For discussion on 12 March 2012

Legislative Council Panel on Education

**Mechanism for rechecking / remarking the results of
the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination
administered by the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority**

A paper on the mechanism for rechecking / remarking the results of the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination administered by the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA), prepared by the HKEAA, is attached. Members are invited to note the content of the paper.

Education Bureau
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Mechanism for rechecking / remarking the results of
the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination
administered by the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority

Purpose

This paper sets out the mechanism for rechecking / remarking the examination results of the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) Examination administered by the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA).

Background

2.   It is the mission of HKEAA to ensure validity, reliability and equity in conducting public examinations. The HKEAA has put in place a set of comprehensive quality assurance procedures for the marking of examination papers to ensure fairness and consistency in the marking process. Some major features of the quality assurance procedures are set out below.

3.   The markers are essentially in-service teachers from secondary schools or professors and lecturers from tertiary institutions who are experienced with the respective subjects. In appointing the markers, due consideration will be given to the applicants' academic qualification, teaching and marking experience of the same or similar subjects. Before the appointed markers are allowed to mark the live papers, they have to go through a standardization, training and qualifying process to demonstrate that they have met the requisite standards.

4.   Marking schemes are prepared by the relevant moderation committees[1] to serve as a guide to markers on how marks should be awarded. After the examination has been conducted, samples of live answer scripts will be selected for the subsequent marking standardization process to be conducted by the moderation committee to further refine and finalise the

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[1] A moderation committee usually comprises five members, namely, a Chief Examiner, two moderators, a setter, and the Manager of Assessment Development Division who is also the secretary. Members of the moderation committee are subject experts, or tertiary/secondary teachers who are familiar with the requirements of the examination and teaching syllabuses.

marking scheme.

5.   Double marking will be adopted for papers with predominantly open-ended questions involving professional judgment in marking.[2] In 2012 HKDSE Examination, it will be adopted for papers in seven subjects, including Chinese Language, English Language and Liberal Studies. Under double marking, each script will be marked by at least two different markers. A third or even a fourth marking will be conducted if necessary.

6.   More than 90% of the answer scripts for 2012 HKDSE Examination will adopt Onscreen Marking (OSM). OSM can greatly enhance marking quality, accuracy and efficiency. Under OSM, answer scripts can be marked by multiple markers at the same time, and different questions in a paper can be allocated to different markers to facilitate specialist marking. Marker consistency can be monitored in real-time, and controlled-scripts can be used to ensure that the marking standards are adhered to.

7.   The marked scripts of each marker will undergo at least two stages of check-marking by the examiners to ensure consistency and to spot marking problems at an early stage.

Standards-Referenced Reporting (SRR)

8.   All 24 Category A subjects of HKDSE Examination[3] adopted Standards-referenced reporting (SRR) where a candidate's attainment in a subject is reported against prescribed standards. The prescribed standards of performance are defined by descriptors. Under SRR, the standards are held constant and there is no fixed proportion of students for each level. The levels attained by individuals are primarily dependent on the individuals' performance. On the contrary, the previous norm referencing adopted in Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE) (except Chinese Language and English Language subjects which have already adopted SRR)

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[2] Double-marking for open-ended questions has been an established practice adopted in the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination and the Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination. This is also a common practice adopted in many overseas examinations such as the IELTS.

[3] HKDSE subjects are divided into three categories. Category A subjects (also known as New Senior Secondary subjects) comprise 4 core subjects (i.e. Chinese Language, English Language, Mathematics and Liberal Studies) and 20 elective subjects; whereas Category B subjects refer to Applied Learning subjects and Category C subjects refer to other language subjects.

and Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination (HKALE) produces results not just dependent on individual performance but also on the performance of the peer group.   In this respect, it would be easier for teachers and students to project the performance in HKDSE Examination than the HKCEE / HKALE as the predicted performance is compared against set standards rather than the performance of their fellow candidates.   Candidates, teachers and parents can have a better estimate about the level of performance of the candidates, and candidates can also better assess their genuine needs for remarking.

Rechecking and Remarking Mechanism

9.   The rechecking / remarking mechanism is to ensure that candidates having results different from their reasonable expectations have a fair chance to have their answer scripts to be rechecked or remarked.

10.   Rechecking is for checking technical errors such as arithmetical errors, incorrect mark entries and unmarked pages.   All examination scripts and score sheets are rechecked but not remarked.

11.   Remarking involves the remarking of each answer script independently by a different marker.   Before remarking, a checking of the technical errors will be carried out first.   After the first remarking, if the marks given by the remarker differ from the original mark by more than a specified margin (the margin can range from zero to a few marks depending on the nature of the paper), the script will be further remarked by a second remarker.   After remarking, the final mark is calculated by averaging all valid marks given by the original marker(s) and the remarker(s) for the paper(s) concerned.   Marks are considered valid only if they can satisfy all the quality assurance requirements in terms of accuracy and reliability.

12.   After the scripts have been rechecked / remarked, a special committee of the HKEAA (chaired by the Secretary General) will meet to scrutinize all the rechecking / remarking results and decide which cases meet the upgrading criteria laid down by the Public Examinations Board.   For rechecking, subject / component result will be upgraded if technical errors are found and the final mark after correction of technical errors attains the minimum cut-off score of the next higher grade.   For remarking, the subject /

component result will be upgraded if the new mark after averaging all the valid marks of the original marker(s) and the remarker(s) reaches a specified margin above the minimum cut-off score of the next higher grade. The specified margin is determined on a subject / paper basis in accordance with the guidelines set by the Public Examinations Board.

Rechecking / Remarking for 2012 HKDSE Examination

13.   It is an established practice for HKCEE/HKALE that school candidates should consult teachers/principals about their performance so that candidates can have a better understanding about their individual needs for remarking after the examination results are released. HKDSE candidates are expected to do the same and get their teachers' advice on their performance before applying for rechecking/remarking. Meanwhile, the OSM system is much more efficient in supporting remarking and double marking compared with paper-based marking as all answer scripts are available on the intranet for distribution to a second or a third marker efficiently.

14.   Three additional temporary OSM centres are being set up to handle the increased demand in marking due to the double cohort of HKALE and HKDSE Examination in 2012. Together with the current four OSM centres, a total of seven OSM centres will be available for the purpose in 2012. The additional OSM centres can also increase the capacity in handling remarking.

15.   HKEAA has started the recruitment process for markers for the 2012 HKALE and HKDSE Examination. As of February 2012, more than 11,000 marker applications were received. In particular, the number of teachers applying to be markers for HKDSE Liberal Studies is about 2.5 times of the actual requirement. HKEAA is confident that sufficient quality markers can be recruited and can handle at least twice the normal total number of remarking applications for HKCEE and HKALE. Contingency plans including extending the operating hours of marking centres for remarking and recruiting additional reserve markers have also been developed.

16.   The application procedures, fees and timelines for rechecking and remarking are published in the 2012 HKDSE Handbook for Candidates which has been distributed to all candidates in December 2011. The information is

also posted onto the HKEAA website. In general, rechecking/remarking applications should be made within 5 days after the examination result is released on 20 July 2012. The result for rechecking and remarking will be released on 20 August 2012.

<u>Admission by the Joint University Programme Admissions System (JUPAS) and Other Institutions</u>

17.   Every year, the HKEAA will coordinate with the JUPAS office to ensure that the JUPAS admission schedule can tie in smoothly with the HKEAA examination result release schedule.   For the double cohort year in 2012, JUPAS has separate admission schedules for candidates of HKALE and HKDSE Examination.   The important dates are set out in the table below:

	HKDSE	**HKALE**
HKEAA Exam Result Release	20 Jul 2012	29 Jun 2012
HKEAA Application for Remarking	20-25 Jul 2012	29 Jun – 6 Jul 2012
JUPAS Main Round Results	17 Aug 2012	26 Jul 2012
HKEAA Results for Remarking	20 Aug 2012	27 Jul 2012
JUPAS Application for Reconsideration using remarked results	21 Aug 2012	28 Jul 2012
JUPAS Results after Reconsideration	28 Aug 2012	2 Aug 2012
JUPAS Clearing Round	3 Sep 2012	8 Aug 2012

18.   JUPAS has a policy to ensure that candidates applying for reconsideration using the remarked results **<u>will not be disadvantaged</u>** in any respect.   Places will be offered to candidates meeting the same criteria as the main round candidates, disregarding whether the quota has been filled. Candidates who are not offered places in the reconsideration will be processed in the clearing round in the same way as other main round candidates.   This practice has been adopted by JUPAS for many years, and similar arrangements will be made for candidates of both HKALE and HKDSE Examination in 2012.   Students admitted to universities via JUPAS using their remarked results in HKDSE Examination will be notified of the results on 28 August 2012.   For institutions other than those in the JUPAS, effort is being made to encourage them to exercise flexibility in dealing with such cases.

Communication

19.   To increase public's understanding of the marking and rechecking / remarking process for the 2012 HKDSE Examination, HKEAA has published various leaflets for schools and for the public, and also uploaded the information onto the HKEAA website.   HKEAA has also from time to time invited the media, education organisations, parent organisations, etc., to visit the OSM centres to provide more information about the marking process. Various briefing sessions have been and will continue to be conducted for principals, schools teachers, parents and students.

Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority
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