

1. *Why is SBA being implemented?*

There are two main reasons for introducing SBA into the public assessment system. The first is to improve the *validity* of assessments. Some important outcomes cannot be assessed through a written examination, particularly where they involve practical work, require special equipment and facilities (e.g., laboratories, studios, theatres and workshops), or involve extended amounts of time (e.g., to complete a research project, create a portfolio of work or compose/ design/ make something). But these outcomes can be assessed through SBA. The second main reason for introducing SBA is to improve the *reliability* of assessments. Because they are typically based on many observations of the student over an extended period of time, school assessments, once they have been moderated, can provide a more reliable indication of the true abilities of the student than their results in a ‘one-shot’ examination.

2. *How is SBA implemented in other countries?*

- SBA has been adopted by almost all major examination bodies over the past 20 years to improve the quality of learning, teaching and assessment. For example, in the UK and Australia, the weighting given to SBA is about 50%. Provinces in Canada have up to 100% SBA and the International Baccalaureate (IB) has a heavy emphasis on SBA supported by teacher moderation arrangements.
- There is a long history of SBA in Hong Kong. It was introduced into HKALE Chemistry in 1978. In 2007, SBA has been implemented in 11 HKALE subjects and 14 HKCEE subjects. As a result, half of the subjects to be examined under the NSS curriculum will already have an SBA component.

3. *How can fairness and reliability be ensured in SBA?*

- Assessment tasks will be designed so that they are carried out for the most part under the direct supervision of teachers, who will be able to authenticate that the work done is genuinely that of the students.
- HKEAA will provide assessment criteria, exemplars and detailed guidelines to ensure consistency in teachers’ assessments.
- HKEAA will organize professional development programmes on SBA for teachers so as to strengthen their understanding of SBA.
- Teachers have a sound knowledge of the standards of their own students but are not necessarily familiar with the standards of students in all other schools. Hence, for subjects with large enrolments, statistical moderation will be used to eliminate any inconsistencies in marking standards between schools. Statistical moderation is a process in which raw school

assessments are adjusted in the light of the performance of the same candidates in the examination.

- Non-statistical methods will be adopted to moderate SBA results for subjects with small candidatures or those that involve outcomes that are very different from those assessed through the public examination.

4. *Is it valid to moderate students' performance in SBA against the public examination?*

Statistical moderation is a fair and impartial way of ensuring consistency of standards across schools. It makes use of a valid indicator of the ability of the students, namely their performance in the public examination, to determine whether any adjustment is needed. During the moderation process, students' SBA marks may be adjusted, but the rank order determined by the school will remain unchanged. For subjects with small candidatures or that involve outcomes that are very different from those assessed through the public examination, moderation will be carried out by a panel of experts who will inspect samples of assessed student work and make adjustments if required.

5. *How can students' work in SBA be authenticated?*

The SBA activities are designed so that the final product or performance can readily be authenticated by the teachers as the work of the student concerned, through designing tasks, as far as possible, so that they can be completed during school time under the supervision of teachers. In some cases, students may undertake fieldwork, planning, reading, research and other activities outside the classroom, but checks will be built into the process at critical stages of the writing up or execution of the final product or performance.

6. *Will EMB and HKEAA provide sufficient training and supporting materials for teachers?*

SBA handbooks for new senior secondary subjects, including assessment criteria and detailed guidelines, will be published by HKEAA in the school year 2008-09. Professional development programmes on assessment literacy as well as for helping teachers to prepare to conduct SBA will begin from the school year 2007-08.

7. *Will students' workload be excessive because of SBA?*

The suggested SBA assessment activities closely align with the curriculum and what will be taught in the classroom. These activities include an oral assessment in English Language, laboratory work in science subjects, an Independent Enquiry Study in Liberal Studies, and so on. In other

words, the activities carried out as part of SBA are all integral to the learning of the subject. In the curriculum and assessment guides, sufficient time has been allocated for conducting the related activities. In addition, efforts will be made to ensure that due dates for assessment activities of different subjects are coordinated so that the demands of students' work are not concentrated into one or two critical months, but spread out over two years.

8. *Will teachers' workload be excessive because of SBA?*

In response to the views obtained during the consultation exercises, EMB and HKEAA have reviewed the SBA for each subject and have substantially trimmed both the number of tasks and the task requirements in many subjects. Furthermore, SBA has been so designed that it forms an integral part of the curriculum and not an "add-on". Schools have been advised to conduct SBA activities within the normal teaching and learning process and, in particular, to incorporate SBA assessment as a part of their internal assessment policy, replacing some of the current assessment activities. The strategic implementation of SBA will also help teachers to prepare themselves for the implementation of the new curriculum as well as relieve them of the extra burden resulting from having to prepare for the HKAL Examination and the HKDSE Examination in 2011 and 2012.

9. *When will SBA be implemented in the new senior secondary curriculum?*

SBA will be implemented in the 2012 HKDSE for Liberal Studies and seven other subjects that currently have SBA as part of the HKCEE. For the four science subjects, implementation of SBA of laboratory work will commence in 2012 with full implementation deferred until 2014. For the remaining twelve subjects, a deferral in implementing SBA is proposed. Typically, SBA will contribute between 15-30% of the overall assessment result of a given subject.

10. *For those subjects in which the implementation of SBA is going to be deferred, how will teaching and learning and the reporting of students' achievement be affected?*

During the transition years, the curricula of the relevant subjects will remain unchanged and schools will be expected to fully implement the curriculum and assessment guides and conduct, as a normal part of ongoing instruction, the assessment activities as suggested in the guides. Strategic implementation of SBA will enable schools and teachers to familiarize themselves with the new senior secondary curriculum and relieve them of the extra burden resulting from teachers having to prepare students for both the HKAL Examination and HKDSE Examination. The decision to defer the implementation of SBA in some subjects was made after extensive consultation with relevant stakeholders. It will facilitate a smooth implementation of SBA in the new senior

secondary curriculum.

*11. What will happen to private candidates or repeaters?*

Private candidates or repeaters will continue to participate in the HKDSE. Where it is not possible for them to have a School-based Assessment, their final result will be based entirely on public examination results and annotated in their HKDSE accordingly. For certain subjects, an alternative mode of assessment will be adopted to replace the SBA.