



中華人民共和國香港特別行政區政府總部教育局
Education Bureau
Government Secretariat, The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
The People's Republic of China

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12 April 2012

Legislative Council Panel on Education
Legislative Council Secretariat
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, Hong Kong
(Attention: Ms Amy YU, Clerk to Panel)

Dear Ms YU,

**Legislative Council Panel on Education Meeting on 12 March 2012
Supplementary Information on
“Mechanism for rechecking/ remarking of the
Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination”**

At the request of Members raised at the Legislative Council Panel on Education's meeting of 12 March 2012, the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority and we have prepared a note setting out the requested supplementary information relating to the item of “Mechanism for rechecking/ remarking of the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination”. I should be grateful if you could circulate the information to the Members for reference.

Yours sincerely,

(Ms Cora HO)
for Secretary for Education

LegCo Panel on Education Meeting on 12 March 2012

**Mechanism for rechecking / remarking the results of the
Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) Examination**

Supplementary Information on -

- (A) Financial assistance provided by the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA), the Student Financial Assistance Agency and the Social Welfare Department to needy students in rechecking / remarking of HKDSE examination results; and whether consideration would be given to reducing the rechecking / remarking fees and to granting all applications from students with financial difficulties for waiving such fees for the 2012 HKDSE Examination**

The objective of the Examination Fee Remission (EFR) Scheme administered by the Student Financial Assistance Agency and the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) administered by the Social Welfare Department is to provide needy students with financial assistance to sit for public examinations. Rechecking and remarking of public examination results are supplementary services provided by the HKEAA. These supplementary services are not essential services or necessary procedures for a candidate to sit for the examination. On the basis of the objectives of the EFR Scheme and the CSSA, both schemes all along do not provide automatic assistance for these non-essential supplementary services.

2. HKEAA provides supplementary services related to public examinations on a cost recovery basis. Nevertheless, needy students can apply to HKEAA for consideration of partial waiver for fees on rechecking / remarking if there are genuine needs. HKEAA will consider the applications for fee waiver on a case by case basis. In processing the applications, a number of factors are considered, including the reasons given by the candidates and the financial situation of the Authority. Whether candidates are beneficiaries of CSSA has also been an important factor considered by HKEAA.

3. Fees for rechecking / remarking will also be refunded to candidates

who get an upgrade in the examination result after the review.

(B) The justifications for adopting different upgrading criteria for rechecking and remarking of HKDSE examination results

4. Rechecking refers to the checking of technical errors such as arithmetical errors, incorrect mark entries and unmarked pages which do not involve professional judgment. Subject / component results are upgraded if technical errors are found and the final mark, after correction of any technical errors, attains the minimum cut-off score of the next higher grade.

5. Remarking involves the remarking of each answer script independently by a different marker. Before remarking, a checking for technical errors will be carried out. After a remark, the script will be further remarked by a second marker if the mark given by the first marker differs from the original mark by more than a specified margin (i.e. more than zero to a few marks depending on the nature of the paper and whether the paper was originally single or double-marked. In general, the specified margin is smaller for papers adopting single-marking and not with predominantly open-ended questions). After remarking has been completed, the final mark is calculated by averaging all valid marks given by the original marker(s) and the marker(s) for the script(s) concerned. Marks are considered valid only if they satisfy all the quality assurance requirements in terms of accuracy and reliability.

6. The same quality assurance requirements also apply to original marking. In the original marking of double-marked papers, when the two marks differ by more than a specified tolerance margin, a third marking is carried out. Then, the closest pair of marks from the three (or the highest pair if they are evenly spaced) is used to generate the original mark. The third, outlier, mark is regarded as invalid and discarded.

7. After the scripts have been rechecked / remarked, a special committee of the HKEAA (chaired by the Secretary General) meets to scrutinize all the rechecking / remarking results and confirm which cases meet the upgrading criteria laid down by the Public Examinations Board. For remarking, the subject / component result is upgraded if the new mark, after averaging all the valid marks of the original marker(s) and the marker(s), reaches a specified

margin above the minimum cut-off score of the next higher grade. The specified margin is determined on a subject / component basis in accordance with the guidelines set by the Public Examinations Board.

8. Marking involves professional judgment especially for open-ended questions. It is well established that slightly different marks may be given if a script is being marked twice, even when done by the same marker. As such, a small margin above the minimum cut-off score is necessary to take such marker variation into account in determining an upgrade. The specified margin of each subject is determined by the Public Examinations Board based on the nature of the subject. In determining the specified margin for the HKDSE Examination, the Public Examinations Board has made reference to the previous practice of the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination and the Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination.

(C) Whether HKEAA would consider providing suitable computer softwares to assist candidates with dyslexia to answer examination papers

9. HKEAA is dedicated to providing reliable and equitable examination and assessment services. Special needs candidates (such as candidates with physical, visual, aural, oral, specific learning difficulties and other disabilities) can apply for special examination arrangements (e.g. allocation to special centres, extra time allowance, provision of Braille or enlarged question papers) or exemption from part(s) of the requirements of an examination. The provision of such services allows these candidates to be equitably assessed under suitable conditions without having an unfair advantage over other candidates.

10. For those candidates with a confirmed diagnosis of Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD) indicating that they have severe word reading difficulties, HKEAA already allows the use of screen readers (computers with a “text-to-speech” software function). Candidates with SLD with extremely slow handwriting speed or illegible handwriting may apply for the use of word processors to type their answers.

11. At present, HKEAA has formed an Expert Panel under the Task

Group on Special Examination Arrangements for Candidates with Specific Learning Disabilities comprising both clinical and educational psychologists, school principals as well as academics in the field to make recommendation, based on the independent evidence submitted, on the eligibility of the applicants claimed to have SLD for special examination arrangements. The recommendations of the Expert Panel will be endorsed by the Task Group composed of experts of the HKEAA as well as representatives from EDB, Department of Health, parent associations, schools, professional body and tertiary institution to oversee fairness and consistency in providing special examination arrangements for the candidates.

12. HKEAA regularly reviews and investigates the use of new technology and computer software for candidates with special educational needs, including those with SLD. The introduction of any new provision of special examination arrangements such as the “speech-to-text” software should be fully deliberated and endorsed by the Task Group before implementation. In principle, any new provision must be practicable in a public examination setting, and there must be no undue advantage over other candidates, nor can assessment objectives be compromised. In addition, it would be necessary for the candidates concerned to have prior experience in the use of such software so that they will not be disadvantaged in the examination setting due to their unfamiliarity with the software.

**Education Bureau and
Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority**

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