

For discussion on

13 June 2011

## **Progress on the Implementation of the New Academic Structure**

### **PURPOSE**

This paper reports on the progress on the implementation of the New Academic Structure for Senior Secondary Education and Higher Education (NAS) focusing on the following areas: curriculum, learning and assessment, the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE), interface with post-secondary and university education and pathways, support for schools, communication with various stakeholders, and evaluation and monitoring.

### **BACKGROUND**

2. The new senior secondary (NSS) curriculum under the NAS has been implemented in all secondary schools at Secondary 4 since September 2009 and the new public examination leading to the HKDSE qualification will take place for the first time in 2012. The HKDSE is a new qualification that aligns with the new curriculum's aims and recognises the achievements, abilities and potentials of ALL students comprehensively. As all students may proceed to S6, learning and teaching should be geared to "success for all", replacing the emphasis of "only selecting the best" for further progression. Students with the HKDSE qualification have multiple pathways which include applying for various 4-year undergraduate programmes or other post-secondary programmes, going overseas for further studies, or joining the workforce.

3. Since 2004, the Education Bureau (EDB) has undertaken a multi-stage approach in developing reform proposals, consulting different stakeholders (including parents, principals, teachers, post-secondary institutions, universities, employers, overseas education organisations/universities), and collecting views from schools to address their needs. We have also communicated closely with stakeholders, including school principals, teachers, parents, employers, the public, and overseas countries, using diverse channels like a dedicated website,

seminars, publication, Announcements in the Public Interest (API), etc. We have reported to the Education Commission (EC) and the Panel on Education of the Legislative Council on the progress of the NAS and related issues each year. At the LegCo Education Panel meeting on 30 April 2010 we reported specifically on the international recognition of HKDSE and on 14 June 2010 the study pathways for the last cohort of S5 graduates in 2010. At the EC meeting on 5 May 2011, we reported on the latest developments of the NAS and HKDSE including the interface with multiple pathways and support for schools.

## **PROGRESS**

### **Curriculum, Learning and Assessment**

4. As reflected from school visits, focus group interviews and surveys on areas relating to curriculum, learning and assessment, the NAS, on the whole, has been implemented smoothly since September 2009 and there is a smoother interface between the junior secondary and senior secondary levels. Schools are providing a broader and more balanced curriculum to cater for the diverse interests, aptitudes and abilities of students, some of whom may not have been able to join senior secondary forms or may have been pigeon-holed into arts, science or commerce streams previously. The second Subject Information Survey conducted by EDB in October to November 2010 continues to reflect that schools offer a wide range of elective subjects (11.8 on average) to meet the needs and interests of students. Students' choices of elective subjects are more diversified and not limited to a particular Key Learning Area (KLA). Sixty-eight percent of the students are taking elective subjects from two or three KLAs, and the traditional specialisation has given way to over 1,500 combinations of different subjects. On the other hand, schools and other stakeholders (including parents and students) have expressed concerns over Liberal Studies (LS), Applied Learning (ApL), New Senior Secondary curriculum for Intellectual Disabled students (NSS(ID)), as well as the issue of learner diversity. Development in these areas during the 2010/11 school year and some updates are reported in the following paragraphs.

#### ***Liberal Studies***

5. Noting that there are concerns among schools and parents, EDB has

constantly reviewed and enhanced support to teachers in the teaching of LS in the 2010/11 school year. Measures including extra grant, professional development programmes (PDPs), resources and samples, regional school networks and more targeted support are adopted to help schools implement LS more effectively. The enhanced support measures are bearing fruit and feedback from schools is more encouraging.

6. To help smoothen the introduction of LS, a special LS Curriculum Support Grant of HK\$320,000 has been disbursed by EDB to each secondary school in the 2010/11 school year for hiring teaching assistants and appropriate services. Enhanced PDPs for teachers are provided by EDB and the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA) for teachers all year round. There were specific courses on conducting the internal assessment of Independent Enquiry Study (IES). A web course had also been offered for teachers who did not have the time to attend face-to-face courses. Teachers from more than 300 schools have attended the courses. From October 2010 to February 2011, there were two rounds of HKDSE LS markers' training for over 1,100 teachers to acquaint teachers with the marking standardisation process and onscreen marking. Teachers were offered an opportunity to trial mark a number of scripts to gauge their own marking performance. The last round of markers' training will be offered to teachers from June to October 2011 with 700 places available so as to ensure that teachers teaching LS would know how to conduct LS assessment. On the topic of IES and question setting for internal assessment, two sharing sessions were organized by HKEAA in April 2011 where sample questions and guidance on question setting were provided. In addition, workshop series and on-site follow-up support to the participating schools are available on a need basis. To benefit all teachers, these PDPs are targeted at the different needs of stakeholders in the school sector, including teaching assistants. The HKEAA has accorded high priority to monitoring the implementation of LS. District Co-ordinators (DCs) are appointed to advise and give feedback on assessment plans, samples of assessment activity design and students' work as well as marking standard of Stage I in May-June 2011. It would be followed by two identical territory-wide marking standardisation process seminars on IES Stage II Task. All the PDPs helped to ease teachers' anxiety and address their needs by providing concrete suggestions on teaching and assessing the subject.

7. In terms of resources, HKEAA has provided more IES Process

Assessment activity samples to give teachers more illustrations of Process Assessment of the 3 stages of IES. Further samples will be provided in due course. Four annotated examples on the learning and teaching of LS including conducting IES in schools have also been uploaded on the Web-based Resource Platform for LS, and they have been proved to be very useful. EDB will continue to develop and upload more annotated examples for schools' reference.

8. The regional school networks are found to be effective in connecting teachers and engaging key players, including HKEAA's DCs. As at 31 May, a total of 27 activities on IES have been organised in all six regions. Feedback from participating schools on these activities has been in general positive.

9. To ensure smooth implementation of IES for the 1st NSS cohort, all key players in rendering support to schools in implementing LS and IES have been engaged in professional dialogue deliberating those issues requiring more follow up actions. A number of enhanced support measures have been implemented, including setting strategic priority to offer closer support to the identified "needy" schools, strengthening confidence and professional capacity of LS teachers as well as timely communication with definite messages to stakeholders. The needy schools have been visited at least once by the end of March 2011. There are also schools receiving different forms of professional support, e.g. different partnership schemes, invitation to sharing networks and more visits as well as provision of supplementary information of examples on IES. As a result of these efforts, there is evidence of improvement in terms of curriculum planning, consensus building among teachers as well as assessment-related issues.

10. To monitor the progress of implementation of LS, EDB and HKEAA officers meet regularly. A LS task force convened by CDI involving different divisions of EDB has been set up to share concerns and clarify myths on assessment of the subject, and four meetings have been held during the past three months. Further communication with teachers and schools is enhanced by an email alert service to regularly update all subscribed teachers on the latest information of the subject, including the support measures and updated resources. HKEAA has also launched a webpage on "Public Assessment of HKDSE Liberal Studies", which provides easy access to a wide range of resources for teachers and students, e.g. the assessment framework, the format and content of the examination, sample questions and student exemplars,

School-based Assessment (SBA), marking and grading, and the Standards-referenced Reporting (SRR) of results.

11. To address teachers' concerns about the marking and assessment of LS examination papers, enhanced dissemination of the assessment criteria has been and will continue to be conducted. We shall clarify that the main objective of the criteria and procedures is assurance of fairness and reliability. Students' performance in the LS examination would be judged by their understanding and application of relevant knowledge and concepts, application of enquiry skills such as analytical and critical thinking, their construction of arguments with direct evidence, as well as their understanding of an underlying concept/value and applicability to apply it to solve problems or make a suitable judgment as required. To ensure fairness, suggested marking guidelines will be established for each question, while sample scripts will be chosen for the purpose of standardized marking. The marking criteria will then be thoroughly discussed and finalized in the markers' meeting, which will be adhered to by all markers in the marking process. Furthermore, markers will be recruited from among LS teachers who have to go through stringent training, including onscreen marking. Double marking will be adopted to monitor the quality of marking.

12. As a result of the enhanced support measures, schools are more aware of the need to adopt a cross modular approach in the learning and teaching of the subject while covering the six core modules systematically. Most schools have made revisions to their curriculum plans this year to align better with the objectives of the curriculum and to take into account students' ability. As for the teachers, with more assessment samples and territory-wide markers' training provided by the HKEAA, they should now have a clearer understanding of the standards and process of marking for the subject. There is also a greater use of internal assessment as a tool to monitor students' progress and to ensure curriculum coherence, though some still have difficulties in setting appropriate assessment questions / tasks / activities. In addition, some teachers still need more guidance and support in integrating curriculum teaching with IES implementation, addressing the issue of learner diversity as well as formulating their assessment plans for IES. Upon the first submission of marks in IES in May 2011, the situation of implementation would be assessed further to inform future planning. Communication strategies are also being planned to acquaint the public and relevant stakeholders with the implementation of LS.

### ***Applied Learning***

13. ApL courses are offered to S5 and S6 students as elective subjects to cater for students who have a more practically-oriented approach to learning and/or wish to develop career aspirations in a certain area. The first cohort of NSS ApL courses was smoothly launched in September 2010. Thirty courses under six areas of studies are being offered by 11 course providers. As at end of September 2010, there were about 7,000 student enrolments from about 300 schools, as compared with about 6,000 student enrolments from about 200 schools in the last cohort of piloting (2008-10). In the second cohort, five additional new courses are being developed and there will be 35 ApL courses in total offered by 12 course providers to the NSS students in September 2011.

14. Under the NAS, students' results in ApL courses will be reported in the HKDSE certificate as "Attained" or "Attained with Distinction". Regarding the recognition of ApL courses, the latest progress is as follows:

- Civil Service Bureau (CSB) will take into account the two levels of attainment in the ApL courses when considering the acceptance of the results in the HKDSE for civil service appointment.
- For further studies in sub-degree programmes, a maximum of two ApL subjects will be counted for consideration of admission.
- For undergraduate programmes, University Grants Committee (UGC)-funded institutions have made announcements in September 2010 on using ApL subjects as specified/unspecified elective subjects, for award of extra bonus or additional information, to suit the needs of different programmes and faculties of different institutions.

### ***Development of NSS Curriculum for Students with Intellectual Disabilities***

15. To ensure the smooth implementation of the NSS Curriculum for Students with Intellectual Disabilities (NSS(ID) curriculum) in special schools, support measures have been and will continue to be provided for special schools. These measures include, (a) supplementary guides of elective subjects; (b) trial-run for Ethics & Religious Studies and General Studies for providing more appropriate choices to students and enhancing a smooth interface between the basic education and NSS in special school for students with intellectual

disabilities (ID); (c) a wide range of PDPs from subject-based knowledge and related pedagogy to sharing on good practices; (d) developing a web-based resource platform (launched in April 2011) for sharing the learning and teaching resources with teachers; and (e) coordinating NSS Coordinators Network meetings for teachers' sharing of good practices.

16. The report prepared by EDB presenting the findings of the first annual study and the first year longitudinal study under the evaluation project of NSS(ID) curriculum in special schools was issued in April 2011. EDB will follow up on the recommendations on the support measures for NSS(ID) curriculum implementation. EDB will also set up a task force in September 2011 for planning the establishment of accreditation system to recognise the educational achievement of ID students as the development of the Learning Progression Frameworks of the three NSS(ID) core subjects should be completed in early 2012.

17. Regarding the pathways for NSS(ID) graduates, there will be more cooperation between the training institutes and social enterprises including the Vocational Training Council (VTC), Hong Chi Association and Caritas to equip students with the capabilities of acquiring basic vocational knowledge and furthering their studies, and to provide them with job experience to enhance their employability. As for the students with severe ID who will be considered by Social Welfare Department (SWD) for admission to residential care, day activity centres or sheltered workshops when they reach 16 years old (under the old system), EDB has liaised with SWD on the need to review this mechanism taking into account the implementation of NAS when students usually leave school at the age of 18 or above. We would continue to touch base with related departments and bureaux in addition to relevant organisations in order to assure NSS(ID) graduates of the availability of appropriate pathways.

## **The Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education**

### ***Examination Arrangements and Preparation for HKDSE***

18. In preparation for the smooth implementation of the first HKDSE Examination in 2012, constant consultations have been conducted with principals through the Principals' Liaison Meeting and universities through the

Liaison Group on “334” Interface Issues as well as other stakeholders. The HKDSE Examination is scheduled with due consideration given to the administration of the two public examinations in the double cohort year in order to meet the specific demands of various parties as well as the quality assurance requirements of the examinations: (a) schools and students, who need as much teaching and learning time as possible; (b) examination personnel, who must ensure the smooth implementation of the examinations, including examination administration, marking and grading, and results processing; and (c) universities, which need the examination results in time for their admission process. The results of the 2012 Hong Kong Advanced Level (HKAL) and HKDSE examinations will be released on 29 June and 20 July respectively.

19. The examination arrangements have been made and improved with a view to maximizing the interests of students and allowing sufficient time of teaching in schools, and to cater to the unique situation of the double cohort year in 2012. The examination dates of the four HKDSE core subjects are staggered to ease the examination pressure on students. Examination dates for all subjects are well spaced as far as possible to ensure benefits for the majority (with about 20 candidates only having four different subjects examined on consecutive days). Quality marking for reliability and validity is ensured with more papers/questions being double-marked. Onscreen marking is implemented for all core subjects and major elective subjects (a total of 16 subjects), and more onscreen marking centres are to be set up. There will be improvement also in the administrative arrangements including online registration for school candidates through school portal, online application for special examination arrangements and notification of application results for Special Education Needs (SEN) candidates. School candidates can pay examination fees through 7-eleven outlets or internet banking, while private candidates can register and pay through online portal.

20. A new computer system for the HKDSE Examination is being developed, and an Alternate Plan for the Development of the HKDSE Examination System was approved by the HKEAA Council in Oct 2010. Major milestones have been met including the successful testing of commercial portal software which will become the basic platform for online services in the future. Contingency plans for each individual function have also been developed. The first function rolled out under the Alternate Plan was the SEN, which adopted an online submission to handle application for special



examination arrangement for students with SEN. A total of over 694 applications were received and processed in January 2011. The SBA mark submission based on the online portal was rolled out in April 2011. The development to support the online registration for six other languages in July 2011 is also on schedule.

21. To familiarise teachers and students with the new examination and help them better understand the assessment format and requirements, HKEAA will produce practice papers and marking schemes for each of the 24 NSS subjects in early 2012 for teachers' reference.

22. The double cohort year will be particularly challenging, with more than 110,000 HKDSE and HKALE candidates taking the written and oral examinations from late March to late May 2012. There will be a great demand for markers for HKDSE, especially for the subjects of English Language, Chinese Language and Liberal Studies. Owing to the significant overlap of the examination periods of HKALE and HKDSE, there will be a pressing need for examination venues for both written and oral examinations. In order to shorten the duration of the oral examinations, it is necessary to hold some sessions on Saturdays, i.e. the speaking tests will be conducted from Monday to Saturday. Some major HKALE subjects and small-entry HKDSE subjects will be examined during the Easter school break and more teachers will be required to perform invigilation duties on school holidays. It is possible that some schools will have to be closed for a maximum of five days to make available their classrooms for the conduct of the HKDSE core subjects with the largest entries. While HKEAA would try to minimise disruption to schools with better arrangements, all such needs for examination venues, invigilation staff and markers require cooperation and continued support from all participating schools.

### *Quality Assurance of HKDSE*

23. HKEAA has developed an HKDSE Quality Assurance Framework, which has been reviewed by the Public Examinations Board in the meetings on 19 October and 29 November 2010. The Framework aims to provide an overview of various quality assurance mechanisms established by HKEAA in the HKDSE Examination, so as to ensure safeguarding of standards, compliance and quality of delivery, HKDSE recognition and continuous improvement.

The framework has been reviewed by an overseas assessment professional, who has served previously as the assessment advisor in the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulations (Ofqual) in the United Kingdom (UK). A communication strategy has been developed to promulgate the framework to stakeholders.

### ***HKDSE Examination Fees***

24. HKEAA has announced the examination fees for the first HKDSE, which was gazetted on 8 April 2011. Same as the current HKCEE and HKALE, the HKDSE examination fee is set at two categories: Language and Non-language. Language subjects will be charged at HK\$540 per subject entry and non-language subjects will be charged at HK\$360 per subject entry. School councils, principals and parents are in general supportive of the proposed fee level which is some 80% to 90% of HKALE. To consider the financial situation as well as the affordability of the candidates and parents, and to ensure that no eligible candidates will be deprived of the opportunity to take the HKDSE examination due to financial difficulties, eligible students who are financially in need can apply for examination fee remission from the Student Financial Assistance Agency (SFAA). For students in receipt of the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance, SWD will provide assistance to them to cover the examination fees. HKEAA will continue its efforts to reduce operation cost while maintaining the quality and reliability of the public examinations.

### ***School-based Assessment***

25. We note that there are concerns regarding the implementation of SBA in particular over the workload and anxiety of teachers. EDB has been collaborating closely with HKEAA in providing timely support and communication to schools, co-ordinating and monitoring the progress and implementation of SBA.

26. In response to issues such as handling a large number of students, integrating SBA in learning and teaching, internal standardisation and handling queries against assessment decisions, EDB and HKEAA are collaborating in beefing up the support measures such as PDPs, networking and sharing, advisory CD visits, enhancing communication strategies with different

stakeholders (particularly teachers and parents), and refining measures whenever the need arises. To enhance professional capacity in implementing SBA, EDB and HKEAA have been offering year-round PDPs on SBA for school teachers, and re-running courses for new teachers to ensure that all teachers have opportunities to receive training. Besides, updated information about SBA of the 12 subjects, including the moderation methodology and sample collection requirements, was conveyed to subject teachers in the respective teachers' seminars conducted between September and November 2010. Two SBA briefing sessions for school principals were also conducted in November 2010 to update them on the latest development. Resources like Handbook for School Leaders on SBA, SBA Teachers' Handbooks for individual subject, a booklet on the moderation of SBA scores in HKDSE, sample assessment tasks, assessment guidelines and annotated exemplars have been provided by HKEAA to help schools understand the methodology for moderating SBA scores. Furthermore, HKEAA has appointed DCs who are experienced teachers to monitor the implementation of SBA in schools for all the 12 subjects.

27. Taking teachers' concerns and readiness into consideration, a strategic and incremental approach has been adopted in the implementation of SBA to enable schools and teachers to familiarise themselves with the NSS curriculum and facilitate the smooth implementation of SBA. Improvements in SBA implementation and practices have already been made to relieve teachers' workload through a concerted effort by different parties. They include a co-ordinated time-table for submission of SBA marks in S5 and S6, standardisation of practices across subjects, including the moderation mechanism and collection of samples of students' work after submission of students' scores in S6. For the 2012 HKDSE Examination, schools are required to submit SBA marks of their S5 students to HKEAA from May to July 2011 according to a staggered schedule. Briefing sessions for teachers on the mark submission procedures were conducted in March and April 2011. In addition, a range of support measures, including an online demonstration kit, hand-on training workshops and enquiry hotlines, have been provided to familiarise teachers with the procedures and to address any queries that may arise.

28. To enhance understanding of and support for SBA, EDB would continue to work very closely with HKEAA on communication strategies with

different stakeholders (particularly teachers and parents), making decisions in relevant committees and refining measures whenever necessary. We would take great care of public responses without forsaking professional qualities. In order to help schools better communicate information on SBA to students and parents, HKEAA and EDB have taken measures to disseminate SBA information to these stakeholders. These include an HKEAA booklet on SBA, EDB's Useful Tips for Parents, and parents seminars held by EDB all year round for parents in different districts.

## **Local and International Recognition of NAS/HKDSE**

### ***International Recognition of NAS and HKDSE***

29. Following the inclusion in early 2010 of the HKDSE qualification into the Tariff System of the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) in UK, with Levels 3, 4 and 5 in the HKDSE Examination broadly comparable to Grades E, C and A in the GCE A Level Examination respectively, EDB and HKEAA have continued to jointly promote the NAS, NSS curriculum and the HKDSE qualification to other countries for wider recognition. In the past year, EDB and HKEAA have visited Canada, the United States (US), UK, Australia and some European as well as Asian countries. Responses have been positive and overseas authorities, tertiary institutions, credential and academic agencies generally appreciate the provision of a broad and balanced curriculum for nurturing students' life-long learning abilities (e.g. critical and creative thinking) and developing their global outlook, and are all positive in accepting the HKDSE qualification as a credential for application for admission. Some of the world-renowned universities, e.g. University of Oxford and Yale, have announced the admission requirements of the HKDSE holders on their websites. We would take further opportunities to promote NAS and HKDSE to overseas institutions.

### ***Acceptance of HKDSE by Mainland Institutions***

30. It is the general requirement that Hong Kong students wishing to enter Mainland universities should sit for the Joint Entrance Examination for Universities (JEE). Three Mainland universities (namely Peking University, Tsing Hua University and Fudan University) would continue to directly recruit

Hong Kong students and exempt them from Mainland examinations. Another three (Sun Yat-sen University, Hua Qiao University and Jinan University) may also directly recruit Hong Kong students, but will require them to sit for a separate examination.

31. EDB and HKEAA visited the Ministry of Education (MoE) and some Mainland institutions between November 2010 and January 2011 to update the Mainland authorities of the latest development of the NAS and HKDSE, with a view to further facilitating a smoother articulation between the NAS and the Mainland system. They commended our efforts in implementing the NAS and HKDSE and would welcome more Hong Kong students to study in the Mainland. During the EDB's visit to Beijing in April 2011, the MoE agreed in principle that Mainland universities would make special admission arrangements in 2012 to accommodate the release date of HKDSE exam results and would consider the public exam results of the first cohort of NSS students for admissions.

### ***Recognition of HKDSE by Civil Service Bureau***

32. The Government is the largest employer in Hong Kong. CSB and EDB have been liaising closely with each other as well as with the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications and HKEAA of the implications of HKDSE for civil service appointments. As reported to the LegCo Panel on Public Service, CSB has already had plans to align the HKDSE results with the entry requirement of the civil service appointments<sup>1</sup>. CSB plans to promulgate the acceptance arrangements in the second quarter of 2011.

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<sup>1</sup> CSB intends to implement the following arrangements in respect of civil service appointments -

- A candidate attaining results in 5 subjects in HKDSE in any combination of the following will be regarded as having met the requirement of "5 passes in HKCEE":
  - Level 2 in NSS subjects,
  - "Attained" in ApL subjects (subject to a maximum of two ApL subjects), &
  - Grade E in Other Language subjects
- A candidate attaining results in 5 subjects in HKDSE in any combination of the following will be regarded as having met the requirement for "2A3O":
  - Level 3 in NSS subjects,
  - "Attained with Distinction" in ApL subjects (subject to a maximum of two ApL subjects), &
  - Grade C in Other Language subjects

## **Interface and Pathways**

### ***Interface with Tertiary Institutions - entrance requirements for undergraduate programmes***

33. It was announced on 21 January 2010 that, for the core subjects, UGC-funded institutions would consider the application of students who have attained Level 3 for Chinese Language and English Language and Level 2 for Mathematics and Liberal Studies in the HKDSE Examination. The level requirement of the one or two elective subject(s), together with faculty / programme requirements of the core subjects, were announced on 18 September 2010:

- the requirements for the NSS elective subjects are generally Level 2 or Level 3;
- ApL subjects are used as elective subjects, or considered for award of extra bonus or additional information, varying by institutions, faculties or programmes; and
- Other Language subjects are recognised as unspecified subjects, generally at the minimum requirement of Grade E.

Institutions' support to students' whole-person development is also reflected in their recognition of students' achievements in different areas. Under the NAS, every student is encouraged to build up a Student Learning Profile (SLP) which may include brief information on OLE, awards / achievements gained outside school, academic performance in school and student's self-account of their learning experiences.

34. For the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts (HKAPA) and self-financing institutions, as announced on 30 September 2010, requirements regarding the core subjects are the same as the UGC-funded sector, that is, Level 3 in Chinese Language and English Language, and Level 2 in Mathematics and Liberal Studies. For the elective subjects, the general requirement is Level 2 in one subject.

35. As announced in the Chief Executive's 2010-11 Policy Address, the provision of first-year first-degree places will be increased from 14,620 to 15,000 for each cohort from the 2012/13 academic year. For the double cohort year of 2012, provision will be doubled with 15,000 places for normative 3-year

undergraduate programmes for S7 graduates and 15,000 places for normative 4-year undergraduate programmes for S6 graduates under the NAS. The computer system of the Joint University Programmes Admissions System (JUPAS) is being enhanced to process the respective applications from the two cohorts of students.

### *Interface with Post-secondary Sector*

36. The revised Common Descriptors for sub-degree programmes under the NAS were announced on 30 September 2010. The minimum entrance requirement for admission to Associate Degree or Higher Diploma programmes is Level 2 in five HKDSE subjects including English Language and Chinese Language. A maximum of two ApL subjects will be counted in the application to align with the broad and balanced rationale of the NSS curriculum.

37. To cope with the double cohort year of 2012, with funding support from EDB, The Federation for Continuing Education in Tertiary Institutions (FCE) undertook a consultancy study to develop a web-based online Common Application Platform (CAP) for processing applications from students taking HKDSE (and where appropriate, HKALE) and seeking admission to full-time locally-accredited sub-degree and first-year first-degree programmes not covered by JUPAS. There remained divergent views regarding some key parameters of CAP among the FCE's members. Given the unresolved differences and the time-constraint factor, EDB decided to adopt a staged approach in pursuing the CAP project. For Stage 1, EDB will enhance the existing Information Portal for Accredited Self-financing Post-secondary Programmes (iPASS). The aim is to make use of enhanced iPASS to provide an "E-application for Post-secondary Programmes" platform for students to submit their application for non-JUPAS programmes, in addition to the existing application channels adopted by the respective institutions. Key features of the platform include:

- Students will be able to submit one set of application for all the programmes/institutions that they intend to apply for. The application will be electronically forwarded to the respective institutions and the institutions would process the application and deal with the student direct as with other applications that institutions receive through their respective channels;
- No fee would be charged for the use of the enhanced iPASS.

Institutions may charge application fee according to their own policy as with other applications that institutions receive through their respective channels; and

- Participation in the enhanced iPASS is on a voluntary basis. Institutions offering locally accredited full-time sub-degree and degree programmes not covered by JUPAS will be eligible to join.

38. To cater for the 2012 application cycle, it is planned to put in place the “E-application for Post-secondary Programmes” platform by early 2012. For stage 2, FCE would continue to discuss and resolve the divergent views among the institutions on the key parameters of the CAP. Our ultimate objective is still to have a full-function CAP for non-JUPAS programmes in the longer run.

39. For the double cohort year, while the number of first-year first-degree places will be doubled, HKAPA, VTC and the self-financing post-secondary institutions will also provide additional sub-degree and degree places to meet the extra demand. As for senior year undergraduate places, the Chief Executive has announced in the 2010-11 Policy Address that the number of UGC-funded senior year intake places will increase from 1,987 to 4,000 places in the 2012/13 – 2014/15 triennium by phases. This will help meet the demand from the double cohort students admitted to sub-degree programmes in the 2012/13 academic year.

## **Professional Development Programmes and Support for Teachers and School Leaders**

### ***Professional Development Programmes (PDPs) on NAS***

40. PDPs serve as an important platform through which key messages on curriculum and assessment are conveyed to schools and teachers to ensure the smooth implementation of the NSS curriculum as well as SBA. Teachers’ feedback has been collected from the PDPs so that their concerns would be addressed as far as possible. About 27,000 training places of PDPs were provided to principals, curriculum leaders and teachers from September 2010 to February 2011. A survey on teachers’ training needs has been conducted to collect data for better planning of NSS PDPs. EDB will continue to provide courses to meet the needs of teachers, especially for new teachers and serving



teachers who will be deployed to teach NSS subjects as well as to provide new PDPs to address new learning and teaching emphases. Those on curriculum leadership, curriculum and assessment planning, interface between junior and senior secondary curricula, catering for learner diversity, assessment for learning and SBA have been and will continue to be arranged for schools and teachers.

41. To support teachers, apart from the recommended NSS textbooks (152 sets), about 221 learning and teaching materials for NSS subjects have been developed, and around 359 resources/web links are also available. These resources will be further updated when necessary on an ongoing basis. The “NSS Learning and Teaching Resource List” which lists out the availability and sources of relevant learning and teaching materials for each NSS subject (e.g. textbooks, the learning packages and websites) was uploaded in May 2011 for teachers’ reference. Resources to support teachers in teaching NSS subjects will continue to be developed to enhance learning and teaching.

42. CD visits have been conducted to observe the authentic general picture of curriculum implementation and development in schools, provide advice to schools, and collect feedback continuously and systematically by KLA/subject from teachers and students so that curriculum developers can understand the impact of curriculum reform and make better informed decisions to support teachers and benefit student learning. CD visits also aim at identifying good practices adopted in schools for sharing with schools/teachers. The visits have covered a range of school contexts so that a comprehensive picture of the implementation of the NSS curriculum could be gained. About 510 CD visits were conducted from September 2010 to May 2011, with 40 visits scheduled for June to July.

43. Apart from CD visits, focus group discussions with school heads, KLA/subject panel coordinators and teachers have also been carried out to gather their views and concerns on various NAS-related issues. Seed projects related to NSS curriculum continue and experiences generated from these projects have been disseminated through PDPs, e.g. workshops, seminars and sharing sessions held for different KLAs. Furthermore, various types of resources, such as CD-ROMs, learning and teaching packages, websites and publications, have been produced by different seed projects. Teachers are also supported by on-site school-based support service delivered by university-school partnership

projects and EDB officers. We would continue to provide schools with curriculum development support, such as whole-school curriculum planning, catering for learner diversity, learning and teaching in various KLAs, project learning and assessment for learning, in order to cater for the different needs of schools.

### **Supporting Measures for Other Learning Experiences and Student Learning Profile**

44. The entitlement of students to OLE is to ensure whole-person development opportunities. The activities, achievements and self-reflections of students would be recorded in the SLP to be developed by the student and facilitated by school teachers. The Heads of Universities Committee (HUCOM) has confirmed that the information in the SLP would be considered for admission to universities. A wide range of support measures has been provided to facilitate schools to develop OLE and SLP in accordance with their own needs. A series of seminars and workshops on “Preparing students for successful transition in NAS” was launched in late December, in partnership with the Hong Kong Association for Career Masters and Guidance Masters. Another series of workshops is being held from March to July 2011.

45. In addition to the supporting measures, EDB has been liaising with the JUPAS Office in devising practical arrangements for submitting student information of OLE and SLP for university admissions purpose. The JUPAS Board of Management has designed a common template to aid students in the submission of information pertaining to their OLE and achievements as part of their JUPAS applications for reference by UGC-funded institutions. While students may make reference to their SLPs in submitting information about their learning experiences through the JUPAS common template, they may also upload the full SLPs in pdf format to the JUPAS online application system, or submit to individual institution when they are invited for interviews. The procedures for submission of OLE/SLP information was announced by JUPAS in August 2010. JUPAS also announced the arrangements and timetable of the 2012 JUPAS applications on 28 April 2011, and released file structures of the “Other Experiences and Achievements” (OEA) Form and School Reference Reports to schools on 16 May. This will be followed by school seminars in mid-June. As one of the popular school-based SLP systems, WebSAMS is

working with JUPAS to create a function for such uploading in order to streamline the procedures.

### **Funding Support**

46. The Senior Secondary Curriculum Support Grant (SSCSG) and the Diversity Learning Grant (DLG) have been provided to schools since the 2008/09 school year and the 2009/10 school year respectively. The former aims to facilitate the implementation of the NSS curriculum while the latter is to encourage schools to offer diversified curriculum (including ApL, other languages, gifted education and network programmes to be shared among schools) to cater for the different needs, interest and aptitudes of their students. In addition, schools with genuine financial difficulties may apply for a top-up provision of the NSS Curriculum Migration Grant, which will be considered on a case-by-case basis. In the 2010/11 school year, EDB continues to provide the SSCSG and the DLG to schools to support the implementation of the NSS curriculum at both S4 and S5 levels.

### **WAY FORWARD**

47. EDB will host an event, the “International Education Forum and Expo” (IEFE) on Learning Journey for the Globalised World, from 14 to 16 July 2011. The event will showcase to the overseas authorities and education professionals the major features and implementation of the NAS. It is expected to attract more than 55,000 participants.

48. The implementation of NAS is so far on-track. A master plan has been drawn up by EDB to evaluate the implementation and impact of the NAS on the senior secondary education and higher education. A Coordinating Committee involving local and overseas experts was set up in March 2010 to monitor the progress of the implementation of the NAS. We would continue to provide support to schools and teachers on the one hand and use appropriate and effective communication channels to solicit feedback, identify issues and concerns, and work in partnership with different stakeholders to fine-tune / improve support measures on the other. Studies to evaluate the progress and outcomes of the NAS over the next few years will continue to be carried out by

different parties to complement or supplement the information that we have collected.

49. To ensure that the NAS could be smoothly implemented particularly in the 2011/12 school year when two cohorts of students will respectively sit for the HKAL and HKDSE examinations, it is important that we assess the potential risks of various tasks ahead and ensure that reasonable steps are taken to mitigate those risks. To better prepare all relevant stakeholders for the 2012 HKDSE, a risk management plan has been devised and co-ordinated among EDB, HKEAA, UGC, FCE, tertiary education, school and employer sectors. These plans will be discussed with different stakeholders and regularly reviewed to align the risk management strategies for the NAS and HKDSE, and to ensure the smooth implementation of the first HKDSE in 2012.

## **ADVICE SOUGHT**

50. Members are invited to note the progress of implementation of the NAS as reported in this paper.

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