

Information Paper

Admission Procedures for Secondary Six Students

Purpose

This paper outlines the proposal for a revised procedure for admission to Secondary Six (S6). The proposal was formulated after a recent review of the 1997 Secondary Six Admission Procedure and subsequent consultation with major school councils and education bodies. Members are invited to give their views on this proposal.

Background

2. The Secondary Six Admission Procedure (the Procedure) was introduced in 1991 with the following objectives:

- assisting participants of the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE) to seek S6 places in government, aided, bought-place and caput schools, and as far as possible, to continue sixth form education in their own schools; and
- maximizing the utilization of subsidized S6 places and reducing the wastage of these places due to applicants' multiple registration with a number of schools.

3. The existing Procedure comprises five stages:

Stage I - Students with 14 points* or more may apply to their own or linked school(s);

Stage II - Students with 14 points* or more may apply to other schools;

* 14 points from the best 6 subjects in one sitting of the HKCEE (Grades A to E shall be given the numerical values of 5 to 1 for the purpose of calculating the points)

- Stage III - Students with minimum Advanced Level (AL) entry requirements may apply to their own or linked school(s);
- Stage IV - Students with minimum AL entry requirements may apply to other schools; and
- Stage V - Students with minimum AL entry requirements may apply for central allocation.

Schools are required to announce the results and complete all registration procedures before the completion of each of Stages I to IV. The 1997 Procedure took a total of 8 working days to complete, details of which are at Annex I.

Problem

4. Since its inception, the Procedure has achieved the objectives set out above. However, there were criticisms from some quarters that the Procedure was too lengthy and thereby created anxiety among students seeking admission to S6. The Education Department (ED) has also received complaints against some schools for violating the Procedure, such as admitting students ahead of the schedule and providing false information on vacancy situation.

Review of the Procedure

5. The Procedure is reviewed every year. After the 1997 Procedure had been completed, ED collected suggestions from various educational organizations, interested parties and the public (including the media). The pros and cons of these suggestions are summarized at Annex II. In brief, major improvement measures proposed are as follows:

- shortening of Stage I from one day to half-a-day and advancing Stage II to the afternoon of Day 1; and
- adopting a joint admission procedure with all S6 places allocated centrally.

6. In addition, there were calls for ED to step up its monitoring measures and sanctions to ensure the effective operation of the Procedure. A summary of the views is at Annex III.

Initial Proposal

7. Having considered the suggestions received, ED came to the view that the existing five-stage Procedure should remain. However, Stages I and III could be shortened to half-a-day and Stages II and IV could be advanced to the afternoon of Day 1 and Day 3 accordingly. The revised schedule would normally be as follows:

- Stage I - Day 1 morning
- Stage II - Day 1 afternoon and Day 2 whole-day
- Stage III - Day 3 morning; and
- Stage IV - Day 3 afternoon and Day 4 whole-day

8. The above proposal would allow students who could not secure an S6 place in their own school to apply to other schools on Day 1 and thereby easing their anxiety. By extending Stages II and IV to one and a half days, there would be more time for students to apply to other schools, and for schools to interview and select students.

9. To facilitate private candidates to apply on Day 1, the Hong Kong Examinations Authority (HKEA) would arrange with the Post Office to send result

notices to these candidates as early as possible. If necessary, duplicate copies of result notices could also be obtained from the HKEA office on Day 1.

10. To ensure that the Procedure would be fair and open and to prevent malpractice by schools, ED considered it necessary to spell out clearly to schools what they should observe throughout the process.

11. Schools have a duty to ensure that the Procedure is effective and fair. District Education Officers would conduct random visits to schools to forestall any malpractice. ED would take serious actions against those which were found to have admitted students outside the normal schedule. These include the issue of warning letters to the supervisors and principals and putting on record the malpractices in the school files and the principals' personal files. ED would monitor these schools closely to prevent such malpractices from occurring again. ED would also write to the chairpersons of the respective school sponsoring bodies to inform them that their track records, including malpractices by schools under their sponsorship, would be taken into account when their organisations apply to operate new schools in the future.

Consultation

12. ED convened a consultation meeting on 18 October 1997 to discuss the proposal in paragraphs 7 to 11 with representatives from school councils, secondary school head associations, parent associations and various divisions of the department. The majority at the meeting supported the initial proposal, with some minor amendments suggested to cater for the needs of students and different types of schools in the implementation process.

Summary of the Revised Proposal

13. The Procedure was further revised taking into account the suggestions at the consultation meeting. The revised Procedure is as follows:

- The five-stage Secondary Six Admission Procedure would continue;
- Both Stages I and III would be shortened to half-a-day (i.e. to complete on the mornings of Days 1 and 3). Stages II and IV would start on the same afternoon after the completion of Stages I and III respectively. The duration of these two Stages would normally be extended to one and a half days. The revised schedule is shown at Annex IV; and
- The following details should be spelt out clearly in the guidelines to be issued to schools:
 - (a) Outside Stages II and IV, schools should not collect application forms, interview or take down information from students from other schools for admission purposes;
 - (b) schools should not make verbal agreement with students who make application for admission at an inappropriate stage, or retain whole/part of their original/ duplicate copies of HKCEE result notices as a gesture of acceptance; and
 - (c) during Stages I to IV, as long as there are still vacancies, schools should accept applications from eligible students.

14. As regards monitoring measures, ED will continue to conduct random checks on schools to ensure that they comply with the revised Procedure. For schools not observing the Procedure, sanctions will be taken against the principals, school management committees and sponsoring bodies as detailed in paragraph 11 above.

Advice Sought

15. Members are invited to give their views on the revised Sixth Form Admission Procedure in paragraphs 7 to 14 above.

Education Department
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1997 Secondary Six Admission Procedure

Stage I (1 day)	Day 1 7 August 1997 (Thursday)	Students with 14 points or more applied to own or linked school(s)
Stage II (1 day)	Day 2 8 August 1997 (Friday)	Students with 14 points or more applied to other schools
Stage III (½ day)	Day 3, AM Session 9 August 1997 (Saturday)	Students with minimum Advanced Level (AL) entry requirements applied to own or linked school(s)
Stage IV (1 day)	Day 4 11 August 1997 (Monday)	Students with minimum AL entry requirements applied to other schools
Stage V (4½ days)	Day 5 12 August 1997 (Tuesday) to Day 9, AM Session 16 August 1997 (Saturday)	Students with minimum AL entry requirements applied for central allocation on Day 5 Results of central allocation announced and successful students registered with schools on Day 9

Suggestions to Improve Secondary Six Admission Procedure and their Pros and Cons

Proposed improvement measures	Pros	Cons
<p>1. Joint Admission (similar to JUPAS *)/ central allocation by computer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application for S6 places to start before the announcement of HKCEE result (can be as early as January) • Upon release of HKCEE results, S6 places would be centrally allocated to students by the computer system • eligible students would be given priority to be allocated to their own schools, or to other schools according to their choices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • advanced admission could be avoided • students do not need to scramble for S6 places after the announcement of HKCEE results • students will be able to apply to more schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too much emphasis will be put on HKCEE results • Due to keen competition for entry to popular schools, students with good HKCEE results might be allocated to schools far from their expectation • with a large number of students and complex combinations of subject requirements for different academic streams, the possibility of mismatch would be very great • schools will lose their autonomy in the admission of students • If schools follow JUPAS and interview students before the publication of HKCEE results, students will have to spend a lot of time attending interviews during the school year • schools might find it difficult to draw up a set of criteria for selecting students

* JUPAS : Joint University Programmes Admissions System

Proposed improvement measures		Pros	Cons
2. Shortening of Stages I to IV	a) Stages I and II to be completed on Day 1 and Stages III and IV to be combined	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> it would shorten and simplify existing admission procedures students with less satisfactory results need not wait for several days before applying to schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> some schools might have to rush to complete the procedure on Day 1 students still have to go to a number of schools to find an S6 place private and evening school students would have less chance to find an S6 place schools might admit students from other schools at the expense of eligible students from their own schools
	b) Stage I to be shortened to ½ day on Day 1. All students meeting the minimum AL entry requirements should apply in Stage II which will start from the afternoon of Day 1 and last until the end of Day 3. Central allocation to start on Day 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> it would simplify existing admission procedures students with less satisfactory results need not wait for several days before applying to schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> some schools might have to rush to complete the procedure on Day 1 private and evening school candidates would have less chance to find an S6 place students scrambling for places would be worsened and school might find it difficult to admit students because the benchmark set at 14 points would no longer be applicable schools might admit students from other schools at the expense of eligible students from their own schools

Proposed Improvement Measures		Pros	Cons
3. Centralised S6 Admission at the Hong Kong Convention Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All schools to set up their own booths in the Hong Kong Convention Centre to distribute HKCEE results and to recruit S6 students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> students could save travelling time and money advanced admission could be avoided 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There might be safety and crowd control problems as over 130,000 HKCEE participants and some 38,000 students eligible for S6 places are gathered in one place and moving from booth to booth in an enclosed area schools might not have sufficient time to interview individual student and the booths too small to conduct interviews

**Suggestions on ED's Monitoring Measures
and Sanctions against Schools
for Violating the Secondary Six Admission Procedure**

Proposed measures	Areas of concern
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ED to play a more active role in monitoring schools to prevent them from violating the S6 Admission Procedure• to cut subsidies to schools• to freeze school principals' salary increments• to name the schools which have violated S6 Admission Procedure• to dismiss principals of schools which have violated S6 Admission Procedure	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• to conduct frequent spot checks would involve a lot of manpower which could otherwise be used for more meaningful purposes; self-discipline of schools is vital to the success of the Procedure• all students will be affected• not a fair and effective measure• this will create labelling effect on students and staff of the schools. It is unfair to them as only the school authorities should be held responsible• the school management committees rather than the Government should decide whether to dismiss a staff

**Revised Proposal
Secondary Six Admission Procedure**

Stage I	Stage II	Stage III	Stage IV	Stage V
<u>Day 1</u> AM Session	<u>Day 1</u> PM Session <u>Day 2</u> Whole-day	<u>Day 3</u> AM Session	<u>Day 3</u> PM Session <u>Day 4</u> Whole-day	<u>Day 5 - Day 9</u> Central Allocation

- Note:
- Stage I - Students with 14 points or more apply to and register with own or linked school(s).
 - Stage II - Students with 14 points or more apply to other schools.
 - Stage III - Students with minimum Advanced Level (AL) entry requirements apply to and register with own or linked school(s).
 - Stage IV - Students with minimum AL entry requirements apply to other schools.
 - Stage V - Students with minimum AL entry requirements apply for central allocation on the first day of this Stage and results will be announced on the last day of this Stage.