination. Candidates themselves shall also be solely responsible for full compliance with any applicable visa or stay conditions and quarantine requirements, etc., and the HKEAA shall have no responsibility for any consequences if they fail to comply or have any difficulty in doing so.
- 5.3 The HKEAA may at its sole discretion determine how to conduct and deal with the Examination as it considers necessary or advantageous and proper, and this includes rescheduling, cancelling or changing the mode of examination and/or assessment for the whole Examination or any part thereof for all candidates or individual candidates, or refusing, restricting or withdrawing participation in the Examination by certain candidates as and when necessary (e.g. due to public health or disease prevention reasons). In any of the above events, ~~In the event of an examination having to be rescheduled or cancelled, the HKEAA will not accept any liability in respect of claims for expenses, refunds or other damages. If the whole Examination or any part thereof is cancelled, the HKEAA~~ However, it may at its discretion refund the whole or part of the fees paid after deducting any costs incurred. ~~in respect of an examination which has to be cancelled.~~

- 5.4** Examination fees will be announced before June in the year preceding the Examination.
- 5.5** Candidates may not submit more than one entry for the Examination, whether for the same or different subjects, and whether as school or private candidates.
- 5.6** The **HKEAA** reserves the right to reject an application for entry to any examination conducted by the **HKEAA** if it is satisfied that the applicant has been involved in any serious irregularity, misconduct or dishonesty in any examination conducted by the **HKEAA**, or in connection with certificates, statements of results or similar documents.
- 5.7** Under special circumstances the **HKEAA** may at its discretion,
- (1) admit a candidate after the normal closing date for entry, on payment of a supplementary fee in addition to the normal examination fee;
 - (2) allow the addition or substitution of a subject or subjects to a candidate's entries after they have been accepted, on payment of a supplementary fee (For the purpose of this regulation, a change of language version will be regarded as a change of subject.);
 - (3) allow changes in a candidate's choice of paper, or modules within a paper, on payment of a supplementary fee;
 - (4) accept a script submitted by a candidate in a language medium other than that for which the candidate entered, or for a subject/paper/module other than that for which he/she entered, on payment of a supplementary fee;
 - (5) permit a school candidate who has ceased to attend the school which submitted the candidate's entry to change his/her status to that of a private candidate (subject to his/her satisfying the relevant entry requirement), on payment of the initial fee and a supplementary fee.
- 5.8** Candidates with special needs may apply for exemption from part(s) of the requirements in an examination or special examination arrangements. Such applications must be made in writing (via schools in the case of school candidates) to the Secretary General within a period prescribed by the **HKEAA**, together with full supporting documents (e.g. medical certificates).
- 5.9** School candidates who are unable to take the examinations because of hospitalisation as a result of an accident or serious illness, or because of special circumstances, may, with the support of the school principal, apply for special consideration.
- 5.10** Entries of candidates will not be regarded as having been accepted until the fees payable have been received in full by the **HKEAA**.
- 5.11** Candidates will be responsible for checking their entry data to ensure that the entries they made at the time of registration have been correctly processed. The Secretary General must be notified in writing before a specified date of any discrepancies discovered. In the absence of such notification, the entry data will be regarded as having been confirmed. Any subsequent request for changes will be subject to the provisions of Regulation 5.6 and will not be accepted after a date stipulated by the **HKEAA**.
- 5.12** Applications for amendments to a candidate's personal particulars received after a specified date may be accepted at the discretion of the Secretary General.
- 5.13** A candidate withdrawing from the Examination may receive a partial refund of the fees paid provided that the Secretary General is notified in writing of the candidate's withdrawal before a date stipulated by the **HKEAA**. The **HKEAA** may, at its discretion, consider special applications under exceptional circumstances. There will be no refund for partial withdrawal. Examination fees are neither transferable from one examination to another, nor from one person to another. Examination fees will not be refunded to candidates who are disqualified (see Regulation 6.1).

- 5.14** Admission forms will be issued to candidates (via schools in the case of school candidates) in October in the year preceding the Examination (for Category C November series) / in or before March in the year of the Examination (for Category A subjects). Schools should not, for whatever reasons, withhold the admission forms of their students.
- 5.15** On application by a candidate, a duplicate admission form may be issued to replace one which has been lost, subject to payment of a supplementary fee.
- 5.16** Electronic calculators, including programmable calculators, may be used in any non-language examination session provided that the calculators are battery-powered, silent in operation and with neither print-out nor graphic/word-display facilities and do not use dot-matrix technology in the main display.
- 5.17** All answer scripts submitted by candidates (including portfolios and audio/video recordings for speaking and practical examinations) and all works submitted to the HKEAA under the SBA and ApL subjects (including coursework and audio/video recordings), shall be the property of the HKEAA. All scripts and works submitted may be handled by the HKEAA at any time and in any way it deems appropriate, in particular the HKEAA may (and may authorize third parties to) use, reproduce and/or publish those scripts and works, or any part thereof in an anonymous format in which the identities of applicants are not traceable. Also, the HKEAA will exercise reasonable care to protect and preserve the scripts and works submitted, but in the event of any loss or damage, as a result of which the candidate's performance cannot be assessed based on the scripts and/or the works submitted, the candidate concerned will waive all claims, if any, against the HKEAA.
- 5.18** Personal data of candidates will be used for the purpose of conducting the Examination and the subsequent assessment of their performance. The personal data, including examination results, may also be used for the following purposes:
- (1) assisting tertiary institutions and other government/public organisations in their admission processes;
 - (2) assisting government/public organisations in respect of their requests for information in granting scholarships;
 - (3) confirming with relevant Government authorities the eligibility of candidates for examination fee remission by transferring necessary data of the school candidates concerned to these Government authorities for verification;
 - (4) certifying candidates' examination results in response to legitimate requests;
 - (5) conducting educational research and/or analysis in an anonymous format in which the identities of candidates are not traceable; and
 - (6) processing of any refund or payment in relation to the examination by the HKEAA's designated banks (or their appointees).

In compliance with the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance, access to all personal data will be made available, on payment of a fee, to anyone who can establish his/her right to be informed of such data as are retained by the HKEAA.

- 5.19** All correspondence should be addressed to the Secretary General. (Address: Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority, 12th Floor, Southorn Centre, 130 Hennessy Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong.) School candidates should normally write to the HKEAA via their schools.

DISQUALIFICATION

- 6.1** A candidate may be disqualified from part or whole of the Examination or suffer a mark penalty or downgrading, without refund of the examination fees paid if the candidate
- (1) is not a bona fide Secondary 6 student of the school which presented him/her for the Examination;
 - (2) provides false personal particulars in his/her entry form;
 - (3) improperly obtains knowledge of examination papers prior to the Examination;

- (4) brings unauthorised article(s) (not limited to those perceived as related to cheating) to the examination, whether on/in the examination desk or his/her body or otherwise;
- (5) communicates or attempts to communicate in any form with any persons inside or outside the examination room during an examination session in an attempt to gain unfair advantage;
- (6) copies from notes, books or materials stored in electronic devices brought into the examination room or from the work of other candidates during an examination session;
- (7) takes away the question papers during the examination or removes any materials supplied by the HKEAA from the examination room, such as answer books, answer sheets and barcode labels; or displays the barcode labels electronically or publicly;
- (8) leaves the examination room without permission;
- (9) starts to read or work on the question paper before being instructed to do so or continues to hold any stationery or work on the answer script after being told to stop working at the end of an examination session;
- (10) passes off work done by someone else as his/her own, in any part of a project/portfolio/SBA where original work is required;
- (11) breaks any of the examination instructions as laid down in the Handbook for Candidates/Instructions to Candidates;
- (12) repeatedly disobeys the reasonable instructions of the centre supervisor or an invigilator;
- (13) disregards the HKEAA's/centre staff's verbal/written warning in connection with misbehaviour in any examination conducted by the HKEAA.

6.2 Appeals against decisions to disqualify or to refuse entry to examinations within the purview of the HKEAA should be made in writing to the Secretary General.

REPORTING OF RESULTS

- 7.1** For Category A subjects, results will be reported in five levels (1-5), with Level 1 being the lowest and Level 5 the highest. Achievements below Level 1 will be designated as 'unclassified'. To give recognition to outstanding candidates, top candidates within Level 5 will be awarded Level 5* and Level 5** as appropriate. Component levels for Chinese Language, English Language and Science (for Combined Science electives only) will be reported on the certificate.
- 7.2** For Category B subjects, assessment will be undertaken by course providers. After moderation by the HKEAA, the final results will be recorded on the HKDSE certificate. The results for Category B subjects will be reported as 'Attained', 'Attained with Distinction (I)' and 'Attained with Distinction (II)' except for Applied Learning Chinese subjects (for non-Chinese speaking students), the results of which will be reported as 'Attained' and 'Attained with Distinction'.
- 7.3** For Category C subjects, marking and grading will be conducted by Cambridge International. Results will be reported in five grades (a-e), with grade e being the lowest and grade a being the highest. Achievements below grade e will be designated as 'ungraded'. Except for the subjects Hindi and Urdu, a separate speaking endorsement grade (With Distinction/Merit/Pass in Speaking) will be reported for candidates who satisfy the conditions as stated in the syllabus. Achievement below 'Pass in Speaking' is not recorded.
- 7.4** A results notice will be issued to each candidate (via schools in the case of school candidates) at the time of the publication of results in January (for Category C November series examination) / July (for Category A and Category B examinations). This will record
 - (1) the provisional results obtained in individual subjects sat; and
 - (2) subjects entered for, but not sat.
 Results recorded in the results notice in case of absence in the paper(s) of Category C other language subjects will be issued by Cambridge International in accordance with their standard procedures. The language medium used by candidates will not be recorded on the results notice.

- 7.5** Each school will receive a summary showing the results obtained by its candidates.
- 7.6** On application by a candidate, a duplicate results notice may be issued to replace one which has been lost, subject to the payment of a fee.
- 7.7** Certificates are normally issued to candidates (via schools in the case of school candidates) in October in the year of the Examination.
- 7.8** Levels or grades awarded for individual subjects will be recorded on the certificate. The language medium used by candidates in the Examination will not be recorded. Subjects for which the candidate was absent and subjects with results designated as ‘Unclassified’ (i.e. below level 1 for the subjects in Category A), ‘Unattained’ (for subjects in Category B) or ‘Ungraded’ (i.e. below grade e / ‘Pass in Speaking’ in the speaking endorsement grade for the subjects in Category C) will not be recorded. Candidates who were absent from all subjects or who obtained Unclassified/Unattained/Ungraded results in all subjects will not be issued a certificate.
- 7.9** For Category A subjects with a school-based assessment component (Regulation 3.6), the subject results of candidates will be annotated if they are not required to undertake the school-based assessment.
- 7.10** Where a candidate has been exempted from component(s)/part(s) of an examination, his/her results for the affected component(s)/part(s) will be assessed. The details of the component(s) exempted will be indicated on the candidate’s certificate. However, the reason for granting the exemption will not be recorded on the certificate. In the case of special assistance (e.g. extra time allowance, provision of braille or enlarged question papers), such assistance provided will not be recorded on the certificate.
- 7.11** School principals are required to return all unclaimed certificates to the **HKEAA** at the time when certificates for the Examination in the following year are collected. Certificates unclaimed by 31 December, two years after the Examination, will be destroyed.
- 7.12** On application by a candidate, a statement of results may be issued, subject to the payment of a fee.
- 7.13** The Examination Report will be posted on the HKEAA website, normally in December in the year of the Examination.

APPEALS

- 8.1** For Category A subjects, applications for appeal must be submitted within a period prescribed by the **HKEAA**. Each candidate may apply for rechecking and/or remarking of scripts for a number of subjects as stipulated by the Public Examinations Board. A fee will be charged per subject. The fee will be refunded if the result is upgraded. For the SBA component, all disputes on assessment decisions should be resolved within the school before marks are submitted to the **HKEAA** for moderation. Candidates are not allowed to appeal for re-assessment after the release of examination results. They may apply for rechecking of marks only.
- 8.2** For Category B subjects, course providers are required to establish procedures to allow candidates to appeal against assessment decisions. The course providers should keep a complete record of all complaint cases and resolve all complaints from candidates before submitting the assessment results to the **HKEAA** for moderation. Candidates are not allowed to appeal against assessment decisions made by course providers once the results are submitted to the **HKEAA** for moderation. They may apply for rechecking of marks only.
- 8.3** For Category C subjects, appeals for other language subjects will be handled by Cambridge International in accordance with their standard procedures.

- 8.4 School candidates should submit their applications through their schools. Private candidates may submit their applications to the HKEAA direct.
- 8.5 The Examination is deemed to be closed on 30 November of that examination year (unless otherwise decided by the HKEAA), after which the HKEAA will not consider or entertain any appeals, queries or requests in relation to the Examination.

AMENDMENTS TO REGULATIONS

- 9.1 The Regulations are subject to revision.
- 9.2 Major amendments to the Regulations will be published before 15 September in the year preceding the Examination. Candidates will be notified of subsequent amendments, if any.

2022 HONG KONG DIPLOMA OF SECONDARY EDUCATION EXAMINATION REGULATIONS (Revised in September 2020)

INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** The Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination (HKDSE) ('the Examination') is a public examination conducted by the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority ('HKEAA') in accordance with the provisions of the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority Ordinance (Cap. 261).
- 1.2** The primary purpose of the HKDSE is to measure the attainment of candidates who have completed a full-time three-year senior secondary course in Hong Kong. The Examination is conducted annually, mainly in March to May.
- 1.3** Each HKDSE subject is assessed based on the Curriculum and Assessment (C&A) Guide (Secondary 4 to 6) jointly prepared by the Curriculum Development Council and the HKEAA for that particular subject. The overall aim of the assessment is to evaluate candidates' achievement of the learning targets and objectives of the curriculum and so the learning outcomes that are assessed and examined through the HKDSE are aligned with the learning goals of the secondary curriculum in general, as well as with the aims/learning objectives/learning targets of individual HKDSE subjects as detailed in respective C&A Guides.

SUBJECTS OF THE EXAMINATION

- 2.1** There are three categories of subjects:

Category A

These refer to the Senior Secondary subjects.

Category B

These refer to the Applied Learning (ApL) subjects approved by the Education Bureau (EDB).

Category C

These refer to the other language subjects which will be examined using the question papers of Cambridge Assessment International Education (Cambridge International).

- 2.2** The Category A subjects are as follows:

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Language in which subject is to be examined</u>
Biology**	Chinese or English
Business, Accounting and Financial Studies	Chinese or English
Chemistry**	Chinese or English
Chinese History	Chinese only
Chinese Language	Chinese only
Chinese Literature	Chinese only
Design and Applied Technology**	Chinese or English
Economics	Chinese or English
English Language	English only
Ethics and Religious Studies	Chinese or English
Geography	Chinese or English
Health Management and Social Care	Chinese or English
History	Chinese or English
Information and Communication Technology	Chinese or English

Liberal Studies	Chinese or English
Literature in English	English only
Mathematics#	Chinese or English
Compulsory Part	
Extended Part	
Module 1. Calculus and Statistics	
Module 2. Algebra and Calculus	
Music	Chinese or English
Physical Education	Chinese or English
Physics**	Chinese or English
Science**	Chinese or English
Combined Science (Biology, Chemistry)	
Combined Science (Biology, Physics)	
Combined Science (Chemistry, Physics)	
Integrated Science	
Technology and Living**	Chinese or English
Tourism and Hospitality Studies	Chinese or English
Visual Arts	Chinese or English

Note:

In any Category A subjects examinable in both Chinese and English, only one language version may be entered for in the same Examination.

** Subjects that require laboratory/workshop facilities (see Regulation 3.4(3))

There are two parts in the subject of Mathematics: the compulsory part and the extended part. Candidates may choose to take either the compulsory part only or the compulsory part plus **one** of the modules of the extended part.

2.3 There are two streams in the subject of Science: Combined Science and Integrated Science. To ensure there is no overlap with Biology, Chemistry and Physics, only one subject in each of the following groups may be entered for in the same Examination:

Biology
Integrated Science
Combined Science (Biology, Chemistry)
Combined Science (Biology, Physics)

Chemistry
Integrated Science
Combined Science (Biology, Chemistry)
Combined Science (Chemistry, Physics)

Physics
Integrated Science
Combined Science (Biology, Physics)
Combined Science (Chemistry, Physics)

2.4 The Applied Learning subjects in Category B are grouped under six areas of studies:

Creative Studies
Media and Communication
Business, Management and Law
Services
Applied Science
Engineering and Production

Besides the six areas of studies, Applied Learning Chinese courses for non-Chinese speaking

students have been introduced.

An ApL subject is a two-year course offered by a course provider to students through schools. Entries from private candidates will normally not be accepted (but see Regulation 2.5). Normally, the first year of study (Y1) commences in the first or second term of Secondary 4 or the first term of Secondary 5, and the second year (Y2) is completed in Secondary 5 and/or Secondary 6. At the time of registration, candidates must indicate the name of the subject entered according to the list of subjects approved by the Education Bureau.

- 2.5** Students who repeat Secondary 4 or Secondary 5 in schools but will complete Y2 of ApL subjects may enter for ‘ApL subjects only’ as school candidates with the support of school principals and course providers. Such entries must be endorsed by the school principal during registration.

Special approval may be given to candidates entering for ‘ApL subjects only’ as private candidates under the following circumstances:

- (1) Students who have left schools at the end of Y1 but will complete Y2 with the support of course providers.
- (2) Students who have entered for the HKDSE as school candidates but left schools before the completion of Secondary 4, Secondary 5 or Secondary 6. These students, irrespective of whether they meet the entry requirements for private candidates (Regulation 4.1), may seek special approval from the HKEAA to enter for ApL subjects with the support of course providers if they can complete Y2.

- 2.6** The list of ApL subjects to be offered in 2022 is shown below:

Area of Studies	Course Cluster	Course
<i>Creative Studies</i>	1. Design Studies	Display and Jewellery Design Fashion Image Design Interior Design
	2. Media Arts	Computer Game and Animation Design Digital Comic Design and Production
	3. Performing Arts	Taking a Chance on Dance The Essentials of Theatre Arts
<i>Media and Communication</i>	4. Films, TV and Broadcasting Studies	Film and Transmedia
	5. Media Production and Public Relations	Creative Advertising Magazine Editing and Production PR and Multimedia Communication
<i>Business, Management and Law</i>	6. Accounting and Finance	Accounting for e-Business
	7. Business Studies	Data Application for Business Entrepreneurship for SME Marketing and Online Promotion
	8. Legal Studies	Law Enforcement in Hong Kong
<i>Services</i>	9. Food Services and Management	Pâtisserie and Café Operations Western Cuisine
	10. Hospitality Services	Airport Passenger Terminal Operations Hospitality Services in Practice Hotel Operations
	11. Personal and Community Services	Child Care and Development Child Care and Education Fundamental Cosmetology
<i>Applied Science</i>	12. Medical Science and Health Care	Animal Care Foundation in Chinese Medicine Health Care Practice Medical Laboratory Science
	13. Psychology	Applied Psychology Practical Psychology
	14. Sports	Exercise Science and Health Fitness Exercise and Fitness Coaching

<i>Engineering and Production</i>	15. Civil, Electrical and Mechanical Engineering	Constructing Smart Cities Electrical and Energy Engineering
	16. Information Engineering	Computer Forensic Technology
	17. Services Engineering	Aviation Studies Railway Studies
<i>Applied Learning Chinese (for non-Chinese speaking students)</i>		Chinese in Business Service Chinese in Practical Context Practical Chinese

There is no language indicator for entry to Applied Learning subjects.

2.7 The Category C subjects are as follows:

French
German
Hindi
Japanese
Spanish
Urdu

Advanced Subsidiary (AS) level question papers from Cambridge International will be used for these six language subjects to be offered in the November 2021 series. There is no speaking component for the Hindi and Urdu examinations.

2.8 Candidates may take up to a maximum of eight subjects. These subjects may come from Categories A, B or C. If a candidate chooses to take the extended part of Mathematics, the result of the extended part will be reported separately from the compulsory part. The extended part is not regarded as an additional subject. For candidates choosing eight subjects, at least one of the subjects chosen must come from the following areas:

- (a) Ethics and Religious Studies/Music/Physical Education/Visual Arts in Category A
- (b) Applied Learning subjects in Category B
- (c) Other language subjects in Category C

2.9 A candidate may only enter for the Examination either as a school candidate or as a private candidate but not both in the same examination year.

PARTICIPATION IN THE EXAMINATION BY SCHOOLS

3.1 The participation of schools in the Examination shall be subject to the prior approval of the HKEAA. At the time of application for participation, the school should provide evidence that it is a registered school and is running courses and operating classes in accordance with the Education Bureau registration requirements; and that the school agrees to comply with the examination regulations. The HKEAA may seek advice from the Education Bureau where necessary. In its consideration and determination of an application, the HKEAA reserves the right to refuse such an application and to make such conditions, in addition to those conditions contained within these Regulations, as it considers appropriate.

3.2 Only bona fide Secondary 6 students of registered schools in Hong Kong approved for participation may be entered as school candidates. The students must be studying at the registered address of the schools. The principal's certification to this effect will be required at the time of registration.

Exceptional entry for Applied Learning subjects only at Secondary 4 or Secondary 5 is subject to the endorsement of school principals (see Regulation 2.5).

- 3.3** Schools wishing
- (1) to enter candidates for the first time; or
 - (2) to enter candidates for any subject that requires laboratory/workshop facilities for the first time,
- must make a written application to the Secretary General of the HKEAA for approval by 30 June, three years preceding the Examination.
- 3.4** Schools are required to apply for first participation in HKDSE and comply with the following conditions:
- (1) Schools will be required to make a declaration that they must make their school premises available as may be required for the conduct of examinations and place their teaching staff at the reasonable disposal of the HKEAA (see Regulation 3.5). For schools that cannot comply with the requirement, the HKEAA reserves the right to ask such schools to meet the costs incurred by hiring other examination venues and/or invigilators to accommodate their candidates.
 - (2) Schools will have to submit the application by 30 June, three years before the Examination.
 - (3) For some subjects, schools will have to declare that they can provide the laboratory/workshop facilities for practical work. These subjects include Biology, Chemistry, Design & Applied Technology, Physics, Integrated/Combined Science and Technology & Living.
- 3.5** Schools presenting candidates for the Examination must provide teaching staff to undertake invigilation duties in relation to the total number of subject entries. For schools that are unable to provide examination venues or teaching staff to serve as invigilation staff in a particular year, application for exemption must be made to the Secretary General before 30 September of the year preceding the Examination with valid reasons. Schools that do not have proper venues or cannot provide examination venues are required to provide extra invigilation staff. Schools that are unable to provide the required number of invigilation staff may, at the discretion of the Secretary General, be allowed the option of paying the costs of hiring invigilators.
- 3.6** For school candidates, there will be a School-based Assessment (SBA) component for the following subjects:

Biology
Chemistry
Chinese Language
Chinese Literature
Design and Applied Technology
English Language
Health Management and Social Care
Information and Communication Technology
Liberal Studies
Literature in English
Physics
Integrated/Combined Science
Technology and Living
Visual Arts

Schools are required to fulfill the SBA requirements for subjects entered by candidates of their schools. The HKEAA will not accept entries for subjects from candidates presented by schools which do not join the SBA scheme.

School candidates who repeat Secondary 6 in schools have to be re-assessed in S6 and meet the SBA requirements of the respective subjects entered. If the schools do not offer the elective subject(s) that the candidates wish to re-take in the examination, the candidates may apply for exemption from the SBA for the particular subject(s). The candidates' subject result

will be based entirely on their public examination result (see also Regulation 7.9). Special approval must be sought from the HKEAA prior to registration. This special exemption does not apply to the core subjects – Chinese Language, English Language and Liberal Studies.

- 3.7** Compliance by schools with Regulations 3.4 to 3.6 will be regarded as a condition of participation in the Examination.
- 3.8** The Secretary General will notify schools of the decisions of the HKEAA under Regulations 3.1 and 3.3, normally not later than 31 August, three years preceding the Examination. Any appeal against the HKEAA's decisions under Regulations 3.1 and 3.3 should be made in writing to the Secretary General within 30 days from the date of the above notification.
- 3.9** Under exceptional circumstances, a school may be given provisional approval for participation in the Examination or in a subject that requires laboratory/workshop facilities; the final approval being subject to the school fulfilling the conditions under which the provisional approval was given.
- 3.10** Participation in the Examination and in subjects that require laboratory/workshop facilities will be subject to annual review by the HKEAA. The Secretary General will inform schools of any decision of the HKEAA to withdraw permission for the schools to participate or to impose conditions for continued participation, normally not later than 31 August, three years preceding the Examination. Nonetheless, schools that have not presented candidates for three consecutive years will be removed from the list of participating schools for the following examination year.
- 3.11** Notwithstanding Regulation 3.10, the HKEAA may by notice rescind the participation of any school upon receipt of notification from the Education Bureau that:
- (1) the registration of the said school under the terms of the Education Ordinance (Cap. 279) has been cancelled; OR
 - (2) registration of the premises or part of the premises of the said school under the terms of the Education Ordinance (Cap. 279) has been refused; OR
 - (3) the said school has been found to be operating in premises all or part of which are not registered under the terms of the Education Ordinance (Cap. 279).
- The participation of any such school shall cease with effect from the date of the said notice, or with effect from such other date as the HKEAA may specify in the said notice.
- 3.12** Should permission to participate be withdrawn under Regulation 3.10 or 3.11, a school may make application to participate again in accordance with Regulations 3.1 and 3.3 as if applying to enter candidates for the first time.
- 3.13** The list of schools approved for participation in the Examination together with approved subjects that require laboratory/workshop facilities is available at the HKEAA's offices, District Offices and the HKEAA's website (www.hkeaa.edu.hk) from 1 June in the year preceding the Examination.

PARTICIPATION IN THE EXAMINATION BY PRIVATE CANDIDATES

- 4.1** A person may enter for the Examination as a private candidate provided he/she has satisfied the requirements set out at (a) or (b) or (c) below:
- (a) The person has sat the previous Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination (HKDSE) or an equivalent examination, or
 - (b) The person has reached the age of 19 by 1 January of the year of the Examination, or
 - (c) The person has completed or is currently pursuing a non-HKDSE curriculum equivalent to Secondary 6 as determined by the HKEAA in the year preceding the Examination.
- 4.2** The HKEAA may consider applications from persons possessing other qualifications or pleading special circumstances. Persons who have sat other public examinations are

expected to demonstrate a suitable level of competence in the same subject(s) entered for the Examination and may be required to provide supporting documents from their schools, if applicable. Persons who are currently pursuing an HKDSE curriculum will not normally be considered for special entry to the Examination. Exceptional cases may be considered on a case-by-case basis. Applications under this regulation must be made in writing to the Secretary General before the normal closing date for entry.

- 4.3 A private candidate may enter for a subject which requires laboratory/workshop facilities (subjects in 2.2 marked with **) only if the candidate can produce evidence of having sat the subject in a previous HKDSE or in an equivalent public examination, or having completed or is currently pursuing the study of the subject up to a level equivalent to the HKDSE in the year preceding the Examination. [Notwithstanding this provision, the HKEAA will not accept entries from private candidates for Design and Applied Technology.]
- 4.4 For Category A subjects with an SBA component, private candidates are not required to complete the SBA component of the subjects entered (except Visual Arts). Their subject marks will be based entirely on their public examination results (see also Regulation 7.9). For Visual Arts in which the SBA component carries a weighting of 50%, private candidates will be required to submit a portfolio in lieu of the SBA.

GENERAL

- 5.1 The subjects of the Examination will be examined in accordance with a timetable, which will normally be announced in November in the year preceding the Examination. A provisional examination timetable will be provided to participating schools by May in the year preceding the Examination.
- 5.2 All the dates and times stated in the Regulations and the examination timetable are subject to change. Although the HKEAA will endeavour to ensure that all examinations will be conducted on the dates and at the times as specified in the relevant examination timetable, it cannot guarantee that this will be so. The HKEAA will also not be liable for any delay, non-performance, claim, complaint or dispute arising from circumstances or causes such as epidemic or pandemic, terrorist attack, demonstrations or riots, social unrest or public disorder; explosion, fire, natural disasters or inclement weather conditions; destruction, suspension, unavailability or break-down of transport, telecommunication, electricity or other public utility; labour disturbance including but without limitation to boycott and strike; quarantine measures or restrictions; immigration or border controls; compliance with any law or governmental order, rule, regulation or direction, etc. Candidates themselves shall be solely responsible for obtaining all necessary visa, entry permit, etc. to cover the Examination period and, in the event of any epidemic or pandemic situations in Hong Kong, for fulfilling all the prevailing entry and quarantine requirements in accordance with the laws of Hong Kong in order to take part in the Examination. Candidates themselves shall also be solely responsible for full compliance with any applicable visa or stay conditions and quarantine requirements, etc., and the HKEAA shall have no responsibility for any consequences if they fail to comply or have any difficulty in doing so.
- 5.3 The HKEAA may at its sole discretion determine how to conduct and deal with the Examination as it considers necessary or advantageous and proper, and this includes rescheduling, cancelling or changing the mode of examination and/or assessment for the whole Examination or any part thereof for all candidates or individual candidates, or refusing, restricting or withdrawing participation in the Examination by certain candidates as and when necessary (e.g. due to public health or disease prevention reasons). In any of the above events, ~~In the event of an examination having to be rescheduled or cancelled, the HKEAA will not accept any liability in respect of claims for expenses, refunds or other damages. If the whole Examination or any part thereof is cancelled, the HKEAA~~ However, it may at its discretion refund the whole or part of the fees paid after deducting any costs incurred. ~~in respect of an examination which has to be cancelled.~~

- 5.4** Examination fees will be announced before June in the year preceding the Examination.
- 5.5** Candidates may not submit more than one entry for the Examination, whether for the same or different subjects, and whether as school or private candidates.
- 5.6** The **HKEAA** reserves the right to reject an application for entry to any examination conducted by the **HKEAA** if it is satisfied that the applicant has been involved in any serious irregularity, misconduct or dishonesty in any examination conducted by the **HKEAA**, or in connection with certificates, statements of results or similar documents.
- 5.7** Under special circumstances the **HKEAA** may at its discretion,
- (1) admit a candidate after the normal closing date for entry, on payment of a supplementary fee in addition to the normal examination fee;
 - (2) allow the addition or substitution of a subject or subjects to a candidate's entries after they have been accepted, on payment of a supplementary fee (For the purpose of this regulation, a change of language version will be regarded as a change of subject.);
 - (3) allow changes in a candidate's choice of paper, or modules within a paper, on payment of a supplementary fee;
 - (4) accept a script submitted by a candidate in a language medium other than that for which the candidate entered, or for a subject/paper/module other than that for which he/she entered, on payment of a supplementary fee;
- permit a school candidate who has ceased to attend the school which submitted the candidate's entry to change his/her status to that of a private candidate (subject to his/her satisfying the relevant entry requirement), on payment of the initial fee and a supplementary fee.
- 5.8** Candidates with special needs may apply for exemption from part(s) of the requirements in an examination or special examination arrangements. Such applications must be made in writing (via schools in the case of school candidates) to the Secretary General within a period prescribed by the **HKEAA**, together with full supporting documents (e.g. medical certificates).
- 5.9** School candidates who are unable to take the examinations because of hospitalisation as a result of an accident or serious illness, or because of special circumstances, may, with the support of the school principal, apply for special consideration.
- 5.10** Entries of candidates will not be regarded as having been accepted until the fees payable have been received in full by the **HKEAA**.
- 5.11** Candidates will be responsible for checking their entry data to ensure that the entries they made at the time of registration have been correctly processed. The Secretary General must be notified in writing before a specified date of any discrepancies discovered. In the absence of such notification, the entry data will be regarded as having been confirmed. Any subsequent request for changes will be subject to the provisions of Regulation 5.6 and will not be accepted after a date stipulated by the **HKEAA**.
- 5.12** Applications for amendments to a candidate's personal particulars received after a specified date may be accepted at the discretion of the Secretary General.
- 5.13** A candidate withdrawing from the Examination may receive a partial refund of the fees paid provided that the Secretary General is notified in writing of the candidate's withdrawal before a date stipulated by the **HKEAA**. The **HKEAA** may, at its discretion, consider special applications under exceptional circumstances. There will be no refund for partial withdrawal. Examination fees are neither transferable from one examination to another, nor from one person to another. Examination fees will not be refunded to candidates who are disqualified (see Regulation 6.1).

- 5.14** Admission forms will be issued to candidates (via schools in the case of school candidates) in October in the year preceding the Examination (for Category C November series) / in or before March in the year of the Examination (for Category A subjects). Schools should not, for whatever reasons, withhold the admission forms of their students.
- 5.15** On application by a candidate, a duplicate admission form may be issued to replace one which has been lost, subject to payment of a supplementary fee.
- 5.16** Electronic calculators, including programmable calculators, may be used in any non-language examination session provided that the calculators are battery-powered, silent in operation and with neither print-out nor graphic/word-display facilities and do not use dot-matrix technology in the main display.
- 5.17** All answer scripts submitted by candidates (including portfolios and audio/video recordings for speaking and practical examinations) and all works submitted to the **HKEAA** under the SBA and ApL subjects (including coursework and audio/video recordings), shall be the property of the **HKEAA**. All scripts and works submitted may be handled by the **HKEAA** at any time and in any way it deems appropriate, in particular the **HKEAA** may (and may authorize third parties to) use, reproduce and/or publish those scripts and works, or any part thereof in an anonymous format in which the identities of applicants are not traceable. Also, the **HKEAA** will exercise reasonable care to protect and preserve the scripts and works submitted, but in the event of any loss or damage, as a result of which the candidate's performance cannot be assessed based on the scripts and/or the works submitted, the candidate concerned will waive all claims, if any, against the **HKEAA**.
- 5.18** Personal data of candidates will be used for the purpose of conducting the Examination and the subsequent assessment of their performance. The personal data, including examination results, may also be used for the following purposes:
- (1) assisting tertiary institutions and other government/public organisations in their admission processes;
 - (2) assisting government/public organisations in respect of their requests for information in granting scholarships;
 - (3) confirming with relevant Government authorities the eligibility of candidates for examination fee remission by transferring necessary data of the school candidates concerned to these Government authorities for verification;
 - (4) certifying candidates' examination results in response to legitimate requests;
 - (5) conducting educational research and/or analysis in an anonymous format in which the identities of candidates are not traceable; and
 - (6) processing of any refund or payment in relation to the examination by the **HKEAA**'s designated banks (or their appointees).
- In compliance with the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance, access to all personal data will be made available, on payment of a fee, to anyone who can establish his/her right to be informed of such data as are retained by the **HKEAA**.
- 5.19** All correspondence should be addressed to the Secretary General. (Address: Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority, 12th Floor, Southorn Centre, 130 Hennessy Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong.) School candidates should normally write to the **HKEAA** via their schools.

DISQUALIFICATION

- 6.1** A candidate may be disqualified from part or whole of the Examination or suffer a mark penalty or downgrading, without refund of the examination fees paid if the candidate
- (1) is not a bona fide Secondary 6 student of the school which presented him/her for the Examination;
 - (2) provides false personal particulars in his/her entry form;
 - (3) improperly obtains knowledge of examination papers prior to the Examination;

- (4) brings unauthorised article(s) (not limited to those perceived as related to cheating) to the examination, whether on/in the examination desk or his/her body or otherwise;
- (5) communicates or attempts to communicate in any form with any persons inside or outside the examination room during an examination session in an attempt to gain unfair advantage;
- (6) copies from notes, books or materials stored in electronic devices brought into the examination room or from the work of other candidates during an examination session;
- (7) takes away the question papers during the examination or removes any materials supplied by the HKEAA from the examination room, such as answer books, answer sheets and barcode labels; or displays the barcode labels electronically or publicly;
- (8) leaves the examination room without permission;
- (9) starts to read or work on the question paper before being instructed to do so or continues to hold any stationery or work on the answer script after being told to stop working at the end of an examination session;
- (10) passes off work done by someone else as his/her own, in any part of a project/portfolio/SBA where original work is required;
- (11) breaks any of the examination instructions as laid down in the Handbook for Candidates/Instructions to Candidates;
- (12) repeatedly disobeys the reasonable instructions of the centre supervisor or an invigilator;
- (13) disregards the HKEAA's/centre staff's verbal/written warning in connection with misbehaviour in any examination conducted by the HKEAA.

6.2 Appeals against decisions to disqualify or to refuse entry to examinations within the purview of the HKEAA should be made in writing to the Secretary General.

REPORTING OF RESULTS

- 7.1** For Category A subjects, results will be reported in five levels (1-5), with Level 1 being the lowest and Level 5 the highest. Achievements below Level 1 will be designated as 'unclassified'. To give recognition to outstanding candidates, top candidates within Level 5 will be awarded Level 5* and Level 5** as appropriate. Component levels for Chinese Language, English Language and Science (for Combined Science electives only) will be reported on the certificate.
- 7.2** For Category B subjects, assessment will be undertaken by course providers. After moderation by the HKEAA, the final results will be recorded on the HKDSE certificate. The results for Category B subjects will be reported as 'Attained', 'Attained with Distinction (I)' and 'Attained with Distinction (II)' except for Applied Learning Chinese subjects (for non-Chinese speaking students), the results of which will be reported as 'Attained' and 'Attained with Distinction'.
- 7.3** For Category C subjects, marking and grading will be conducted by Cambridge International. Results will be reported in five grades (a-e), with grade e being the lowest and grade a being the highest. Achievements below grade e will be designated as 'ungraded'. Except for the subjects Hindi and Urdu, a separate speaking endorsement grade (With Distinction/Merit/Pass in Speaking) will be reported for candidates who satisfy the conditions as stated in the syllabus. Achievement below 'Pass in Speaking' is not recorded.
- 7.4** A results notice will be issued to each candidate (via schools in the case of school candidates) at the time of the publication of results in January (for Category C November series examination) / July (for Category A and Category B examinations). This will record
 - (1) the provisional results obtained in individual subjects sat; and
 - (2) subjects entered for, but not sat.
 Results recorded in the results notice in case of absence in the paper(s) of Category C other language subjects will be issued by Cambridge International in accordance with their standard procedures. The language medium used by candidates will not be recorded on the results notice.

- 7.5 Each school will receive a summary showing the results obtained by its candidates.
- 7.6 On application by a candidate, a duplicate results notice may be issued to replace one which has been lost, subject to the payment of a fee.
- 7.7 Certificates are normally issued to candidates (via schools in the case of school candidates) in October in the year of the Examination.
- 7.8 Levels or grades awarded for individual subjects will be recorded on the certificate. The language medium used by candidates in the Examination will not be recorded. Subjects for which the candidate was absent and subjects with results designated as ‘Unclassified’ (i.e. below level 1 for the subjects in Category A), ‘Unattained’ (for subjects in Category B) or ‘Ungraded’ (i.e. below grade e / ‘Pass in Speaking’ in the speaking endorsement grade for the subjects in Category C) will not be recorded. Candidates who were absent from all subjects or who obtained Unclassified/Unattained/Ungraded results in all subjects will not be issued a certificate.
- 7.9 For Category A subjects with a school-based assessment component (Regulation 3.6), the subject results of candidates will be annotated if they are not required to undertake the school-based assessment.
- 7.10 Where a candidate has been exempted from component(s)/part(s) of an examination, his/her results for the affected component(s)/part(s) will be assessed. The details of the component(s) exempted will be indicated on the candidate’s certificate. However, the reason for granting the exemption will not be recorded on the certificate. In the case of special assistance (e.g. extra time allowance, provision of braille or enlarged question papers), such assistance provided will not be recorded on the certificate.
- 7.11 School principals are required to return all unclaimed certificates to the HKEAA at the time when certificates for the Examination in the following year are collected. Certificates unclaimed by 31 December, two years after the Examination, will be destroyed.
- 7.12 On application by a candidate, a statement of results may be issued, subject to the payment of a fee.
- 7.13 The Examination Report will be posted on the HKEAA website, normally in December in the year of the Examination.

APPEALS

- 8.1 For Category A subjects, applications for appeal must be submitted within a period prescribed by the HKEAA. Each candidate may apply for rechecking and/or remarking of scripts for a number of subjects as stipulated by the Public Examinations Board. A fee will be charged per subject. The fee will be refunded if the result is upgraded. For the SBA component, all disputes on assessment decisions should be resolved within the school before marks are submitted to the HKEAA for moderation. Candidates are not allowed to appeal for re-assessment after the release of examination results. They may apply for rechecking of marks only.
- 8.2 For Category B subjects, course providers are required to establish procedures to allow candidates to appeal against assessment decisions. The course providers should keep a complete record of all complaint cases and resolve all complaints from candidates before submitting the assessment results to the HKEAA for moderation. Candidates are not allowed to appeal against assessment decisions made by course providers once the results are submitted to the HKEAA for moderation. They may apply for rechecking of marks only.
- 8.3 For Category C subjects, appeals for other language subjects will be handled by Cambridge International in accordance with their standard procedures.

- 8.4** School candidates should submit their applications through their schools. Private candidates may submit their applications to the HKEAA direct.
- 8.5** The Examination is deemed to be closed on 30 November of that examination year (unless otherwise decided by the HKEAA), after which the HKEAA will not consider or entertain any appeals, queries or requests in relation to the Examination.

AMENDMENTS TO REGULATIONS

- 9.1** The Regulations are subject to revision.
- 9.2** Major amendments to the Regulations will be published before 15 September in the year preceding the Examination. Candidates will be notified of subsequent amendments, if any.

2023 HONG KONG DIPLOMA OF SECONDARY EDUCATION EXAMINATION REGULATIONS (Revised in September 2020)

INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** The Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination (HKDSE) ('the Examination') is a public examination conducted by the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority ('HKEAA') in accordance with the provisions of the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority Ordinance (Cap. 261).
- 1.2** The primary purpose of the HKDSE is to measure the attainment of candidates who have completed a full-time three-year senior secondary course in Hong Kong. The Examination is conducted annually, mainly in March to May.
- 1.3** Each HKDSE subject is assessed based on the Curriculum and Assessment (C&A) Guide (Secondary 4 to 6) jointly prepared by the Curriculum Development Council and the HKEAA for that particular subject. The overall aim of the assessment is to evaluate candidates' achievement of the learning targets and objectives of the curriculum and so the learning outcomes that are assessed and examined through the HKDSE are aligned with the learning goals of the secondary curriculum in general, as well as with the aims/learning objectives/learning targets of individual HKDSE subjects as detailed in respective C&A Guides.

SUBJECTS OF THE EXAMINATION

- 2.1** There are three categories of subjects:

Category A

These refer to the Senior Secondary subjects.

Category B

These refer to the Applied Learning (ApL) subjects approved by the Education Bureau (EDB).

Category C

These refer to the other language subjects which will be examined using the question papers of Cambridge Assessment International Education (Cambridge International).

- 2.2** The Category A subjects are as follows:

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Language in which subject is to be examined</u>
Biology**	Chinese or English
Business, Accounting and Financial Studies	Chinese or English
Chemistry**	Chinese or English
Chinese History	Chinese only
Chinese Language	Chinese only
Chinese Literature	Chinese only
Design and Applied Technology**	Chinese or English
Economics	Chinese or English
English Language	English only
Ethics and Religious Studies	Chinese or English
Geography	Chinese or English
Health Management and Social Care	Chinese or English
History	Chinese or English
Information and Communication Technology	Chinese or English

Liberal Studies	Chinese or English
Literature in English	English only
Mathematics#	Chinese or English
Compulsory Part	
Extended Part	
Module 1. Calculus and Statistics	
Module 2. Algebra and Calculus	
Music	Chinese or English
Physical Education	Chinese or English
Physics**	Chinese or English
Science**	Chinese or English
Combined Science (Biology, Chemistry)	
Combined Science (Biology, Physics)	
Combined Science (Chemistry, Physics)	
Integrated Science	
Technology and Living**	Chinese or English
Tourism and Hospitality Studies	Chinese or English
Visual Arts	Chinese or English

Note:

In any Category A subjects examinable in both Chinese and English, only one language version may be entered for in the same Examination.

** Subjects that require laboratory/workshop facilities (see Regulation 3.4(3))

There are two parts in the subject of Mathematics: the compulsory part and the extended part. Candidates may choose to take either the compulsory part only or the compulsory part plus **one** of the modules of the extended part.

2.3 There are two streams in the subject of Science: Combined Science and Integrated Science. To ensure there is no overlap with Biology, Chemistry and Physics, only one subject in each of the following groups may be entered for in the same Examination:

Biology
Integrated Science
Combined Science (Biology, Chemistry)
Combined Science (Biology, Physics)

Chemistry
Integrated Science
Combined Science (Biology, Chemistry)
Combined Science (Chemistry, Physics)

Physics
Integrated Science
Combined Science (Biology, Physics)
Combined Science (Chemistry, Physics)

2.4 The Applied Learning subjects in Category B are grouped under six areas of studies:

Creative Studies
Media and Communication
Business, Management and Law
Services
Applied Science
Engineering and Production

Besides the six areas of studies, Applied Learning Chinese courses for non-Chinese speaking

students have been introduced.

An ApL subject is a two-year course offered by a course provider to students through schools. Entries from private candidates will normally not be accepted (but see Regulation 2.5). Normally, the first year of study (Y1) commences in the first or second term of Secondary 4 or the first term of Secondary 5, and the second year (Y2) is completed in Secondary 5 and/or Secondary 6. At the time of registration, candidates must indicate the name of the subject entered according to the list of subjects approved by the Education Bureau.

2.5 Students who repeat Secondary 4 or Secondary 5 in schools but will complete Y2 of ApL subjects may enter for ‘ApL subjects only’ as school candidates with the support of school principals and course providers. Such entries must be endorsed by the school principal during registration.

Special approval may be given to candidates entering for ‘ApL subjects only’ as private candidates under the following circumstances:

- (1) Students who have left schools at the end of Y1 but will complete Y2 with the support of course providers.
- (2) Students who have entered for the HKDSE as school candidates but left schools before the completion of Secondary 4, Secondary 5 or Secondary 6. These students, irrespective of whether they meet the entry requirements for private candidates (Regulation 4.1), may seek special approval from the HKEAA to enter for ApL subjects with the support of course providers if they can complete Y2.

2.6 The provisional list* of ApL subjects to be offered in 2023 is shown below:

Area of Studies	Course Cluster	Course
<i>Creative Studies</i>	1. Design Studies	Display and Jewellery Design Fashion Image Design Interior Design
	2. Media Arts	Computer Game and Animation Design Digital Comic Design and Production
	3. Performing Arts	Taking a Chance on Dance The Essentials of Theatre Arts
<i>Media and Communication</i>	4. Films, TV and Broadcasting Studies	Film and Transmedia
	5. Media Production and Public Relations	Creative Advertising Magazine Editing and Production PR and Multimedia Communication
<i>Business, Management and Law</i>	6. Accounting and Finance	Accounting for e-Business
	7. Business Studies	Data Application for Business Entrepreneurship for SME Marketing and Online Promotion
	8. Legal Studies	Law Enforcement in Hong Kong
<i>Services</i>	9. Food Services and Management	Pâtisserie and Café Operations Western Cuisine
	10. Hospitality Services	Airport Passenger Terminal Operations Hospitality Services in Practice Hotel Operations
	11. Personal and Community Services	Child Care and Development Child Care and Education Fundamental Cosmetology
<i>Applied Science</i>	12. Medical Science and Health Care	Animal Care Foundation in Chinese Medicine Health Care Practice Medical Laboratory Science
	13. Psychology	Applied Psychology Practical Psychology
	14. Sports	Exercise Science and Health Fitness Exercise and Fitness Coaching

<i>Engineering and Production</i>	15. Civil, Electrical and Mechanical Engineering	Constructing Smart Cities Electrical and Energy Engineering
	16. Information Engineering	Computer Forensic Technology
	17. Services Engineering	Aviation Studies Railway Studies
<i>Applied Learning Chinese (for non-Chinese speaking students)</i>		Chinese in Business Service Chinese in Practical Context Practical Chinese

- * The final list of ApL subjects is subject to confirmation by EDB.
There is no language indicator for entry to Applied Learning subjects.

2.7 The Category C subjects are as follows:

French
German
Hindi
Japanese
Spanish
Urdu

Advanced Subsidiary (AS) level question papers from Cambridge International will be used for these six language subjects to be offered in the November 2022 series. There is no speaking component for the Hindi and Urdu examinations.

2.8 Candidates may take up to a maximum of eight subjects. These subjects may come from Categories A, B or C. If a candidate chooses to take the extended part of Mathematics, the result of the extended part will be reported separately from the compulsory part. The extended part is not regarded as an additional subject. For candidates choosing eight subjects, at least one of the subjects chosen must come from the following areas:

- (a) Ethics and Religious Studies/Music/Physical Education/Visual Arts in Category A
- (b) Applied Learning subjects in Category B
- (c) Other language subjects in Category C

2.9 A candidate may only enter for the Examination either as a school candidate or as a private candidate but not both in the same examination year.

PARTICIPATION IN THE EXAMINATION BY SCHOOLS

3.1 The participation of schools in the Examination shall be subject to the prior approval of the HKEAA. At the time of application for participation, the school should provide evidence that it is a registered school and is running courses and operating classes in accordance with the Education Bureau registration requirements; and that the school agrees to comply with the examination regulations. The HKEAA may seek advice from the Education Bureau where necessary. In its consideration and determination of an application, the HKEAA reserves the right to refuse such an application and to make such conditions, in addition to those conditions contained within these Regulations, as it considers appropriate.

3.2 Only bona fide Secondary 6 students of registered schools in Hong Kong approved for participation may be entered as school candidates. The students must be studying at the registered address of the schools. The principal's certification to this effect will be required at the time of registration.

Exceptional entry for Applied Learning subjects only at Secondary 4 or Secondary 5 is subject to the endorsement of school principals (see Regulation 2.5).

- 3.3** Schools wishing
- (1) to enter candidates for the first time; or
 - (2) to enter candidates for any subject that requires laboratory/workshop facilities for the first time,
- must make a written application to the Secretary General of the HKEAA for approval by 30 June, three years preceding the Examination.
- 3.4** Schools are required to apply for first participation in HKDSE and comply with the following conditions:
- (1) Schools will be required to make a declaration that they must make their school premises available as may be required for the conduct of examinations and place their teaching staff at the reasonable disposal of the HKEAA (see Regulation 3.5). For schools that cannot comply with the requirement, the HKEAA reserves the right to ask such schools to meet the costs incurred by hiring other examination venues and/or invigilators to accommodate their candidates.
 - (2) Schools will have to submit the application by 30 June, three years before the Examination.
 - (3) For some subjects, schools will have to declare that they can provide the laboratory/workshop facilities for practical work. These subjects include Biology, Chemistry, Design & Applied Technology, Physics, Integrated/Combined Science and Technology & Living.
- 3.5** Schools presenting candidates for the Examination must provide teaching staff to undertake invigilation duties in relation to the total number of subject entries. For schools that are unable to provide examination venues or teaching staff to serve as invigilation staff in a particular year, application for exemption must be made to the Secretary General before 30 September of the year preceding the Examination with valid reasons. Schools that do not have proper venues or cannot provide examination venues are required to provide extra invigilation staff. Schools that are unable to provide the required number of invigilation staff may, at the discretion of the Secretary General, be allowed the option of paying the costs of hiring invigilators.
- 3.6** For school candidates, there will be a School-based Assessment (SBA) component for the following subjects:

Biology
Chemistry
Chinese Language
Chinese Literature
Design and Applied Technology
English Language
Health Management and Social Care
Information and Communication Technology
Liberal Studies
Literature in English
Physics
Integrated/Combined Science
Technology and Living
Visual Arts

Schools are required to fulfill the SBA requirements for subjects entered by candidates of their schools. The HKEAA will not accept entries for subjects from candidates presented by schools which do not join the SBA scheme.

School candidates who repeat Secondary 6 in schools have to be re-assessed in S6 and meet the SBA requirements of the respective subjects entered. If the schools do not offer the elective subject(s) that the candidates wish to re-take in the examination, the candidates may apply for exemption from the SBA for the particular subject(s). The candidates' subject result

will be based entirely on their public examination result (see also Regulation 7.9). Special approval must be sought from the HKEAA prior to registration. This special exemption does not apply to the core subjects – Chinese Language, English Language and Liberal Studies.

- 3.7** Compliance by schools with Regulations 3.4 to 3.6 will be regarded as a condition of participation in the Examination.
- 3.8** The Secretary General will notify schools of the decisions of the HKEAA under Regulations 3.1 and 3.3, normally not later than 31 August, three years preceding the Examination. Any appeal against the HKEAA's decisions under Regulations 3.1 and 3.3 should be made in writing to the Secretary General within 30 days from the date of the above notification.
- 3.9** Under exceptional circumstances, a school may be given provisional approval for participation in the Examination or in a subject that requires laboratory/workshop facilities; the final approval being subject to the school fulfilling the conditions under which the provisional approval was given.
- 3.10** Participation in the Examination and in subjects that require laboratory/workshop facilities will be subject to annual review by the HKEAA. The Secretary General will inform schools of any decision of the HKEAA to withdraw permission for the schools to participate or to impose conditions for continued participation, normally not later than 31 August, three years preceding the Examination. Nonetheless, schools that have not presented candidates for three consecutive years will be removed from the list of participating schools for the following examination year.
- 3.11** Notwithstanding Regulation 3.10, the HKEAA may by notice rescind the participation of any school upon receipt of notification from the Education Bureau that:
- (1) the registration of the said school under the terms of the Education Ordinance (Cap. 279) has been cancelled; OR
 - (2) registration of the premises or part of the premises of the said school under the terms of the Education Ordinance (Cap. 279) has been refused; OR
 - (3) the said school has been found to be operating in premises all or part of which are not registered under the terms of the Education Ordinance (Cap. 279).
- The participation of any such school shall cease with effect from the date of the said notice, or with effect from such other date as the HKEAA may specify in the said notice.
- 3.12** Should permission to participate be withdrawn under Regulation 3.10 or 3.11, a school may make application to participate again in accordance with Regulations 3.1 and 3.3 as if applying to enter candidates for the first time.
- 3.13** The list of schools approved for participation in the Examination together with approved subjects that require laboratory/workshop facilities is available at the HKEAA's offices, District Offices and the HKEAA's website (www.hkeaa.edu.hk) from 1 June in the year preceding the Examination.

PARTICIPATION IN THE EXAMINATION BY PRIVATE CANDIDATES

- 4.1** A person may enter for the Examination as a private candidate provided he/she has satisfied the requirements set out at (a) or (b) or (c) below:
- (a) The person has sat the previous Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination (HKDSE) or an equivalent examination, or
 - (b) The person has reached the age of 19 by 1 January of the year of the Examination, or
 - (c) The person has completed or is currently pursuing a non-HKDSE curriculum equivalent to Secondary 6 as determined by the HKEAA in the year preceding the Examination.
- 4.2** The HKEAA may consider applications from persons possessing other qualifications or pleading special circumstances. Persons who have sat other public examinations are

expected to demonstrate a suitable level of competence in the same subject(s) entered for the Examination and may be required to provide supporting documents from their schools, if applicable. Persons who are currently pursuing an HKDSE curriculum will not normally be considered for special entry to the Examination. Exceptional cases may be considered on a case-by-case basis. Applications under this regulation must be made in writing to the Secretary General before the normal closing date for entry.

- 4.3 A private candidate may enter for a subject which requires laboratory/workshop facilities (subjects in 2.2 marked with **) only if the candidate can produce evidence of having sat the subject in a previous HKDSE or in an equivalent public examination, or having completed or is currently pursuing the study of the subject up to a level equivalent to the HKDSE in the year preceding the Examination. [Notwithstanding this provision, the HKEAA will not accept entries from private candidates for Design and Applied Technology.]
- 4.4 For Category A subjects with an SBA component, private candidates are not required to complete the SBA component of the subjects entered (except Visual Arts). Their subject marks will be based entirely on their public examination results (see also Regulation 7.9). For Visual Arts in which the SBA component carries a weighting of 50%, private candidates will be required to submit a portfolio in lieu of the SBA.

GENERAL

- 5.1 The subjects of the Examination will be examined in accordance with a timetable, which will normally be announced in November in the year preceding the Examination. A provisional examination timetable will be provided to participating schools by May in the year preceding the Examination.
- 5.2 All the dates and times stated in the Regulations and the examination timetable are subject to change. Although the HKEAA will endeavour to ensure that all examinations will be conducted on the dates and at the times as specified in the relevant examination timetable, it cannot guarantee that this will be so. The HKEAA will also not be liable for any delay, non-performance, claim, complaint or dispute arising from circumstances or causes such as epidemic or pandemic, terrorist attack, demonstrations or riots, social unrest or public disorder; explosion, fire, natural disasters or inclement weather conditions; destruction, suspension, unavailability or break-down of transport, telecommunication, electricity or other public utility; labour disturbance including but without limitation to boycott and strike; quarantine measures or restrictions; immigration or border controls; compliance with any law or governmental order, rule, regulation or direction, etc. Candidates themselves shall be solely responsible for obtaining all necessary visa, entry permit, etc. to cover the Examination period and, in the event of any epidemic or pandemic situations in Hong Kong, for fulfilling all the prevailing entry and quarantine requirements in accordance with the laws of Hong Kong in order to take part in the Examination. Candidates themselves shall also be solely responsible for full compliance with any applicable visa or stay conditions and quarantine requirements, etc., and the HKEAA shall have no responsibility for any consequences if they fail to comply or have any difficulty in doing so.
- 5.3 The HKEAA may at its sole discretion determine how to conduct and deal with the Examination as it considers necessary or advantageous and proper, and this includes rescheduling, cancelling or changing the mode of examination and/or assessment for the whole Examination or any part thereof for all candidates or individual candidates, or refusing, restricting or withdrawing participation in the Examination by certain candidates as and when necessary (e.g. due to public health or disease prevention reasons). In any of the above events, ~~In the event of an examination having to be rescheduled or cancelled, the HKEAA will not accept any liability in respect of claims for expenses, refunds or other damages. If the whole Examination or any part thereof is cancelled, the HKEAA~~ However, it may at its discretion refund the whole or part of the fees paid after deducting any costs incurred. ~~in respect of an examination which has to be cancelled.~~

- 5.4** Examination fees will be announced before June in the year preceding the Examination.
- 5.5** Candidates may not submit more than one entry for the Examination, whether for the same or different subjects, and whether as school or private candidates.
- 5.6** The **HKEAA** reserves the right to reject an application for entry to any examination conducted by the **HKEAA** if it is satisfied that the applicant has been involved in any serious irregularity, misconduct or dishonesty in any examination conducted by the **HKEAA**, or in connection with certificates, statements of results or similar documents.
- 5.7** Under special circumstances the **HKEAA** may at its discretion,
- (1) admit a candidate after the normal closing date for entry, on payment of a supplementary fee in addition to the normal examination fee;
 - (2) allow the addition or substitution of a subject or subjects to a candidate's entries after they have been accepted, on payment of a supplementary fee (For the purpose of this regulation, a change of language version will be regarded as a change of subject.);
 - (3) allow changes in a candidate's choice of paper, or modules within a paper, on payment of a supplementary fee;
 - (4) accept a script submitted by a candidate in a language medium other than that for which the candidate entered, or for a subject/paper/module other than that for which he/she entered, on payment of a supplementary fee;
 - (5) permit a school candidate who has ceased to attend the school which submitted the candidate's entry to change his/her status to that of a private candidate (subject to his/her satisfying the relevant entry requirement), on payment of the initial fee and a supplementary fee.
- 5.8** Candidates with special needs may apply for exemption from part(s) of the requirements in an examination or special examination arrangements. Such applications must be made in writing (via schools in the case of school candidates) to the Secretary General within a period prescribed by the **HKEAA**, together with full supporting documents (e.g. medical certificates).
- 5.9** School candidates who are unable to take the examinations because of hospitalisation as a result of an accident or serious illness, or because of special circumstances, may, with the support of the school principal, apply for special consideration.
- 5.10** Entries of candidates will not be regarded as having been accepted until the fees payable have been received in full by the **HKEAA**.
- 5.11** Candidates will be responsible for checking their entry data to ensure that the entries they made at the time of registration have been correctly processed. The Secretary General must be notified in writing before a specified date of any discrepancies discovered. In the absence of such notification, the entry data will be regarded as having been confirmed. Any subsequent request for changes will be subject to the provisions of Regulation 5.6 and will not be accepted after a date stipulated by the **HKEAA**.
- 5.12** Applications for amendments to a candidate's personal particulars received after a specified date may be accepted at the discretion of the Secretary General.
- 5.13** A candidate withdrawing from the Examination may receive a partial refund of the fees paid provided that the Secretary General is notified in writing of the candidate's withdrawal before a date stipulated by the **HKEAA**. The **HKEAA** may, at its discretion, consider special applications under exceptional circumstances. There will be no refund for partial withdrawal. Examination fees are neither transferable from one examination to another, nor from one person to another. Examination fees will not be refunded to candidates who are disqualified (see Regulation 6.1).

- 5.14** Admission forms will be issued to candidates (via schools in the case of school candidates) in October in the year preceding the Examination (for Category C November series) / in or before March in the year of the Examination (for Category A subjects). Schools should not, for whatever reasons, withhold the admission forms of their students.
- 5.15** On application by a candidate, a duplicate admission form may be issued to replace one which has been lost, subject to payment of a supplementary fee.
- 5.16** Electronic calculators, including programmable calculators, may be used in any non-language examination session provided that the calculators are battery-powered, silent in operation and with neither print-out nor graphic/word-display facilities and do not use dot-matrix technology in the main display.
- 5.17** All answer scripts submitted by candidates (including portfolios and audio/video recordings for speaking and practical examinations) and all works submitted to the **HKEAA** under the SBA and ApL subjects (including coursework and audio/video recordings), shall be the property of the **HKEAA**. All scripts and works submitted may be handled by the **HKEAA** at any time and in any way it deems appropriate, in particular the **HKEAA** may (and may authorize third parties to) use, reproduce and/or publish those scripts and works, or any part thereof in an anonymous format in which the identities of applicants are not traceable. Also, the **HKEAA** will exercise reasonable care to protect and preserve the scripts and works submitted, but in the event of any loss or damage, as a result of which the candidate's performance cannot be assessed based on the scripts and/or the works submitted, the candidate concerned will waive all claims, if any, against the **HKEAA**.
- 5.18** Personal data of candidates will be used for the purpose of conducting the Examination and the subsequent assessment of their performance. The personal data, including examination results, may also be used for the following purposes:
- (1) assisting tertiary institutions and other government/public organisations in their admission processes;
 - (2) assisting government/public organisations in respect of their requests for information in granting scholarships;
 - (3) confirming with relevant Government authorities the eligibility of candidates for examination fee remission by transferring necessary data of the school candidates concerned to these Government authorities for verification;
 - (4) certifying candidates' examination results in response to legitimate requests;
 - (5) conducting educational research and/or analysis in an anonymous format in which the identities of candidates are not traceable; and
 - (6) processing of any refund or payment in relation to the examination by the **HKEAA**'s designated banks (or their appointees).
- In compliance with the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance, access to all personal data will be made available, on payment of a fee, to anyone who can establish his/her right to be informed of such data as are retained by the **HKEAA**.
- 5.19** All correspondence should be addressed to the Secretary General. (Address: Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority, 12th Floor, Southorn Centre, 130 Hennessy Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong.) School candidates should normally write to the **HKEAA** via their schools.

DISQUALIFICATION

- 6.1** A candidate may be disqualified from part or whole of the Examination or suffer a mark penalty or downgrading, without refund of the examination fees paid if the candidate
- (1) is not a bona fide Secondary 6 student of the school which presented him/her for the Examination;
 - (2) provides false personal particulars in his/her entry form;
 - (3) improperly obtains knowledge of examination papers prior to the Examination;

- (4) brings unauthorised article(s) (not limited to those perceived as related to cheating) to the examination, whether on/in the examination desk or his/her body or otherwise;
- (5) communicates or attempts to communicate in any form with any persons inside or outside the examination room during an examination session in an attempt to gain unfair advantage;
- (6) copies from notes, books or materials stored in electronic devices brought into the examination room or from the work of other candidates during an examination session;
- (7) takes away the question papers during the examination or removes any materials supplied by the HKEAA from the examination room, such as answer books, answer sheets and barcode labels; or displays the barcode labels electronically or publicly;
- (8) leaves the examination room without permission;
- (9) starts to read or work on the question paper before being instructed to do so or continues to hold any stationery or work on the answer script after being told to stop working at the end of an examination session;
- (10) passes off work done by someone else as his/her own, in any part of a project/portfolio/SBA where original work is required;
- (11) breaks any of the examination instructions as laid down in the Handbook for Candidates/Instructions to Candidates;
- (12) repeatedly disobeys the reasonable instructions of the centre supervisor or an invigilator;
- (13) disregards the HKEAA's/centre staff's verbal/written warning in connection with misbehaviour in any examination conducted by the HKEAA.

6.2 Appeals against decisions to disqualify or to refuse entry to examinations within the purview of the HKEAA should be made in writing to the Secretary General.

REPORTING OF RESULTS

- 7.1** For Category A subjects, results will be reported in five levels (1-5), with Level 1 being the lowest and Level 5 the highest. Achievements below Level 1 will be designated as 'unclassified'. To give recognition to outstanding candidates, top candidates within Level 5 will be awarded Level 5* and Level 5** as appropriate. Component levels for Chinese Language, English Language and Science (for Combined Science electives only) will be reported on the certificate.
- 7.2** For Category B subjects, assessment will be undertaken by course providers. After moderation by the HKEAA, the final results will be recorded on the HKDSE certificate. The results for Category B subjects will be reported as 'Attained', 'Attained with Distinction (I)' and 'Attained with Distinction (II)' except for Applied Learning Chinese subjects (for non-Chinese speaking students), the results of which will be reported as 'Attained' and 'Attained with Distinction'.
- 7.3** For Category C subjects, marking and grading will be conducted by Cambridge International. Results will be reported in five grades (a-e), with grade e being the lowest and grade a being the highest. Achievements below grade e will be designated as 'ungraded'. Except for the subjects Hindi and Urdu, a separate speaking endorsement grade (With Distinction/Merit/Pass in Speaking) will be reported for candidates who satisfy the conditions as stated in the syllabus. Achievement below 'Pass in Speaking' is not recorded.
- 7.4** A results notice will be issued to each candidate (via schools in the case of school candidates) at the time of the publication of results in January (for Category C November series examination) / July (for Category A and Category B examinations). This will record
 - (1) the provisional results obtained in individual subjects sat; and
 - (2) subjects entered for, but not sat.
 Results recorded in the results notice in case of absence in the paper(s) of Category C other language subjects will be issued by Cambridge International in accordance with their standard procedures. The language medium used by candidates will not be recorded on the results notice.

- 7.5 Each school will receive a summary showing the results obtained by its candidates.
- 7.6 On application by a candidate, a duplicate results notice may be issued to replace one which has been lost, subject to the payment of a fee.
- 7.7 Certificates are normally issued to candidates (via schools in the case of school candidates) in October in the year of the Examination.
- 7.8 Levels or grades awarded for individual subjects will be recorded on the certificate. The language medium used by candidates in the Examination will not be recorded. Subjects for which the candidate was absent and subjects with results designated as ‘Unclassified’ (i.e. below level 1 for the subjects in Category A), ‘Unattained’ (for subjects in Category B) or ‘Ungraded’ (i.e. below grade e / ‘Pass in Speaking’ in the speaking endorsement grade for the subjects in Category C) will not be recorded. Candidates who were absent from all subjects or who obtained Unclassified/Unattained/Ungraded results in all subjects will not be issued a certificate.
- 7.9 For Category A subjects with a school-based assessment component (Regulation 3.6), the subject results of candidates will be annotated if they are not required to undertake the school-based assessment.
- 7.10 Where a candidate has been exempted from component(s)/part(s) of an examination, his/her results for the affected component(s)/part(s) will be assessed. The details of the component(s) exempted will be indicated on the candidate’s certificate. However, the reason for granting the exemption will not be recorded on the certificate. In the case of special assistance (e.g. extra time allowance, provision of braille or enlarged question papers), such assistance provided will not be recorded on the certificate.
- 7.11 School principals are required to return all unclaimed certificates to the HKEAA at the time when certificates for the Examination in the following year are collected. Certificates unclaimed by 31 December, two years after the Examination, will be destroyed.
- 7.12 On application by a candidate, a statement of results may be issued, subject to the payment of a fee.
- 7.13 The Examination Report will be posted on the HKEAA website, normally in December in the year of the Examination.

APPEALS

- 8.1 For Category A subjects, applications for appeal must be submitted within a period prescribed by the HKEAA. Each candidate may apply for rechecking and/or remarking of scripts for a number of subjects as stipulated by the Public Examinations Board. A fee will be charged per subject. The fee will be refunded if the result is upgraded. For the SBA component, all disputes on assessment decisions should be resolved within the school before marks are submitted to the HKEAA for moderation. Candidates are not allowed to appeal for re-assessment after the release of examination results. They may apply for rechecking of marks only.
- 8.2 For Category B subjects, course providers are required to establish procedures to allow candidates to appeal against assessment decisions. The course providers should keep a complete record of all complaint cases and resolve all complaints from candidates before submitting the assessment results to the HKEAA for moderation. Candidates are not allowed to appeal against assessment decisions made by course providers once the results are submitted to the HKEAA for moderation. They may apply for rechecking of marks only.
- 8.3 For Category C subjects, appeals for other language subjects will be handled by Cambridge International in accordance with their standard procedures.

- 8.4** School candidates should submit their applications through their schools. Private candidates may submit their applications to the HKEAA direct.
- 8.5** The Examination is deemed to be closed on 30 November of that examination year (unless otherwise decided by the HKEAA), after which the HKEAA will not consider or entertain any appeals, queries or requests in relation to the Examination.

AMENDMENTS TO REGULATIONS

- 9.1** The Regulations are subject to revision.
- 9.2** Major amendments to the Regulations will be published before 15 September in the year preceding the Examination. Candidates will be notified of subsequent amendments, if any.