

For discussion
on 13 April 2018

Legislative Council Panel on Education

Payment for the examination fees for school candidates sitting for the 2019 Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination

Purpose

This paper aims to seek Members' support for a one-off measure to pay the examination fees for school candidates sitting for the 2019 Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination ("HKDSE").

Proposal

2. The Financial Secretary announced in the 2018-19 Budget a number of concessionary measures to share the fruits of our economic success, including paying the examinations fees for candidates sitting for the 2019 HKDSE (the proposal).

Eligibility

3. To be eligible for Government's payment of examination fees, a candidate must be enrolled in a registered school approved for participation in the 2019 HKDSE in the 2018/19 school year and be entered as a school candidate in the 2019 HKDSE through his/her school, regardless of whether he/she is a first-time candidate or is repeating part or whole of the senior secondary curriculum in a day school or evening school.

Coverage of subsidy

4. The examination fees covered under the proposal include the subject fees of Category A (Senior Secondary) subjects, Category B (Applied Learning) subjects and Category C (Other Languages) subjects for

the 2019 HKDSE, but exclude the supplementary fees¹. A list of Category A, Category B and Category C subjects for the 2019 HKDSE is at *Annex*.

Calculation of examination fees

5. Basically, the subject fees are categorised into fees for language subjects, i.e. the Category A Chinese Language subject and English Language subject as well as the six Category C other language subjects, and the fees for “other subjects”, i.e. the remaining subjects of Category A and all subjects under Category B. For the 2019 HKDSE, the examination fees are \$644 for language subjects and \$431 for other subjects. For example, if an eligible school candidate enters for two language subjects and four other subjects, the amount payable by the Government for the candidate will be \$3,012.

6. It is estimated that about 50 000 school candidates will sit for the 2019 HKDSE and will benefit from the proposal.

Implementation Plan

7. The registration and preparation work for the HKDSE normally starts in June every year and the examination period is from March to May in the following year, except for the Category C subjects which will be conducted in October to November². The registration is conducted in two periods, namely June and September of the year before the year of the examination for Category C subjects (Other Languages - November 2018 Series) and Categories A and B subjects respectively. Candidates are required to make payment for entries in Category C subjects in July and for Categories A and B subjects in October of the year before the year of the examination respectively. The 2019 HKDSE follows the same schedule.

8. The HKEAA will issue notice to schools about the administrative details of the registration for the 2019 HKDSE and upload the “Instructions to Applicants” onto the HKEAA’s website around one week before the start

¹ Examples of supplementary fees are fees for late entry, fees for addition/ change of subject entry, fees for re-scheduling of oral examinations, application fees for rechecking and remarking, appeal review, and data access request, etc. to be paid by the candidates. The fee schedule is set out in the website of HKEAA (<http://www.hkeaa.edu.hk/en/>).

² The timing ties in with the examination timetable of the Cambridge Assessment International Education.

of the registration periods (i.e. in early June and September) according to the prevailing practice.

9. We propose to make payment of the examination fees for the eligible candidates directly to the HKEAA, largely in accordance with the normal payment schedule of school candidates as in past years.

Financial Implication

10. Based on the estimated number of school candidates for the 2019 HKDSE and the estimated number of subjects entered by a school candidate (i.e. two language subjects and three to six other subjects), the estimated financial implication of the payment of the examination fees to the HKEAA on behalf of school candidates is around \$170 million. A tentative breakdown of the expenditure is set out as follows -

Items	Estimated expenditure (\$ million)
(a) language subjects	64.4
(b) other subjects ³	88.4
Breakdown according to number of other subjects entered by a school candidate –	
(i) three or fewer	6.5
(ii) four	60.3
(iii) five or six	21.6
(c) Contingency	15.3
Total amount of estimated payment	168.1 (say, 170)

³ With reference to the registration statistics of school candidates in the past HKDSEs, it is estimated that around 10%, 70% and 20% of school candidates will enter for three or fewer, four and five or six other subjects respectively in the 2019 HKDSE.

11. On item (a) above, the expenditure covers payment for the subject fees of \$644 each for two language subjects of Category A and each of the six other language subjects of Category C entered by some 50 000 eligible school candidates.

12. On item (b) above, the expenditure covers payment for the subject fees of \$431 each for three to six other subjects entered by some 50 000 eligible school candidates.

13. On item (c) above, a contingency amount at about 10% of the sum of items (a) and (b) above is included to accommodate the extra payment in case the percentage of candidates taking a larger number of subjects is larger than in previous years.

14. The actual total amount of payment to the HKEAA will be determined by the actual number of total subject entries of eligible school candidates for the 2019 HKDSE.

Related Issue

15. At present, eligible non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students⁴ enrolled in Secondary (S) 4 to S6 at day schools pursuing the local curriculum are only required to pay a “subsidized examination fee” on par with that of the HKDSE (Chinese Language) Examination for participation in internationally recognized alternative Chinese Language qualifications examinations⁵. With the proposal of paying the examination fees for school candidates sitting for the 2019 HKDSE Examination, the “subsidized examination fee” of eligible NCS students sitting for the aforementioned examinations in the 2018/19 school year will be waived accordingly. The Education Bureau will deploy existing resources to meet the funding requirement arising from the waiver of the “subsidized examination fee” for eligible NCS students which is estimated to be about \$3 million. Related arrangements including

⁴ Specifically, these NCS students are those who have learnt Chinese Language for either:

- (a) less than six years while receiving primary and secondary education; or
- (b) six years or more in schools, but have been taught an adapted and simpler curriculum not normally applicable to the majority of students in local schools.

⁵ Internationally recognized alternative Chinese Language qualifications include those under the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE), International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) and General Certificate in Education (GCE).

application procedures and payment of subsidies will basically follow the established mechanism.

Advice Sought

16. Members are invited to give views and advice on the proposal. Subject to Members' comments, we plan to seek funding approval from the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council as soon as possible such that HKEAA can make preparations for the registration for Category C subjects in the 2019 HKDSE, which will take place in June 2018, on the basis that the examination fees will be paid by the Government.

Education Bureau
April 2018

**List of Category A, Category B and Category C subjects
for the 2019 HKDSE**

Category A: Senior Secondary Subjects

Biology
Business, Accounting and Financial Studies
Chemistry
Chinese History
Chinese Language
Chinese Literature
Design and Applied Technology
Economics
English Language
Ethics and Religious Studies
Geography
Health Management and Social Care
History
Information and Communication Technology
Liberal Studies
Literature in English
Mathematics
 Compulsory Part
 Extended Part
 Module 1. Calculus and Statistics
 Module 2. Algebra and Calculus
Music
Physical Education
Physics
Science
 Combined Science (Biology, Chemistry)
 Combined Science (Biology, Physics)
 Combined Science (Chemistry, Physics)
 Integrated Science
Technology and Living
Tourism and Hospitality Studies
Visual Arts

Category B: Applied Learning Subjects

Area of Studies	Course Cluster	Applied Learning Subject
Creative Studies	Design Studies	Fashion and Image Design
		Interior Design
		Jewellery and Accessories Design
	Media Arts	Computer Game and Animation Design
	Performing Arts	Taking a Chance on Dance
The Essentials of Dramatic Arts		
Media and Communication	Films, TV and Broadcasting Studies	Film and Video
	Media Production and Public Relations	Magazine Editing and Production
		New Media Communication Strategies
		Public Relations and Communication
Business, Management and Law	Accounting and Finance	Accounting in Practice
	Business Studies	Business Data Analysis
		Entrepreneurship for SME
		Marketing and Online Promotion
Legal Studies	Law Enforcement in Hong Kong	
Services	Food Services and Management	Pâtisserie and Café Operations
		Western Cuisine
	Hospitality Services	Hospitality Services in Practice
		Hotel Operations
	Personal and Community Services	Child Care and Education
		Fundamental Cosmetology

Area of Studies	Course Cluster	Applied Learning Subject
Applied Science	Medical Science and Health Care	Animal Care
		Foundation in Chinese Medicine
		Health Care Practice
	Psychology	Applied Psychology
		Practical Psychology
	Sports	Exercise Science and Health Fitness
		Sports and Fitness Coaching
Engineering and Production	Civil, Electrical and Mechanical Engineering	Automotive Technology
		Electrical and Energy Engineering
	Information Engineering	Computer Forensic Technology
		Internet of Everything Application
	Services Engineering	Aviation Studies
	Applied Learning Chinese (for non-Chinese speaking students)	
		Practical Chinese in Hospitality

Category C: Other Language Subjects

French Language
 German Language
 Hindi Language
 Japanese Language
 Spanish Language
 Urdu Language