

For discussion on
14 June 2010

Legislative Council Panel on Education

Study Pathways for the Last Cohort of Secondary 5 Graduates in 2010

Purpose

This paper aims at updating members on the study pathways and arrangements for the last cohort of Secondary 5 (S5) graduates in 2010, and measures adopted by the Education Bureau (EDB) in helping them make informed choices on their further study or future career.

Background

2. It is our usual practice to provide support and updated information on possible pathways to S5 graduates every year, including the publication of the Careers Guidance Handbook for S5 Graduates and organisation of “Information Expo for Secondary School Leavers”. Following the implementation of the New Academic Structure (NAS) in September 2009, the first Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) examination would take place in 2012 and the last Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE) for school candidates is offered in 2010. As the last cohort of S5 graduates may face different challenges this year, EDB has made a lot of efforts to ensure that multiple pathways are available and adequate support is provided to address their specific needs. EDB has also been communicating with various stakeholders including schools, parents, students and counseling organisations in order to provide updated information and timely support. It is hoped that all graduates will be able to, after discussing with their parents and teachers, choose a pathway that best suits their interests, abilities and development plans for the future.

Study Pathways Available for the Last Cohort of S5 Graduates

3. Every S5 graduate has his/her own strengths and potentials. The society

today is developing rapidly, and the requirements for talents have been changing. For all to succeed, it is most essential for the S5 graduates to develop positive values and proactive attitudes, and be ready to accept whatever challenges that may lie ahead. According to statistics and figures in the past years, the majority of S5 graduates chose to further their studies in Hong Kong. EDB has already provided all graduates with diversified choices for receiving further education. The last cohort of S5 graduates under the old academic structure enjoys as many articulation opportunities as previous graduates, if not more. The diagram “Study Pathways for Secondary 5 Graduates” in **Appendix A** outlines concisely the multiple educational/employment pathways for the students.

Progression to S6

4. As in the past, students who meet the minimum entry requirements of Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination (HKALE) may apply for studies in the local sixth form course (S6/7) in their own schools or in other secondary schools according to the Secondary Six Admission Procedure (S6AP), and then sit for the HKALE in 2012. The projected number of subsidised places is more or less the same as those of the previous years, which is around 35 000.

5. Under the current S6AP, schools have been given the flexibility to admit S5 graduates who meet the minimum HKALE entry requirements to fill the discretionary places in their S6 classes. To cater for the needs of the last cohort of S5 graduates as far as possible, schools have been encouraged to exercise discretion to admit students to their S6 classes.

6. Students taking the S6/7 can sit for the last HKALE in 2012 for articulation to 3-year undergraduate programmes. The first cohort of the NAS will also graduate in 2012. To cater for the needs of these two groups of graduates, the provision for publicly-funded first-year-first-degree places will be doubled in 2012. There will be 14 620 places each for students under the old academic structure and those under the NAS (thus making a total of 29 240 places). S7 graduates under the old academic structure and S6 graduates under the NAS will be admitted to 3-year and 4-year undergraduate programmes respectively. As these two groups of graduates will apply for two different programmes of different duration, there will not be any competition for the same university places between them. In addition, the number of places for the self-financing undergraduate programmes will increase from around 3 000 in 2009 to around 5 000 in 2012.

7. Students can also choose to sit for the HKALE as school candidates as well as the HKDSE examination as private candidates in 2012 if they so wish. Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA) will impose no restriction for S7 students to sit for the HKDSE examination in the capacity of private candidates. However, students can apply for admission to the University Grants Committee (UGC)-funded institutions with either HKALE results or HKDSE examination results (but not both) through the Joint University Programmes Admissions System (JUPAS).

Post-secondary Programmes

8. In addition to S6/7, there are many alternative pathways for S5 graduates to suit their abilities, interests and aspirations. For students who have attained at least five passes (including Chinese Language and English Language) in HKCEE, they may apply for 3-year sub-degree programmes, including associate degree and higher diploma programmes. At present, around 20 local post-secondary institutions are offering around 300 sub-degree programmes covering a wide array of disciplines such as design, business administration and applied science. Each year, around 10 000 S5 graduates enrol in these sub-degree programmes. As the number of S5 graduates this year is more or less the same as that of last year, based on our latest projection, there would be adequate post-secondary places to meet their demand.

9. Sub-degrees are valuable standalone qualifications for employment at the junior management or para-professional level. Graduates of sub-degree programmes with satisfactory results may also apply for admission to the second year of 3-year undergraduate programmes in the UGC-funded and self-financing institutions locally and overseas.

Vocational Education and other Programmes

10. Students may also consider enrolling in Project Yi Jin (PYJ), which provides an alternative pathway for S5 school leavers. The programme comprises ten modules, including seven core modules and three electives. The core modules include Chinese, English I, English II, Mathematics in Practice, Information Technology, Putonghua and Communication Skills. The electives include a wide range of practical courses that cater for the different interests and needs of students. A PYJ student is awarded a full PYJ certificate when he/she passes all ten modules of the programme. The certificate has been assessed by the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications as comparable to five passes in HKCEE for continuing

education and employment purposes. In the current academic year, over 12 000 and 3 000 full-time and part-time students enrolled in PYJ respectively. There is no set quota on the number of PYJ places, and there is scope for expanding the current provision to meet the demand of the last S5 cohort.

11. Apart from the above, students may pursue vocational education or training courses provided by the Vocational Training Council (VTC), the Clothing Industry Training Authority and the Construction Industry Council Training Academy. EDB has been maintaining close contact with the VTC with a view to providing S5 graduates with a wide range of programmes (including diploma in vocational education programmes, foundation diploma programmes and certificate programmes) which are relevant to their needs. Students may also participate in the Youth Pre-employment Training Programme and the Youth Work Experience and Training Scheme provided by the Labour Department. The number of places available for vocational education and training is flexible depending on the demand. In 2009, around 13 000 students enrolled in programmes organised by various providers.

Switching to S5 under the New Senior Secondary Academic Structure

12. For students who wish to improve their results in some HKCEE subjects, they can sit for the last HKCEE as private candidates. HKEAA has committed to conducting an additional HKCEE in 2011 for some subjects as set out in **Appendix B**. Starting from the 2010/11 school year, the public sector schools will no longer provide education programmes leading to HKCEE¹ and there will not be any S6AP in 2011 in any government, aided schools or schools under the Direct Subsidy Scheme.

13. S5 graduates may also wish to consider switching to the New Senior Secondary (NSS) curriculum at S5 and sit for the first HKDSE in 2012. Given that there is sufficient curriculum continuity between HKCEE and NSS subjects, students should have no great difficulty in switching to study in S5 and S6 under the NAS. Under the old academic structure, apart from studying Chinese Language, English Language and Mathematics, students probably have to choose 4 or 5 elective subjects. Under the NAS, apart from studying the 4 compulsory subjects (Chinese Language, English Language, Mathematics and Liberal Studies), students only need to choose 2

¹ The Government operates the Financial Assistance Scheme for Designated Evening Adult Education Courses under which adult learners (aged 17 or above) enrolled in secondary courses, i.e. S1 to S7, run by approved course provider(s) at designated school premises, would be eligible for partial reimbursement of tuition fees if they meet the eligibility criteria. The Scheme will cover up to 15 centres located in five regions throughout the territory which will offer, among other levels, about 5 000 S5 places under both the old and new academic structure in the 2010/11 school year.

or 3 elective subjects. There is opportunity for students to continue to study the elective subjects they have done previously. Students can also take Applied Learning courses which are 2-year courses offered in S5 and S6 just like other students under the NAS. As for Liberal Studies, this subject aims to broaden students' knowledge base, develop their multiple perspectives and critical thinking skills, and enhance their awareness of social, national and global development through the study of a wide range of contemporary issues. S5 graduates have already completed the 5-year secondary education and built up knowledge base as well as the essential learning abilities and skills. With a positive attitude towards learning and assistance from teachers, they should be able to meet the requirements of the subject.

14. Regarding School-based Assessment (SBA), since only SBA conducted in S5 and S6 are counted, switching to the new system in S5 will not affect the SBA marks of the subjects concerned. In short, the last cohort of S5 graduates who switch to the NSS curriculum at S5 should have little problem in studying in the new system, and they will have the same opportunities to sit for the first HKDSE examination in 2012 and articulate to multiple pathways as all other S5 students under NAS.

15. Based on the past statistics, only a small percentage of S5 graduates would like to repeat S5 after the release of HKCEE results. We anticipate that the quota for repeaters this year will be sufficient to meet with the demand for switching to NSS S5 from the 2010 cohort of HKCEE candidates, as schools will be allowed to make use of the approved 5% repeater quota computed on a whole school basis for this cohort of students.

16. Some senior secondary schools², which have more places to admit this cohort of graduates, are providing featured programmes for S4-6 students to supplement the NSS curriculum. These special courses include Work-based Learning Programme, Tourism and Hospitality, Media Writing and Production, etc. Students can visit the homepages of these schools for details, and choose the featured programmes that best suit their needs.

Other choices

17. Apart from the above, students may also choose to pursue further studies abroad or seek employment as in the past.

² The senior secondary schools include Caritas Charles Vath College, CCC Kung Lee College, HKICC Lee Shau Kee School of Creativity and Yeo Chei Man Senior Secondary School. They provide S3 leavers with diversified and practical curricula and a versatile articulation ladder for their S5 graduates.

Summary

18. Around 86 500 S5 students are going to graduate this year. Students progressing to S6/7 this year will graduate in 2012, together with the first cohort of students under the NAS. Both this year and in 2012, there will be sufficient articulation places to meet the needs of students intending to pursue further studies. The table in Appendix C provides the projected number of places available for different programmes in 2010.

Suggested Measures for Schools to Help Students and Parents Plan Ahead

19. It is important that schools are aware of the different needs of S5 graduates this year and the multiple pathways available, and provide them with the necessary guidance and support. As always, we have been communicating closely with the school sector in understanding their concerns and addressing them. This year, we particularly urge schools to provide timely advice to their students on the multiple pathways available and provide them with the appropriate career guidance services (such as careers talks, career counseling for individual students/groups of students who may have diverse learning abilities or special educational needs) so that students and parents can make informed choices on their future. For this last S5 cohort, we appeal to schools to consider admitting students of their own schools and students from other schools to study S5 under the NSS in the 2010/11 school year, if places are available. To cater for students' and parents' needs, schools are also strongly advised to upload relevant information, such as admission requirements, NSS subjects offered and the number of places available, on their websites for students' information. As reflected in our regular meetings with schools, school heads indicated that they would endeavour to admit their own students as well as other students and ensure that arrangements would be made in the best interests of students.

Supporting Measures from EDB

20. EDB's key concerns are to ensure that all S5 graduates as well as their parents are provided with the updated information, and have easy access to it. EDB will strengthen the communication strategies whenever necessary to ensure that all parties have a good understanding of the situation, and that such multiple measures of communication can ensure that every HKCEE student would have access to the

information based on their needs. Our communication channels include publications, websites, seminars/briefing sessions for schools, teachers, parents, students and meetings with other guidance and advisory organisations, etc.

Providing updated information through publications and websites

21. EDB continues to issue the annual Careers Guidance Handbook for S5 Graduates (jointly with Hong Kong Association of Careers Masters and Guidance Masters) this year. In the Handbook, students are provided with guidance on making their choices, and comprehensive and accurate information on various study pathways and vocational education pathways. Contact lists for relevant organisations are also provided for students in need. In addition to the printed copies, graduates may also access the electronic version of the Handbook in the EDB homepage for the updated information. The e-version of the Handbook will be ready in late June and the hard copies will be distributed in early July.

22. A pamphlet entitled “Multiple Pathways for the Last Cohort of S5 (2010) and S7 (2012) Graduates”, Vol. 6 of the Useful Tips for Parents was published in September 2009 to inform parents of the multiple pathways. To provide updated and more detailed information specifically for the last cohort of S5 graduates, another pamphlet “Multiple pathways --- Stretching potentials” for the last cohort of S5 graduates (2009/10 school year) has been distributed to students and parents starting early June. To ensure that it can reach all S5 graduates, the pamphlet will be distributed via schools, non-government organisations (NGOs), District Offices, public libraries, and English Language oral exam centres, etc. EDB will send the same pamphlet to all school candidates through their schools on or before the HKCEE result release date. Its e-version can be accessed easily through the New Academic Structure Web Bulletin as well as the Hong Kong Education City (HKEdCity).

23. EDB has improved the accessibility to relevant information on the New Academic Structure Web Bulletin so as to facilitate students’ and parents’ search for information. There is already a designated webpage (<http://www.edb.gov.hk/lastcohort>) on the multiple pathways for the last cohort of S5 graduates (2009/10 school year) so that students can access information through a one-stop web link before the release of the HKCEE results. Latest information for schools, students and parents has been provided. Publications and materials disseminated in various seminars for this cohort of graduates can also be downloaded. To enhance quick search for relevant information, hyperlinks to this corner will be set

up in GovHK, Youth Portal and HKEdCity in late June. Furthermore, a search engine will be created in late June for the public to gain access to the information of S6 admission in the last 3 years, with its mobile version developed by HKEdCity to be ready in July.

Communication with schools, teachers, students and parents

24. As school heads and teachers are expected to offer advice to their students on articulation, EDB has been communicating with them through circular memorandum, briefing sessions and meetings. A Circular Memorandum No. 41/2010 on the “Study Pathways for the Last Cohorts of Secondary 5 Students in 2010 and Secondary 7 Students in 2012” was issued on 25 March this year. Schools were requested to disseminate the relevant information to their students and parents to help them make informed choices on further study. They were also encouraged to exercise their discretion to cater for students’ needs. EDB had held a meeting in early May with principals of private secondary schools and evening schools which offer full local curriculum to students on the latest information on S5 graduates who would repeat HKCEE, switch to NSS curriculum or take other study pathways. They are better prepared to cater for the needs of their S5 students with the information received in the meeting.

25. As teachers, in particular career masters, are in a good position to give advice to students on their study pathways, briefing sessions with them were organised by EDB earlier this year. An experience sharing session targeted at career guidance service was also held in May 2010 to provide career and guidance teachers with the necessary information and all the supporting measures available for the last cohort of S5 graduates. In this sharing session, teachers were furnished with more details on the multiple exits for students, their views were shared and their concerns were addressed.

26. EDB has also organised seminars for the last cohort of S5 graduates and their parents in the past few months. The annual event “Information Expo for Secondary School Leavers”, aiming at providing the latest information on all local further studies and vocational education opportunities, including various locally accredited post-secondary programmes, vocational education programmes, PYJ and non-local courses, will continue to be held in mid-July this year. As part of this “Information Expo for Secondary School Leavers 2010”, there will be talks on further study pathways available for the last cohort of S5 graduates. During the same period, EDB

will set up a booth in the “Learning and Teaching Expo 2010” organised by HKEdCity in mid-July to provide information to the public as well as students and parents. These talks and exhibitions would help assist both parents and graduates of the last S5 cohort in making informed decisions on the pathway most suitable to them before the release of HKCEE results on 4 August.

27. A full set of detailed information on the study pathways for the last cohort of S5 graduates will be provided to local newspapers with HKCEE supplements before the release of the HKCEE results so that students and parents will be fully informed of the latest development. In parallel, HKEAA will also assist in disseminating the information through Short Message Service (SMS) to private candidates before the release of results.

Facilitating NGOs to provide support for the last cohort

28. In order to provide timely and appropriate advice to students, it is important to cooperate with the guidance and advisory organisations and NGOs that have been giving support to HKCEE students and their parents. In this connection, briefing sessions for Samaritan Befrienders Hong Kong, other guidance and advisory organisations and NGOs were organised in May and early June 2010. In these sessions, EDB had provided the voluntary workers with the updated information and study pathways available for the last cohort of students, with a view to helping them offer suitable advice to students. They will also be provided with the list of resource packages for reference. NGOs have been invited to set up a hyperlink to EDB’s designated webpage on the multiple pathways for the last cohort of S5 graduates (2009/10 school year) on their homepage to facilitate easy access to relevant information. If necessary, follow-up briefing sessions for the voluntary workers would be organised in order to strengthen support for students who are in need.

Way forward

29. EDB will continue to maintain close communication with schools, parents of the last cohort graduates as well as counseling organisations to ensure a better understanding of the study pathways and arrangements for the last cohort of graduates in 2010. We will step up the multiple means of communication, focusing on further updating all relevant parties with the information they need at the earliest possible time, and ensuring that every HKCEE student have access to the information which they

need.

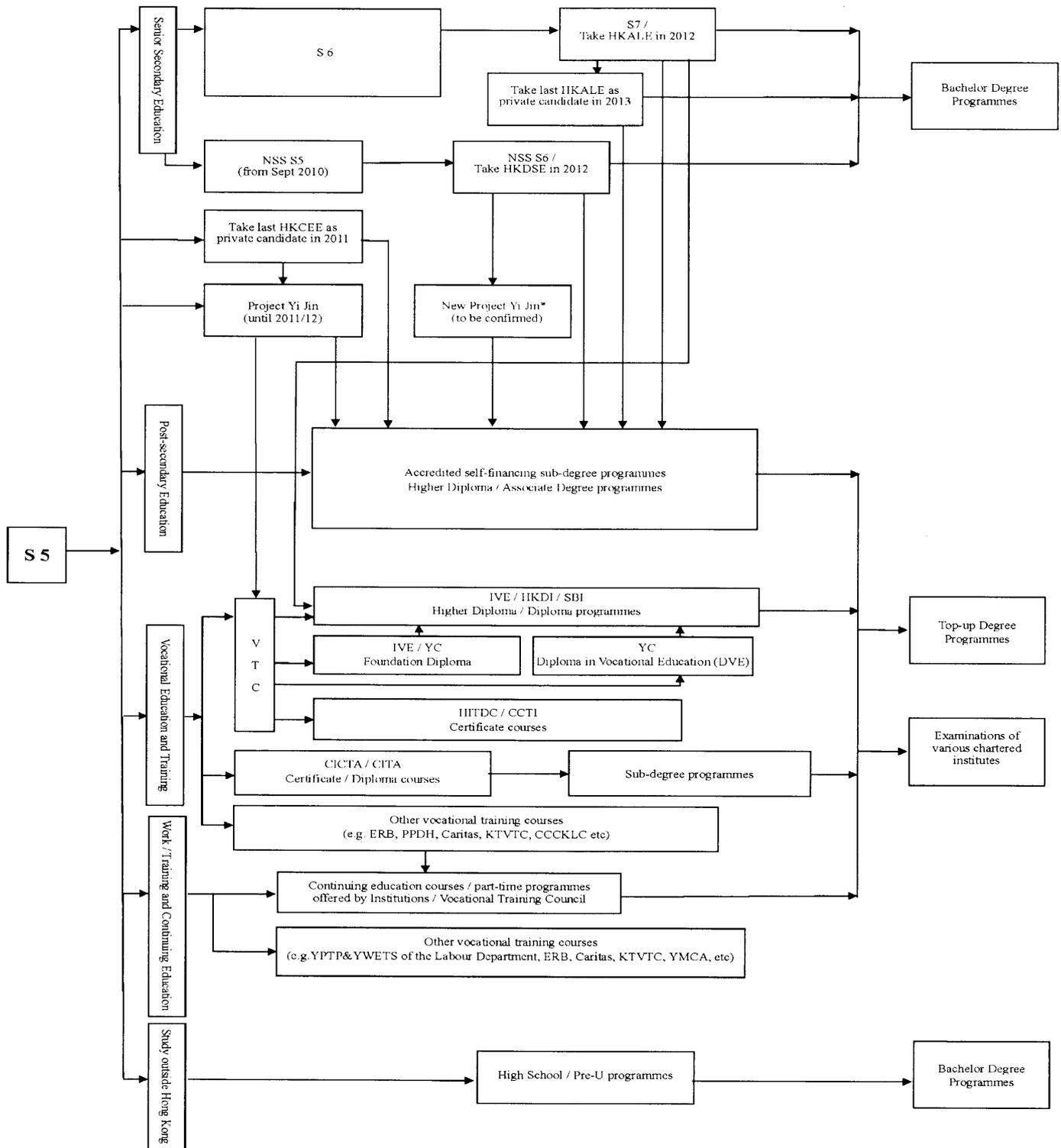
Advice sought

30. Members are requested to note the study pathways and arrangements for the last cohort of S5 graduates in 2010, and measures adopted by EDB in helping them to make informed choices on further study or future career as outlined in this paper.

Education Bureau

June 2010

Study Pathways for Secondary 5 Graduates



* The Education Bureau and The Federation for Continuing Education in Tertiary Institutions is studying the feasibility of implementing under the New Senior Secondary academic structure a programme similar to the existing Project Yi Jin to provide an alternative route for those students who fail to obtain a satisfactory result in the HKDSE Examination.

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| CCKLC | The Church of Christ in China Kung Lee College | HKDI | Hong Kong Design Institute |
| CCTI | Chinese Cuisine Training Institute | IVE | Hong Kong Institute of Vocational Education |
| CICTA | Construction Industry Council Training Academy | KTVTC | HK Christian Service Kwun Tong Vocational Training Centre |
| CITA | Clothing Industry Training Authority | PPDH | The Prince Philip Dental Hospital |
| ERB | Employees Retraining Board | SHI | School of Business and Information Systems |
| HKCEE | Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination | VTC | Vocational Training Council |
| HKALE | Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination | YC | Youth College |
| IITDC | Hospitality Industry Training & Development Centre | YMCA | Young Men's Christian Association |
| HKDSE | Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education | YPTP & YWETS | Youth Pre-employment Training Programme and Youth Work Experience and Training Scheme |

HKCEE subjects offered in 2011 for private candidates

Additional Mathematics	Biology	Buddhist Studies
Chemistry	Chinese History	Chinese Language
Chinese Literature	Commerce	Computer & Information Technology
Economics	English Language	Geography
History	Integrated Humanities	Mathematics
Physics	Principles of Accounts	Putonghua
Religious Studies	Science and Technology	Travel and Tourism
Visual Arts		

Note: Students have to note that there will no longer be any Secondary Six Admission Procedure in 2011. In order to avoid giving false expectations to students, EDB will not offer any HKCEE S5 repeating classes in government and aided schools or schools under the Direct Subsidy Scheme. Students may only take the 2011 HKCEE as private candidates.

**Projected Numbers of Places for Various Study Pathways
for S5 Graduates in 2010**

Number of S5 students entered for 5 or more subjects (including Chinese Language and English Language) in 2010 HKCEE is about 86 500

Pathways	Projected No. of Places Available (Note 1)
Matriculation course	35 000
Three-year sub-degree programmes	10 000
Project Yi Jin (Note 2)	15 000
Vocational education / training programmes provided by the VTC, Clothing Industry & Training Authority, Construction Industry Council Training Academy; and the Youth Pre-employment Training Programme and Youth Work Experience and Training Scheme provided by the Labour Department	~13 000
Repeating at S5 (Note 3)	~15 000
Total	~88 000 (Note 4)

Notes:

1. The number of places available is projected based on the latest available information. The projections are subject to change owing to various factors, e.g. graduates' preference for different pathways.
2. The number of places available for Project Yi Jin and vocational education / training programmes is flexible depending on the demand. In the 2009/10 academic year, Project Yi Jin attracted around 15 000 students (12 000 full-time and 3 000 part-time students) and vocational education / training programmes attracted around 13 000 students. We are seeking funding approval from LegCo to increase the financial commitment for PYJ to meet the funding requirement for 21 000 students in the 2010/11 academic year.
3. The projected number of places available for repeaters is based on the figure 14 800 in 2009 HKCEE.
4. The total number of projected number of places available for all the study pathways in the table adds up to 88 000. However, there are other choices like joining programmes offered by other educational institutions including the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, Caritas Hong Kong, Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong and Open University etc, and studying abroad/in the Mainland. The total projected number of places available should be close to 100 000.