

For discussion
on 30 May 2013

Legislative Council Panel on Education

Review of the New Senior Secondary Curriculum and Assessment

Purpose

This paper informs Members of the progress of the New Academic Structure (NAS) review, with special reference to the findings and recommendations for the review of the New Senior Secondary (NSS) curriculum and assessment that has been recently endorsed by the Curriculum Development Council (CDC) and the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority Public Examinations Board (HKEAA PEB) for implementation by stages.

Background

2. On 12 November 2012, EDB and HKEAA reported to this Panel the launch of a review on the NSS curriculum and assessment. As part of the regular and ongoing review process, EDB, the CDC and HKEAA have launched a joint review of the NSS curriculum and assessment since mid-2012 for improving and fine-tuning the delivery of the NAS. The document *Introduction to New Academic Structure Review* was issued and uploaded to the EDB website on 5 October 2012 to consult the school sector, stakeholders and the public. The broad objectives of the review are to evaluate the achievement of policy intentions, strengths and challenges of the NAS, as well as to identify and share good practices. A strategic approach with multiple stages has been adopted to promptly address the practical concerns of schools and students in the short-term while allowing more time to formulate and discuss medium- and long-term recommendations when more data are available.

3. The review has been supported by a comprehensive engagement and communication plan to collect feedback and opinions extensively from all relevant stakeholder groups. More than 12,000 teachers had taken part in the process. Based on the valuable feedback and suggestions collected through forums, seminars, liaison meetings, focused groups and written submissions, initial recommendations on the system/school level and subject level have been formulated through deliberations in about 200 committee/working group meetings organised by different official advisory bodies (e.g. CDC, NSS CDC-HKEAA Committees and HKDSE Subject Committees). A number of surveys were also conducted, including the *School Survey on New Senior Secondary Curriculum and Assessment* in November 2012, where valuable views of principals and teachers on

the recommendations were collected. In addition, reference has been made to various local and international studies. Advice from local and international experts has also been sought. The recommendations were discussed and endorsed in the joint CDC-Public Examinations Board (PEB) Meeting held on 25 February 2013.

4. A progress report on the New Academic Structure (NAS) Review: *The New Senior Secondary Learning Journey – Moving Forward to Excel*, with details of the fundamental changes, achievements and challenges of the NAS as well as an overview of the recommendations for fine-tuning the NSS curriculum and assessment, has been released and uploaded onto the designated webpage (<http://www.edb.gov.hk/nas/review>) on 19 April 2013.

Initial findings on achievement of policy objectives of the NAS at system level

5. **ALL** students can now receive 12 years' school education and take only one public examination at the end of Secondary 6 (S6). Students have equal access to education at senior secondary levels, unlike the old selective system whereby only one third of the S5 student cohort could go on to sixth form in their pursuit of further studies. There were enough places for the first NSS cohort to pursue study pathways if they would like to continue to study (e.g. undergraduate/sub-degree studies, Yi Jin Diploma, etc). Of the first cohort of NSS graduates, some 81% are pursuing degree, sub-degree or other programmes locally and about 7% opt to studying outside Hong Kong. Another 8% have chosen to work after graduation.

6. In order to meet the challenges of a knowledge-based society, students are now exposed to more diversified learning experiences instead of early specialisation at S4 in the past. In addition to the four core subjects, schools are now offering an average of 11 to 12 elective subjects to their S4-6 students across the Key Learning Areas, allowing over 1,100 subject combinations for the first cohort of NSS students, with similar numbers for subsequent cohorts. Students may choose up to two Applied Learning (ApL) courses (from among some 35 courses) as their elective subjects in S5 and S6 to suit their interest. Students are given learning opportunities in Other Learning Experiences (OLE) which help broaden their horizons and develop personal qualities not acquired in academic subjects, such as aesthetic appreciation, interpersonal skills, sense of responsibilities and career planning. In this light, students are provided with more opportunities to understand their own career/academic aspirations and develop positive attitudes towards work and learning as well as lead a healthy life style with active participation in aesthetic and physical activities.

7. On academic attainment, nearly all students (99.6%) have attained at least Level 1 in one subject or more in the 2012 Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary

Education (HKDSE) Examination. Moreover, 69.3% of the day school student cohort has attained Level 2 or above in 5 subjects (including Chinese and English languages) and thus have met requirements of most civil service posts and are also qualified for admission to local Associate Degree or Higher Diploma programmes. This is some 10 percentage points higher than the equivalent benchmark for the old HKCEE/HKALE system. Furthermore, some 37.6% of the same cohort (including about 7.7% of those students taking ApL courses as their elective subjects) has attained the General Entrance Requirement (the so called “3322” requirement) for accredited degree programmes in Hong Kong. This is much higher than the equivalent benchmark for the old system of around 22%. Thus in terms of human capital development, the NAS has performed better than the old system in equipping more percentage of students to meet the requirements of the workplace and for further studies.

Recommendations

Short-term recommendations for fine-tuning curriculum and assessment

Guiding principles

8. The objectives of the short-term recommendations (for teaching at S4 in the 2013/14 school year leading to the 2016 HKDSE Examination) are to address the practical concerns, collect good practices for sharing among schools and sustain the reform. A holistic and principle-led approach has been adopted for deciding on the recommendations for the review report. Major governing principles include taking students’ interest as the top priority while considering also the workload of teachers and students, maintaining international recognition, catering for learner diversity, consistency of justifications, flexibility and underlying principles of School-based Assessment (SBA), etc. Based on these principles and considerations, while maintaining professional standards and international benchmarking, short-term recommendations at the system/school level are made to address schools’ concerns with flexibility in implementation matters while maintaining professional standards and international benchmarking.

9. For earlier cohorts, proposed changes that would not have major implications on learning and teaching will also be implemented in the 2014 and 2015 HKDSE examinations. As for matters requiring more data collection and deliberation, we will continue to discuss them and collect feedback at the medium- and long-term stages (i.e. 2017 HKDSE Examination and beyond).

Issues of concern

10. During the review process, a number of concerns have been identified, in areas such as the capacity of schools to deliver the breadth and depth of some NSS subjects (including Chinese Language, Liberal Studies, and Business, Accounting and Financial Studies); lesson time; workload from SBA (for both teachers and

students); learner diversity; and resources. It has to be reiterated that the issues in the system/school level and subject level are interrelated and should be considered as a whole. For instance, the reduction and flexibility of total lesson time, that aim to reduce teacher and student workload, must also be taken into account of all fine-tuning measures in curriculum and assessment for individual core subjects and SBA.

Overview of the recommendations

11. An overview of the recommendations responding to the concerns regarding the implementation of the curriculum and assessment is provided below:

Concerns	Curriculum	Assessment	Support measures & Others
Clarity of breadth and depth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update and revise curriculum content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrate exam papers Improve question design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide supplementary notes Provide Professional Development Programmes (PDPs)
Workload	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Streamline curriculum content in overloaded subjects Reduce no. of electives taken by students Flexible total lesson hours –from 2,700 hours to 2,400±200 hours Allocating “10-15%” of the total curriculum time for OLE, emphasising quality rather than quantity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Streamline exam papers Streamline SBA components 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide PDPs
Catering for diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide more choices for diversity Review provision of ApL courses to provide diversified choices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide more options in exam papers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide exemplars Provide PDPs Enhance school-based support service, networking and sharing Priority theme in Quality Education Fund
School Based		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cancel SBA in 3 subjects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide exemplars

Concerns	Curriculum	Assessment	Support measures & Others
Assessment		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defer SBA for 9 subjects • Streamline SBA components in Liberal Studies, Chinese Language, English Language and elective subjects • Replace SBA with public practical exam in PE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide PDPs • Enhance school-based support service, networking and sharing • Assessment literacy as a priority theme in Quality Education Fund

12. At the subject level, recommendations on the three specific subjects – Chinese Language, Liberal Studies (LS) and Business, Accounting and Financial Studies (BAFS) are summarised as follows:

- (a) For Chinese Language, the number of electives to study would be adjusted as two to four, instead of three to four. Regarding the assessments, it would include streamlining Paper 4 and deleting the SBA on “Coursework and Other Language Activities” of the Compulsory Part. These recommendations will immediately benefit S6 students in the 2013/14 school year leading to the 2014 HKDSE Examination. Moreover, Papers 3 & 5 will be integrated in the 2016 HKDSE Examination, benefiting the coming S4 students in the 2013/14 school year. The SBA requirements of reading records would also be clarified.
- (b) For LS, a curriculum and assessment resource package will be issued to schools to clarify the curriculum breadth and depth (including the emphasis on a broad and balanced knowledge base in different fields of knowledge such as humanities, sciences and technologies), as well as to provide more support for learning and teaching, such as to enhance school-based support, resource platform (e.g. resource pack and good practices) and the interface between Junior Secondary curriculum and NSS LS. For SBA, streamlined Independent Enquiry Study (IES) and the cancellation of Process assessment records would be implemented on S6 students taking the 2014 HKDSE Examination to enhance flexibility and relieve teachers’ administrative workload. The IES assessment requirement will also be clarified.
- (c) For BAFS, the curriculum content would be trimmed for about 15% and support for learning and teaching would also be provided with specify clearer cut-off date for accounting standards. Moreover, SBA will not be implemented for S4 students in the 2013/14 school year. Starting from the 2014 HKDSE, the exam time will be adjusted and the assessment

design will be improved.

13. The objectives, principles and considerations for making short-term recommendations on curriculum and assessment are in Appendix 1. Recommendations at the system/school level are in Appendix 2.

Medium- and long-term suggestions

14. Continuous efforts will be made to deliberate on the medium- and long-term suggestions. Regular and ongoing review will continue on all NSS subjects, especially Liberal Studies, and other curriculum components. Ten working groups will be set up for SBA and nine subjects (namely Chinese Language, Chinese Literature, Liberal Studies, Mathematics, Economics, Ethics and Religious Studies, Geography, BAFS as well as Health Management and Social Care) to explore their further development and review the curriculum and assessment of respective subjects. Examples include explore introducing classical texts and their assessment in Chinese Language, the feasibility of splitting the BAFS subject and/or separate grading, and further streamlining of IES in LS. With regard to concerns about future resources for schools, a continuous dialogue is maintained with the school sector to explore the way forward.

15. The ApL courses will be reviewed to cater for learner diversity and there will be further exploration into the possibility of reporting students' results in more levels, communicating with local and overseas institutions for recognition and articulation, and reviewing the moderation mechanism.

16. As for the current HKDSE Examination, further studies will be conducted to see if it can be improved to cater for learner diversity, for example, by designing differentiated papers and extended papers, introducing the graded approach to more subjects, introducing half subjects, reporting students' results in more levels, introducing another tier of qualification to the diploma and benchmarking with other qualifications.

17. Measures to encourage schools to accept re-entry to senior secondary classes for early school-leavers will be explored in order to open more pathways for students. Stakeholders will continue to be engaged in the process to ensure that concerns are addressed without compromising professional principles and standards.

Students with special educational needs (SEN)

18. For students with SEN studying in ordinary schools, one of the concerns is the support measures to help them cope with the learning and assessment of NSS

subjects despise their inherent impairments. As short-term measures, EDB would promote teachers' confidence and competence by providing exemplars and resource materials for teachers in designing school-based curriculum with adaptation and relevant assessment processes that could better cater for the needs of SEN students. Sharing of best practices would be enhanced among schools in teaching SEN students, such as teaching approaches, flexibilities in managing the breadth of the curriculum, particularly the balance between ApL courses, elective subjects and OLE and other curriculum priorities determined in schools. The sector would be encouraged to develop and sustain ongoing networks and support circles for teachers to facilitate cross-school collaboration and sharing.

19. To sustain the positive impacts in the implementation of the adapted NSS curriculum in the special schools for students with intellectual disabilities (ID), EDB would continue to explore feasible measures with stakeholders to address such issues as the form of certification, the qualification and accreditation that would help students with ID to find suitable placements and activities in their adult lives.

20. In light of sustaining the learning-centred reform, a list summarising the supportive measures to be provided to teachers and schools by EDB and HKEAA is illustrated in Appendix 3.

Dissemination and way forward

21. To disseminate the review findings and recommendations to respective sectors and the public, we held a seminar on 19 April 2013. The report of the review was released on the same date. The report highlights both initial achievements and recommended improvements. The school sector was informed of details through a school circular issued on 30 April. In parallel, a series of briefing sessions on the recommendations for fine-tuning the NSS curriculum and assessment of all NSS subjects, ApL and OLE are held from 29 April to end-May 2013. Details on the “2014-2016 Assessment Frameworks of the HKDSE Examination” are provided in the circular issued by HKEAA (www.hkeaa.edu.hk/en/hkdse/Circulars/).

22. To help facilitate schools to reflect on the experiences of the first cycle of implementing NSS, improve whole-school curriculum planning and pedagogical changes, as well as reforming school assessment culture in light of the review report, we shall hold a seminar series and “Workshop series for School Leaders on the New Academic Structure 2013” from mid-May to June 2013. Student version information sheets on the curriculum and assessment of all NSS subjects for the 2013/14 school year onwards have been uploaded to EDB's designated webpage and schools have been reminded to distribute the respective information sheets to their students. The progress report has also been disseminated to all the key

liaison groups and advisory bodies and uploaded on the website of EDB.

23. To step up the ongoing review for the betterment of the NSS curriculum and assessment, various Committees will continue to be engaged to resolve issues that may need further deliberation, including suggestions to be considered in the medium- and long-term.

Advice Sought

24. Members are invited to give their views on the recommendations on the NSS curriculum and assessment and the way forward.

Education Bureau
Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority
May 2013

The NSS Curriculum and Assessment Review
Short-term Recommendations on Curriculum and Assessment
(as endorsed at the joint CDC-PEB meeting on 25 Feb 2013)

Objectives of short-term recommendations

Recommendations for the short-term stage of the review (up to March 2013) aim at addressing the *practical concerns* as well as *collecting good practices for sharing* among schools and sustaining the reform.

Principles and considerations for making recommendations

2. A holistic and principle-led approach is adopted for the review to ensure that the considerations and recommendations are professional. The principles that govern our recommendations are:
 - 2.1 All considerations should be ***student-centred***; students' interest always comes first and it is our top priority to cater for student and school diversities (including abilities, interests, aspirations, learning styles and learning orientations).
 - 2.2 The total ***workload*** of teachers and students associated with SBA in both quantitative and qualitative terms would be addressed, with support measures in place for enhancing schools' and teachers' capacity to implement SBA more effectively.
 - 2.3 A ***flexible range of lesson time*** based on schools' context and students' needs would be suggested after balancing the needs of different stakeholders, with advice on its total impact on learning and teaching provided.
 - 2.4 The ***curriculum design principles*** would be adhered to; and there is a constant need to update/enhance the curriculum (including clarifying its breadth and depth) as a regular cycle to keep abreast of the latest development while keeping the essentials. All subjects are considering whole-curriculum as well as cross-curricular issues when fine-tuning their curriculum, while making serious judgement on the overall impact on students and teachers.
 - 2.5 With increased ***Learner diversity***, we should be vigilant of the need to fine-tune the curriculum as well as assessment in recognition of the fact that all students are to study till S6 in schools but not all are academically-inclined.

- 2.6 ***International recognition*** of the new HKDSE has been secured with benchmarking of standards based on the existing curriculum and assessment (including candidates' live scripts in the 2012 HKDSE Examination) conducted in recent years, and it is important not to jeopardize the professional standards and credibility of the HKDSE.
- 2.7 When making recommendations for various subjects, ***consistency of justifications and professional rationales*** would be observed so as to explain clearly why there are differences among them, e.g. why certain recommendations could be applied to some subjects only or could be applied earlier.
- 2.8 The pre-agreed ***underlying principles for SBA*** would continue to be observed and 'complementarity' between subjects further explored, e.g. SBA is for assessing areas/skills that are difficult to be assessed through formal or pencil and paper examinations; SBA needs to align with curriculum requirements as well as international benchmarking of standards; and cautious deliberations are needed to examine if there is possible similarity or transferability of the formats/contents/skills assessed between SBA tasks across subjects.
3. Apart from the above, the review is *evidence-informed* by nature and has taken all relevant quantitative data and qualitative information collected from different sources into consideration. It is understandable that stakeholders would have different concerns, stances and suggestions, and there should be a *balanced consideration* of their feedback. As stressed, the practical concerns of schools with flexibility in implementation matters would be addressed while maintaining professional standards and international benchmarking. It is also important to consider the pace and practicality of introducing the recommendations.
4. The recommendations on curriculum, assessment and some specific subjects are summarised respectively in the following Tables 1, 2 and 3:

Table 1/Appendix 1

Table 1: Recommendations on Curriculum

(Note: Number of subjects involved and the cohorts that benefit in respective school years are put in brackets)

Recommendations	Effective school year (sy) and levels				
	2013/14 sy	2014/15 sy	2015/16 sy	2016/17 sy	2017/18 sy
1. Update and revise curriculum content (9 subjects)	Lit in English (S4) Bio, Chem, Phy, CS (S4) Geog (S4) THS (S4) ICT (S4) Econ (S4)	Lit in English (S4, S5) Bio, Chem, Phy, CS (S4, S5) Geog (S4, S5) THS (S4, S5) ICT (S4, S5) Econ (S4, S5)	Lit in English (S4, S5, S6) Bio, Chem, Phy, CS (S4, S5, S6) Geog (S4, S5, S6) THS (S4, S5, S6) ICT (S4, S5, S6) Econ (S4, S5, S6)		
2. (a) Trim curriculum content (2 subjects)	Math (S4) BAFS (S4)	Math (S4, S5) BAFS (S4, S5)	Math (S4, S5, S6) BAFS (S4, S5, S6) – curriculum contents trimmed by about 15%		
(b) Adjust number of electives to be taken by students (3 subjects)	Chin Lang (S4, S5, S6) Chin Lit (S4, S5, S6)				
	Chin Hist (S4)	Chin Hist (S4, S5)	Chin Hist (S4, S5, S6)		
3. Provide more choices for diversity (1 subject)	Lit in English (S4)	Lit in English (S4, S5)	Lit in English (S4, S5, S6)		
4. Provide supplementary notes to further clarify the breadth and depth	All subjects (S4, S5, S6)				

Table 2: Recommendations on Assessment (aligning with the principles and changes in curriculum)

For SBA, **streamlining arrangements in 7 subjects (Chinese History, History, Visual Arts, Biology, Integrated Science, Chemistry and Physics) which were confirmed in February 2012 will continue**, and the current S5 cohort taking the 2014 HKDSE Examination already benefits from them. Besides, streamlining arrangements in Chinese Language and Liberal Studies announced in February 2012 already benefit the current S6 cohort taking the 2013 HKDSE Examination, and further streamlining is implemented for the 2014 HKDSE Examination and beyond.

1. SBA	Subjects involved	Effective year of HKDSE exam (NSS cohorts affected)
(a) Not implementing SBA subject to further review in the long term (3 subjects)	Math, BAFS, PE	From 2013 HKDSE (S4, S5, S6 in 2012/13 sy) onwards
(b) Defer SBA (9 subjects)	Chin Lit, Lit in Eng, Econ, ERS, Geog, THS, HMSC, TL, *Music	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> From 2014 HKDSE (S4, S5, S6 in 2013/14 sy) SBA implemented from 2019 HKDSE (S4 in 2016/17 sy) onwards
(c) Streamline SBA components (11 subjects)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LS Chin Lang, Eng Lang ICT Chin Lit, Econ, Geog, HMSC, THS, TL, *Music 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cancel submission of Process assessment records (S6 in 2013/14 sy, 2014 HKDSE) From 2014 HKDSE (S4, S5, S6 in 2013/14 sy) onwards From 2015 HKDSE (S4, S5 in 2013/14 sy) onwards From 2019 HKDSE (S4 in 2016/17 sy) onwards
(d) Replace SBA with public practical exam (1 subject)	PE	From 2014 HKDSE (S4, S5, S6 in 2013/14 sy) onwards

** SBA will be implemented in Music earlier if supported by schools*

2. Adjusting exam time	Effective school year (sy) and levels				
	2013/14 sy	2014/15 sy	2015/16 sy	2016/17 sy	2017/18 sy
(a) Lengthen exam time (to provide candidates with more time to study the questions and organise their answers) (4 subjects)	Econ, Geog, Hist, HMSC (S4, S5, S6) (From 2014 HKDSE)				
(b) Reduce exam time (corresponding streamlining in paper design) (3 subjects)	Chin Lit, BAFS (S4, S5, S6) (From 2014 HKDSE)				
	Lit in English (S4) (From 2016 HKDSE)	Lit in English (S4, S5)	Lit in English (S4, S5, S6)		

3. Improving assessment design	2013/14 sy	2014/15 sy	2015/16 sy	2016/17 sy	2017/18 sy
(a) Streamline exam paper (2 subjects)	Chin Lang (S4, S5, S6) (From 2014 HKDSE)				
	Chin Hist (S4) (From 2016 HKDSE)	Chin Hist (S4, S5)	Chin Hist (S4, S5, S6)		
(b) Integrate exam papers (1 subject)	Chin Lang (S4) (From 2016 HKDSE)	Chin Lang (S4, S5)	Chin Lang (S4, S5, S6)		
(c) Provide more options in exam papers (2 subjects)	BAFS (S4, S5, S6) (From 2014 HKDSE)				
	Lit in English (S4) (From 2016 HKDSE)	Lit in English (S4, S5)	Lit in English (S4, S5, S6)		

Table 3: Recommendations on three specific subjects

Subject	Effective from 2013/14 sy	Medium-/Long-term (Issues to explore)
Chinese Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adjust no. of electives to study: from 3-4 to 2-4 (S6; 2014 HKDSE)* • Streamline exam paper: Paper 4 -- delete reading aloud and include 1 min. speech in 1st round of group discussion (S6; 2014 HKDSE) • Integrate exam paper: Combine Papers 3 & 5 (S4; 2016 HKDSE) • Streamline SBA: Delete SBA task on “Coursework and Other Language Activity” of the Compulsory Part (S6; 2014 HKDSE) • Clarify SBA requirement: Reading records 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore introducing classical set texts and assessment of these texts in Chinese Language
Liberal Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarify curriculum breadth and depth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Issue a curriculum and assessment resource package • Streamline SBA: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Implement streamlined IES (S6; 2014 HKDSE, announced in Feb 2012) ■ Schools are not required to submit the Process assessment records (benefit S6 in 2013/14 sy, 2014 HKDSE onwards) ■ Clarify IES assessment requirement • Provide more support for learning and teaching: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Enhance school-based support wherever necessary ■ Enhance resource platform (e.g. resource pack and good practices) ■ Strengthen interface between Junior Secondary curriculum and NSS LS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review curriculum and assessment design: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Recommendations on reviewing curriculum and assessment design in the medium term, to be ready by mid-2015
Business, Accounting and Financial Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trim curriculum content (about 15%): compulsory & elective parts (S4; 2016 HKDSE) • Adjust exam time (in line with adjustment in curriculum): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Paper 1: reduce exam time from 1 hr 30 mins to 1 hr 15 mins (S6; 2014 HKDSE) ■ Paper 2: reduce exam time from 2 hrs 30 mins to 2 hrs 15 mins (S6; 2014 HKDSE) • Improve assessment design: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Introduce optional questions in Section B of Paper 1 (S6; 2014 HKDSE) ■ Corresponding changes in exam rubrics (S6; 2014 HKDSE) • Provide support for learning and teaching <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Specify clearer cut-off date for accounting standards (S4; 2016 HKDSE) • Explore the possibility of separate reporting • Not implementing SBA (S4; 2016 HKDSE onwards) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore the feasibility of splitting the subject and/or separate grading and reporting in BAFS

*(S4; 2016 HKDSE): for students studying in S4 in the 2013/14 sy and taking the 2016 HKDSE Examination

*(S5; 2015 HKDSE): for students studying in S5 in the 2013/14 sy and taking the 2015 HKDSE Examination

*(S6; 2014 HKDSE): for students studying in S6 in the 2013/14 sy and taking the 2014 HKDSE Examination

The NSS Curriculum and Assessment Review
Recommendations at the system / school level

1. Lesson time

- The NSS curriculum is designed on the basis of 2 500 lesson hours. A flexible range of total lesson time at 2 400±200 hours over three years is recommended for school-based planning purposes to cater for school diversity and varying learning needs while maintaining international benchmarking standards.
- The flexible lesson time recommended, based on the evidence collected, is for schools' reference in addressing their difficulty in timetabling. Lesson time is the time when students are in 'close contact' with teachers for purposeful learning, normally conducted in, but not confined to, classrooms. Flexible timetabling should be explored to ensure entitlements and make effective use of strategies and resources to enhance student learning.
- To ensure learning effectiveness, some activities (especially OLE) may not be timetabled and schools should decide on how to arrange them effectively so that they are in line with their schools' mission and culture.
- To cater for students' diverse interests, needs and abilities, schools should provide a reasonable number of elective subjects (i.e. at least ten elective subjects including Other Languages, Applied Learning courses and network programmes) and OLE by exercising professional judgement and flexibility.
- The suggested time allocation for each NSS subject over three years is as follows:

Subject	Suggested time allocation
Chinese Language	310 to 375 hours
English Language	310 to 375 hours
Mathematics	
Compulsory Part	250 to 310 hours
Compulsory and Extended Part	375 hours
Liberal Studies	250 hours
Each elective subject	250 hours
Other Learning Experiences	
Moral and Civic Education	
Aesthetic Development	
Physical Development	
Community Service	
Career-related Experiences	
	250 to 375 hours
Each Applied Learning course	180 hours over two years in S5 and S6

2. Other Learning Experiences (OLE) and Student Learning Profile (SLP)

- To allow greater school-based flexibility, the recommendation on allocating “10-15%” of the total curriculum time for OLE is adopted.
- There is no longer any word limit in the self-account of SLP so that schools have the flexibility to align the number of words with the Other Experiences and Achievements in Competitions / Activities (OEA) of JUPAS application (rolled out in WebSAMS in Aug 2012).
- The number of OLE activities in SLP can be aligned with OEA form.
- Quality rather than quantity matters in OLE. Schools should flexibly use the curriculum time to further develop OLE based on the existing strengths with reference to Booklet 5A of the Senior Secondary Curriculum Guide to include the five components (e.g. the provision of structured arts learning sessions is an important mode of implementation of Aesthetic Development; the recommended mode of implementation of Physical Development is PE lessons, etc).
- Further streamlining SLP and aligning the admission requirements of different local study pathways in the long run while maintaining the importance of viewing SLP as a reflection tool for self-development.

3. Applied Learning (ApL)

- Improve provision of ApL courses to cater for further studies and career opportunities.
- Enhance recognition (e.g. explore benchmarking with other qualifications such as the Qualifications Framework)
- Strengthen administrative support to cater for diverse needs (e.g. pilot early commencement of some ApL courses at S4, along with opportunities for taster programmes in that year)

4. Qualifications and pathways

Provide timely information on further study options for students with different levels of attainment, including those not attaining Level 2 in five subjects (English Language and Chinese Language included) and those who choose to exit before completing 12 years of education.

5. Support to schools

Support measures will be further enhanced to help schools and teachers to implement the fine-tuned NSS curriculum and assessment, and they include the following:

- Provision of professional development programmes (e.g. those on whole-school curriculum planning for school leaders).
- Supplementary notes, practical examples and resource packages will be available in time.

- Professional learning networks under Key Learning Areas / subjects, OLE and ApL will continue to be organised.
- Communication and interaction with relevant stakeholders, particularly on more controversial subjects, will be stepped up to collect more feedback and views to inform further development.
- Good practices in curriculum planning, learning, teaching and assessment strategies of different subjects will also be collected and shared with schools and teachers.
- The work of school-based support services, university partnership projects and the Quality Education Fund will be further aligned to support schools to implement the recommendations to address relevant concerns and improve student learning.
- Taking into consideration the pace and practicality of introducing the recommendations, we will continue to disseminate important information to relevant stakeholders including students as necessary.

**Support to schools in the implementation of
the fine-tuned NSS curriculum and assessment**

Apart from the provision of professional development programmes by all subjects annually, there are other support measures to help schools and teachers implement the fine-tuned NSS curriculum and assessment, including the following:

1. Supplementary notes to support the revision of curriculum and assessment

Subjects (20)	Available by:
Chin Lang, Chin Lit, Eng Lang, Math, Bio, Chem, Phy, CS, IS, Chin Hist, Econ, Geog, THS, BAFS, DAT, HMSC, ICT, TL, VA, PE	2012/13 s.y.

2. Resource packages on specific topics to enhance the effectiveness of learning and teaching and assessment

Subjects (9)	Available by:
Chin Lit, LS, ERS, Hist, THS, DAT, VA, PE	2012/13 s.y.
Chin Lang	2013/14 s.y.

3. Exemplars for dissemination of good practices

Subjects (14)	Available by:
Chin Lit, LS, ERS	2012/13 s.y.
Chin Lang, Eng Lang, Lit in Eng, Math, Chem, Chin Hist, Econ, HMSC, ICT, TL	2013/14 s.y.
Geog	2014/15 s.y.

4. Seed projects/ pilot schemes to promote collaborative research and development in support of the fine-tuned NSS curriculum and assessment

Subjects (5)	Available by:
Chin Lit, PE	2012/13 s.y.
Chin Lang, Music	2013/14 s.y.
Geog	2014/15 s.y.

5. Teacher Networks to facilitate experience exchange and knowledge sharing

Subjects (6)	Available by:
Lit in Eng, PE	2012/13 s.y.
Eng Lang, BAFS, DAT, ICT	2013/14 s.y.