

HONG KONG ADVANCED LEVEL EXAMINATION 2011

REGULATIONS

INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination ("the Examination") is a public examination conducted by the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority ("the Authority") in accordance with the provisions of the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority Ordinance.
- 1.2 The primary purpose of the Examination is to measure the attainment of students who have completed a full-time two-year sixth form course. The Examination is conducted annually, mainly in April and May.

SUBJECTS OF THE EXAMINATION

- 2.1 The Examination offers subjects at the Advanced (A) level and Advanced Supplementary (AS) level as follows :

Subject	Levels offered	Language in which subject is to be examined
Applied Mathematics	AS A	Chinese or English
* Biology	A	Chinese or English
Business Studies	A	Chinese or English
* Chemistry	AS A	Chinese or English
Chinese History	AS A	Chinese only
Chinese Language & Culture	AS	Chinese only
Chinese Literature	A	Chinese only
* Computer Applications	AS	Chinese or English
* Computer Studies	A	Chinese or English
Economics	AS A	Chinese or English
* Electronics	AS	Chinese or English
Ethics & Religious Studies	AS	Chinese or English
Geography	A	Chinese or English
Government & Public Affairs	AS A	Chinese or English
History	AS A	Chinese or English
Liberal Studies	AS	Chinese or English
Literature in English	AS A	English only
Mathematics & Statistics	AS	Chinese or English
* Physics	AS A	Chinese or English
Principles of Accounts	A	Chinese or English
Psychology	AS A	Chinese or English
Pure Mathematics	A	Chinese or English
Use of English	AS	English only
Visual Arts	AS A	Chinese or English

Note :

- * Practical subjects (see Regulations 2.4, 3.5 and 4.3).
- 2.2 A candidate may enter for a maximum of eight subjects with no restriction on the number of A-level and AS-level subjects at any one Examination.
- 2.3 In any subject with a syllabus examinable in both Chinese and English, only one language version may be entered for in the same Examination. (N.B. Candidates taking Liberal Studies need not enter both modules in the same language.)
- 2.4 Only under exceptional circumstances will a school candidate be permitted to enter for a practical subject (see Regulation 2.1) which his/her school has not obtained permission to enter.
- 2.5 In each of the following groups of subjects, only one may be entered for in the same Examination :

- A Applied Mathematics
- AS Applied Mathematics
- AS Mathematics & Statistics

- A Chemistry
- AS Chemistry

- A Chinese History
- AS Chinese History

- A Computer Studies
- AS Computer Applications

- A Economics
- AS Economics

- A Government & Public Affairs
- AS Government & Public Affairs

- A History
- AS History

- A Literature in English
- AS Literature in English

- A Pure Mathematics
- AS Mathematics & Statistics

- A Physics
- AS Physics

- A Psychology
- AS Psychology

A Visual Arts
AS Visual Arts

Note : Candidates may take both A-level Chinese Literature and AS-level Chinese Language & Culture in the same Examination.

PARTICIPATION IN THE EXAMINATION BY SCHOOLS

- 3.1 The participation of schools in the Examination shall be subject to the prior approval of the Authority. At the time of application for participation, the school should provide evidence that it is a registered school and that it is running courses and operating classes in accordance with the Education Bureau's registration requirements; and that the school agrees to comply with the examination regulations. The Authority may seek advice from the Education Bureau where necessary. In its consideration and determination of an application, the Authority 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 7 students of registered schools 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.
- 3.3 A Secondary 7 student in a participating school may enter for the Examination as a school candidate provided he/she has obtained in the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE) or an equivalent public examination,
- (1) Level 2/grade E or above in Chinese Language and English Language, and
 - (2) At least 4 points in 4 other subjects* or at least 5 points in 3 other subjects* at one sitting (taken at least 18 months before the Examination for which he/she is entering).
- * Each subject shall carry at least one point; grades A to E shall be given the numerical values of 5 to 1 respectively for the purpose of calculating the points.
- 3.4 The Authority may consider applications from persons possessing other qualifications or pleading special circumstances. Applications under this regulation must be made in writing to the Secretary General of the Authority ("the Secretary General") before 1st September in the year preceding the Examination.
- 3.5 Schools wishing
- (1) to enter candidates for the first time; or
 - (2) to enter candidates for a practical subject (see Regulation 2.1) for the

first time,

must make written application to the Secretary General for approval not later than 1st June, two years preceding the Examination.

- 3.6 The Secretary General will notify schools of the decisions of the Authority under Regulations 3.1 and 3.5, normally not later than 31st August, two years preceding the Examination. Any appeal against the Authority's decisions under Regulations 3.1 and 3.5 should be made in writing to the Secretary General within 30 days from the date of the above notification.
- 3.7 Under exceptional circumstances, a school may be given provisional approval for participation in the Examination or in a practical subject; the final approval being subject to the school fulfilling the conditions under which the provisional approval was given.
- 3.8 Participation in the Examination and in practical subjects will be subject to annual review by the Authority. The Secretary General will inform schools of any decision of the Authority to withdraw permission for the schools to participate or to impose conditions for continued participation, normally not later than 31st August, two years preceding the Examination.
- 3.9 Notwithstanding Regulation 3.8, the Authority 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 Authority may specify in the said notice.
- 3.10 Should permission to participate be withdrawn under Regulation 3.8 or 3.9, a school may make application to participate again in accordance with Regulations 3.1 and 3.5 as if applying to enter candidates for the first time.
- 3.11 For school candidates, practical work for the following subjects will be assessed solely through school-based assessment (SBA)/a Teacher Assessment Scheme (TAS) :
- A-level Biology, Chemistry, Computer Studies and Physics
 - AS-level Chemistry, Computer Applications, Electronics and Physics
- The Authority will not accept entries for these subjects from candidates presented by schools which do not qualify to join the SBA/TAS.
- 3.12 Entry forms for school candidates will be available in September in the year preceding the Examination. These forms must be completed and

the examination fees must be paid on or before the date specified by the Authority.

- 3.13 Schools presenting candidates for the Examination must place their staff at the reasonable disposal of the Authority as may be required for the conduct of the Examination. In particular, schools must provide centre supervisors and/or invigilators in relation to the number of entries. Schools which are unable to provide the required number of invigilators may, at the discretion of the Secretary General, be allowed the option of paying the cost of hiring invigilators.
- 3.14 Schools presenting candidates for the Examination must make their school buildings, furniture and facilities available to the Authority as may be required for the conduct of the Examination.
- 3.15 Compliance by schools with Regulations 3.13 and 3.14 will be regarded as a condition of participation in the Examination.
- 3.16 A list of schools approved for participation in the Examination together with approved practical subjects is available at the Authority's offices, District Offices and the Authority's web site (www.hkeaa.edu.hk) from 1st July 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 (1) or (2) or (3) below:
 - (1) The person has obtained in the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE) or an equivalent public examination
 - (i) Level 2/grade E or above in Chinese Language and English Language, and
 - (ii) At least 4 points in 4 other subjects* or at least 5 points in 3 other subjects* at one sitting (taken at least 18 months before the Examination for which he/she is entering).

* Each subject shall carry at least one point; grades A to E shall be given the numerical values of 5 to 1 respectively for the purpose of calculating the points.
 - (2) The person has sat a previous Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination.
 - (3) The person has reached the age of 20 by 1st January in the year of the Examination.
- 4.2 The Authority may consider applications from persons possessing other qualifications or pleading special circumstances. Applications under this regulation must be made in writing to the Secretary General before 1st September in the year preceding the Examination.
- 4.3 A private candidate may enter for a practical subject (see Regulation 2.1) only if
 - (1) the candidate can produce evidence of having sat the subject in a

previous Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination, or in an equivalent public examination; and

(2) centres and facilities for the examination of the subject are available.

However, a private candidate may enter for AS-level Physics provided that he/she has previously sat A-level Physics or vice versa.

- 4.4 Private candidates who enter for A/AS-level Physics, Visual Arts or A-level Biology, Chemistry, Chinese Literature, Computer Studies or AS-level Chinese Language & Culture, Liberal Studies may opt to use their previous teacher-assessed mark on the practical component/project/reading programme to substitute the current year practical examination or requirement for submission of projects/reading reports provided that the former is obtained in the same examination within two years.
- 4.5 Practical examinations will not be arranged for the subjects of AS-level Chemistry, Computer Applications and Electronics. Private candidates who enter for these subjects must have sat the same examination as school candidates within two years. Their previous teacher-assessed mark on the practical/project component will be carried forward to constitute the current year's practical/project mark.
- 4.6 Notwithstanding Regulations 4.1 to 4.5, a Secondary 6 student may enter for the Examination as a private candidate if he/she has obtained outstanding results in the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination and has satisfied the conditions for entry specified by the Authority.
- 4.7 Entry forms for private candidates will be available in September in the year preceding the Examination. Registration arrangements will be announced in the press.
- 4.8 Examination fees must be paid on or before the date specified by the Authority.

GENERAL

- 5.1 The subjects of the Examination will be examined in accordance with a timetable, which will normally be announced in September in the year preceding the Examination. A provisional examination timetable will be provided to participating schools in May or June.
- 5.2 Although the Authority will endeavour to ensure that all examinations will be conducted on the dates and at the times specified in the examination timetable, it cannot guarantee that this will be so. In the event of an examination having to be rescheduled or cancelled, the Authority will not accept any liability in respect of claims for expenses or other damages. However, it may at its discretion refund the whole or part of the fees paid in respect of an examination which has to be cancelled.
- 5.3 Examination fees will be announced before September in the year

- preceding the Examination.
- 5.4 All candidates shall pay the same subject fees. Private candidates shall pay an additional initial fee.
 - 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 Authority reserves the right to reject an application for entry to any examination conducted by the Authority if it is satisfied that the applicant has been involved in any serious irregularity, misconduct or dishonesty in any examination conducted by the Authority, or in connection with certificates, statements of results or similar documents.
 - 5.7 Under special circumstances the Authority 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 sections 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/syllabus 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 Authority together with full supporting documents (e.g. medical certificates).
 - 5.9 Entries of candidates will not be regarded as having been accepted until the fees payable have been received in full by the Authority.
 - 5.10 A copy of the (1) Candidate Entry Information Checklist and a copy of the (2) Instructions to Candidates will be issued to schools and private candidates in early December in the year preceding the Examination. Candidates will be responsible for checking their entry data to see that the entries they made at the time of registration have been correctly processed. The Secretary General must be notified in writing before 16th December 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 5.7.

- 5.11 Applications for amendments to a candidate's personal particulars received after 15th December in the year preceding the Examination may be accepted at the discretion of the Secretary General.
- 5.12 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 16th December in the year preceding the Examination. The Authority may, at its discretion, consider special applications of exceptional circumstances. There will be no refund for partial withdrawal. Examination fees are not 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).
- 5.13 Admission forms will be issued to candidates (via schools in the case of school candidates) in March in the year of the Examination. Schools should not, for whatever reasons, withhold the admission forms of their students.
- 5.14 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.
- 5.15 Electronic calculators, including programmable calculators, may be used in any 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.
- 5.16 All answer scripts submitted by candidates, including the practical work in practical examinations, shall be the property of the Authority and as such, shall be handled by the Authority at any time and in any way it deems appropriate. While the Authority will exercise reasonable care to protect and preserve the scripts, in the event of any loss or damage, as a result of which the candidate's performance cannot be assessed based on the scripts, the candidate concerned will waive all claims, if any, against the Authority.
- 5.17 Personal data of candidates will be used for the purpose of conducting the Examination. The personal data, including examination results, may also be used for the following purposes :
 - (1) assisting tertiary institutions and other government/public organizations in their admission processes;
 - (2) assisting government/public organizations in respect of their requests for information in granting scholarships;
 - (3) certifying candidates' examination results in response to legitimate requests; and
 - (4) conducting educational research and analysis in an anonymous format in which the identities of candidates are not traceable.

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 Authority.

- 5.18 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 Authority via their schools.

DISQUALIFICATION

- 6.1 A candidate may be disqualified from part or whole of the Examination or suffer a mark or grade penalty, without refund of the examination fee paid if the candidate
- (1) is not a bona fide Secondary 7 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) is found to have unauthorized article(s) on/in the examination desk or on his/her person;
 - (5) communicates or attempts to communicate improperly with any person inside or outside the examination room during an examination session;
 - (6) copies from notes, books or materials stored in electronic devices brought into the examination room or from the answers of another candidate during an examination session;
 - (7) attempts to take away from the examination room any examination material, such as answer sheets, backing sheets or graph paper;
 - (8) leaves the examination room without permission;
 - (9) starts to work on the question paper before being instructed to do so or continues to write after being told to stop writing 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/SBA/TAS where original work is required;
 - (11) breaks any of the examination instructions as laid down in the Instructions to Candidates referred to in Regulation 5.10 (2);
 - (12) disobeys the instructions of the centre supervisor or an invigilator;
 - (13) disregards the Authority's written warning in connection with misbehaviour in any examination conducted by the Authority.
- 6.2 Appeals against decisions to disqualify or to refuse entry to examinations within the purview of the Authority should be made in writing to the Secretary General.

RESULTS

- 7.1 The performance of candidates in individual subjects will be recorded in

terms of six grades, namely, A, B, C, D, E and F, of which A is the highest and F the lowest.

- 7.2 Achievements below grade F will be designated as "unclassified".
- 7.3 The same calibre of work will be expected at Advanced Supplementary level as is expected at Advanced level. The grading system adopted by the Authority will ensure that the AS-level grades are comparable to those of their corresponding A-level subjects.
- 7.4 There will be no conversion from A-level results to the corresponding AS-level results.
- 7.5 Grade E or above in all A-level and AS-level subjects is recognised as equivalent to an A-level pass and an Advanced Subsidiary level pass (or a former Advanced Supplementary level pass) respectively in a G.C.E. examination conducted by a British awarding body.
- 7.6 The results will normally be issued by the end of June in the year of the Examination.
- 7.7 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. This will record
 - (1) the results obtained in individual subjects sat; and
 - (2) subjects entered for, but not sat.The language medium used by candidates will not be recorded on the results notice.
- 7.8 Each school will receive a list showing the results obtained by its candidates.
- 7.9 Applications for appeal must be submitted within a period prescribed by the Authority. Each candidate may apply for full appeal (rechecking of marks and remarking of scripts) and rechecking of marks only for a number of subjects as stipulated by the Public Examinations Board. A fee will be charged per subject/component. The fee will be refunded if the candidate's result is upgraded. Applications from school candidates will be accepted only if they are supported by the candidates' school principals. Applications from private candidates must be supported by adequate reasons.
- 7.10 Certificates are normally issued to candidates (via schools in the case of school candidates) in October in the year of the Examination.
- 7.11 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" will not be recorded. Component grades for Chinese Language & Culture, Liberal Studies and Use of English will be reported on the certificate. Candidates who were absent from all subjects or who obtained unclassified results in all subjects will not be issued a certificate.
- 7.12 Where a candidate has been exempted from part(s) of the requirements of an examination, his/her results for the affected part(s) will be assessed.

The details of any such assessment will be listed on a second page to the candidate's certificate, and an indication will be printed on the first page that a second page has been used. 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 as long as the candidate has completed the full requirements of the examination.

- 7.13 School principals are required to return all unclaimed certificates to the Authority at the time when certificates for the Examination in the following year are collected. Certificates unclaimed by 31st December, two years after the Examination, will be destroyed.
- 7.14 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.
- 7.15 On application by a candidate, a statement of results may be issued, subject to the payment of a fee.
- 7.16 School candidates who are unable to take the examinations because of hospitalisation as a result of accident or serious illness, or because of special circumstances, may, with the support of the school principal, apply for special consideration. Subject to the application being approved by the Authority, the assessed results of the subjects concerned, which will be either grade C or grade E, will be listed on a second page to the normal certificate, and an indication will be printed on the first page that a second page has been used.
- 7.17 A copy of the Examination Report will be issued to all participating schools and will be available for sale to the general public, normally in December in the year of the Examination.

AMENDMENTS TO REGULATIONS

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