

New Senior Secondary Subject Information Survey 2010/11

Background

1. The Education Bureau (EDB) conducted a “Survey on New Senior Secondary Subject Information” from October to November 2010 to collect information on the New Senior Secondary (NSS) subjects offered at Secondary 4 (S4) and Secondary 5 (S5) in the 2010/11 school year from 453 secondary schools in Hong Kong.

Schools Offer a Wide Range of Elective Subjects

2. In regard to the NSS elective subjects offered by schools, all secondary schools in Hong Kong offer an average of 11 to 12 elective subjects in S4 and S5. Over 70% of the secondary schools offer “Chinese History”, “Economics”, “Geography”, “History”, “Biology”, “Chemistry”, “Physics”, “Business, Accounting and Financial Studies”, “Information and Communication Technology” and “Visual Arts”. Over 60% of schools (about 300) offer Applied Learning (ApL) in S5 with a total of 6,700 students studying in 30 ApL courses. On the other hand, fewer schools (not more than 10%) offer subjects like “Literature in English”, “Integrated Science”, “Health Management and Social Care” and “Technology and Living”. The same pattern of elective subjects offer was observed in the last school year (Table 1 of the Appendix).

Students choose their elective subjects in accordance with their own interests and ability

3. Regarding the number of students taking the elective subjects, more students take “Economics” (S4:33.3%; S5:32.3%), “Business, Accounting and Financial Studies” (S4: 29.0%; S5:27.5%), “Chemistry” (S4: 27.1%; S5:26.7%), “Biology” (S4:26.8%; S5:25.3%), “Physics” (S4:24.9%; S5:24.2%), and “Geography” (S4: 22.1%; S5: 20.5%). The numbers of classes/groups offered for these subjects all exceed 550. In general, the pattern of student enrollment is similar in S4 and S5. Among the six areas of studies in Applied Learning, the 2 popular areas with higher student enrollment are “Services” and “Creative Studies” (Table 2 of the Appendix).
4. Schools provide opportunities for students to choose their elective subjects in accordance with their own interests and ability. Hence, students’

choices of elective subjects are more diversified and not limited to a particular Key Learning Area (KLA). In this school year, 68% of S4 students and 70% of S5 students take elective subjects from two or three KLAs.

A Drop in the number of elective subjects taken by some students is observed

5. A majority of students (about 97%) take 2 to 3 elective subjects. As expected by the EDB, a number of students dropped one elective subject in S5, and there are more students taking 2 elective subjects (54%) than those taking 3 elective subjects (43%). It is also observed that the number of students taking 4 elective subjects has decreased from 2.2% last year to 0.9% this year (Table 3 of the Appendix).
6. Moreover, it is worth to note that the S4 students in the second cohort take less elective subjects when compared with the S4 students in the first cohort. The percentage of S4 students taking 3 elective subjects in the current school year is 45%, which is lower than that of the S4 students in the last school year (51%), while the percentage of S4 students taking 2 elective subjects in the current school year is 52%, which is higher than that of S4 students in the last school year (45%). It seems that schools have learnt from experience and advised students to take their own abilities and interest into consideration when deciding on the number of elective subjects they should take in S4.

Schools No Longer Stream Students

7. There are over 1,450 subject combinations each in S4 and S5, with around 190 and 220 combinations for S4 and S5 students taking 2 elective subjects, and 800 and 880 combinations for S4 and S5 students taking 3 elective subjects respectively. Based on the subject combinations taken by students, the average numbers of combinations taken in S4 and S5 of all schools in Hong Kong are 41 and 47 (including the Applied Learning courses offered starting from S5) respectively. (Table 4 of the Appendix). (Table 4 of the Appendix).
8. According to the data collected regarding students' subject combination, schools no longer adopt the traditional practice of streaming students into arts, science and commercial classes. Students can take the elective subjects in accordance with their own interest and ability as well as the

school situation. For S4 and S5 students taking 2 elective subjects, the top five popular subject combinations are the same: (1) “Economics” and “Business, Accounting and Financial Studies”; (2) “Biology” and “Chemistry”; (3) “Chemistry” and “Physics”; (4) “Economics” and “Geography”; and (5) “Chinese History” and “History”. As for S4 and S5 students taking 3 elective subjects, the top five popular subject combinations are also the same: (1) “Physics”, “Chemistry” and “Biology”; (2) “Economics”, “Geography” and “Business, Accounting and Financial Studies”; (3) “Economics”, “Chemistry” and “Physics”; (4) “Economics”, “Biology” and “Chemistry”; and (5) “Chemistry”, “Physics” and “Business, Accounting and Financial Studies”. The number of students taking each of the above combinations ranges from 850 to 5,000. Besides, the elective subjects taken by some students are across two to three KLAs, including “Biology” and “History”; “Chinese History” and “Information and Communication Technology”; “Tourism and Hospitality Studies” and “Visual Arts”; “Chinese Literature”, “Economics” and “Business, Accounting and Financial Studies”; “Chemistry”, “Economics” and “Business, Accounting and Financial Studies”. Please refer to Table 5 for details regarding the top 100 combinations of elective subjects chosen by students.

Appendix

Table 1: Number and percentage of schools offering New Senior Secondary (NSS) subjects, classes/groups offered and students enrolled in 2010/11

NSS Subject	S4					S5				
	No. of schools offered	% of schools offered	No. of students enrolled	% of students enrolled	No. of groups offered	No. of schools offered	% of schools offered	No. of students enrolled	% of students enrolled	No. of groups offered
Chinese Language	450	100.0%	77,580 [#]	99.0%	2,306	453	100.0%	74,256 [#]	99.2%	2,314
English Language	450	100.0%	78,330	100.0%	2,509	453	100.0%	74,826	100.0%	2,522
Liberal Studies	450	100.0%	78,330	100.0%	2,754	453	100.0%	74,826	100.0%	2,797
Maths: Compulsory part only	424	94.2%	54,800	70.0%	1,689	447	98.7%	52,967	70.8%	1,767
Maths: Compulsory part plus Module 1	238	52.9%	8,812	11.2%	281	357	78.8%	10,798	14.4%	410
Maths: Compulsory part plus Module 2	241	53.6%	8,364	10.7%	275	337	74.4%	10,455	14.0%	377
Maths: Compulsory part plus a not-yet-specified extended part	57	12.7%	6,316	8.1%	179	9	2.0%	594	0.8%	19
Chinese Literature	183	40.7%	4,265	5.4%	191	191	42.2%	3,733	5.0%	199
Literature in English	27	6.0%	769	1.0%	35	28	6.2%	560	0.7%	33
Chinese History	413	91.8%	11,872	15.2%	479	418	92.3%	10,096	13.5%	495
Economics	430	95.6%	26,111	33.3%	782	433	95.6%	24,161	32.3%	796
Geography	416	92.4%	17,314	22.1%	575	414	91.4%	15,376	20.5%	587
History	324	72.0%	9,709	12.4%	369	329	72.6%	8,043	10.7%	377
Tourism and Hospitality Studies	165	36.7%	5,666	7.2%	200	157	34.7%	4,414	5.9%	191
Biology	420	93.3%	20,994	26.8%	658	421	92.9%	18,961	25.3%	642
Chemistry	422	93.8%	21,239	27.1%	653	427	94.3%	19,952	26.7%	648
Physics	426	94.7%	19,469	24.9%	634	428	94.5%	18,138	24.2%	631
Combined Science: Biology & Chemistry	169	37.6%	5,007	6.4%	194	185	40.8%	4,899	6.5%	213
Combined Science: Chemistry & Physics	120	26.7%	2,888	3.7%	126	138	30.5%	2,973	4.0%	144
Combined Science: Physics & Biology	66	14.7%	1,485	1.9%	66	87	19.2%	1,807	2.4%	91
Integrated Science	21	4.7%	548	0.7%	24	24	5.3%	424	0.6%	26
Business, Accounting and Financial Studies	405	90.0%	22,693	29.0%	698	407	89.8%	20,545	27.5%	713
Design and Applied Technology	57	12.7%	1,419	1.8%	77	52	11.5%	1,040	1.4%	74
Health Management and Social Care	45	10.0%	1,542	2.0%	52	43	9.5%	1,059	1.4%	45

NSS Subject	S4					S5				
	No. of schools offered	% of schools offered	No. of students enrolled	% of students enrolled	No. of groups offered	No. of schools offered	% of schools offered	No. of students enrolled	% of students enrolled	No. of groups offered
Information and Communication Technology	432	96.0%	11,950	15.3%	564	437	96.5%	9,973	13.3%	580
Technology & Living: Food Science & Technology	20	4.4%	471	0.6%	24	23	5.1%	414	0.6%	27
Technology & Living: Fashion, Clothing & Textiles	8	1.8%	188	0.2%	11	6	1.3%	97	0.1%	8
Ethics and Religious Studies	77	17.1%	1,482	1.9%	89	85	18.8%	1,194	1.6%	96
Music*	107	23.8%	448	0.6%	113	97	21.4%	304	0.4%	102
Visual Arts	350	77.8%	7,066	9.0%	375	349	77.0%	5,399	7.2%	374
Physical Education	64	14.2%	1,056	1.3%	65	62	13.7%	824	1.1%	64
Applied Learning						303	66.9%	6,691	8.9%	

Very few students take the adapted Chinese Language curriculum designed for Non-Chinese Speaking students, and related enrolment figure is not included.

* Some courses are offered by the Hong Kong Institute of Education, and Arts and Technology Education Centre.

Table 2: Student enrollment in the six areas of studies of Applied Learning in 2010/11

Area of Studies	No. of Courses	Enrolment
Creative Studies	7	1,419
Media and Communication	3	509
Business, Management and Law	6	764
Services	6	3,075
Applied Science	5	576
Engineering and Production	3	348
Total	30	6,691

Table 3: Number of elective subjects taken by NSS students for the first and second cohort

Cohort	First (S4)	First (S5)	Second (S4)
Elective subjects taken	% of students (78277)	% of students (74826)	% of students (78330)
< 2	0.80%	2.45%	0.79%
2	45.15%	54.03%	52.02%
3	51.36%	42.61%	44.97%
4	2.16%	0.91%	1.54%
> 4*	0.52%	0.01%	0.69%

* The Education Bureau encourages schools to offer more NSS elective subjects to S4 students to explore their interest, so as to decide on the subjects to be taken in S5/S6.

Table 4: Number of subject combinations in 2010/11

Number of elective subjects taken	S4		S5	
	Number of subject combination	% of subject combination	Number of subject combination	% of subject combination
1	19	1.24%	21	1.42%
2	193	12.61%	224	15.18%
3	804	52.55%	879	59.55%
4	460	30.07%	345	23.37%
> 4	54	3.53%	7	0.47%
Total	1530	100.00%	1476	100.00%

Table 5: Number and percentage of students taking the top 100 subject combinations in 2010/11

Order	S4			S5		
	Subject Combination	No. of students	% of students	Subject Combination	No. of students	% of students
1	BIO CHEM PHY	4914	6.27%	BIO CHEM PHY	4628	6.19%
2	BAFS ECON	3582	4.57%	BAFS ECON	3804	5.08%
3	BIO CHEM	2266	2.89%	BIO CHEM	2562	3.42%
4	CHEM PHY	2068	2.64%	CHEM PHY	2498	3.34%
5	CHEM ECON PHY	1607	2.05%	ECON GEOG	1564	2.09%
6	BAFS ECON GEOG	1468	1.87%	BAFS ECON GEOG	1342	1.79%
7	BIO CHEM ECON	1181	1.51%	CHEM ECON PHY	1278	1.71%
8	ECON GEOG	1140	1.46%	CHI_HIST HIST	989	1.32%
9	CHI_HIST HIST	1077	1.37%	CS PHY	958	1.28%
10	CHI_HIST GEOG	929	1.19%	GEOG HIST	944	1.26%
11	BAFS CHEM PHY	871	1.11%	BIO CHEM ECON	921	1.23%
12	BAFS ICT	857	1.09%	BAFS CHEM PHY	859	1.15%
13	BAFS BIO CHEM	829	1.06%	CHI_HIST GEOG	855	1.14%
14	CS PHY	826	1.05%	BIO CS	789	1.05%
15	GEOG HIST	815	1.04%	CHI_HIST ECON	688	0.92%
16	BAFS THS	776	0.99%	BAFS ICT	680	0.91%
17	BAFS ECON ICT	762	0.97%	BAFS GEOG	680	0.91%
18	BIO GEOG	748	0.95%	BAFS BIO CHEM	678	0.91%
19	ECON ICT	687	0.88%	BIO GEOG	658	0.88%
20	CHI_HIST ECON	683	0.87%	ECON ICT	646	0.86%
21	BAFS BIO ECON	670	0.86%	BIO PHY	624	0.83%

Order	S4			S5		
	Subject Combination	No. of students	% of students	Subject Combination	No. of students	% of students
22	BIO ECON	661	0.84%	ICT PHY	623	0.83%
23	BIO CS	658	0.84%	BAFS ECON ICT	603	0.81%
24	BAFS ECON PHY	657	0.84%	BAFS CS ECON	586	0.78%
25	ICT PHY	647	0.83%	BAFS CHI_HIST ECON	577	0.77%
26	BAFS BIO	629	0.80%	ECON HIST	575	0.77%
27	BAFS CHI_HIST ECON	624	0.80%	CHI_HIST CHI_LIT	553	0.74%
28	GEOG THS	620	0.79%	ECON PHY	542	0.72%
29	CS ICT	590	0.75%	BIO ECON	542	0.72%
30	CHEM ICT PHY	589	0.75%	CHEM ICT PHY	541	0.72%
31	BIO CHEM GEOG	583	0.74%	BAFS THS	526	0.70%
32	BAFS CS ECON	575	0.73%	CS ICT	521	0.70%
33	GEOG ICT	574	0.73%	BAFS BIO	506	0.68%
34	BAFS GEOG	559	0.71%	BAFS CHI_HIST	476	0.64%
35	BAFS CS	555	0.71%	GEOG ICT	469	0.63%
36	ECON GEOG HIST	551	0.70%	CS ECON	465	0.62%
37	BAFS PHY	545	0.70%	BAFS BIO ECON	446	0.60%
38	ECON PHY	536	0.68%	CHEM CS	444	0.59%
39	CS ECON	502	0.64%	BIO CHEM GEOG	443	0.59%
40	ECON HIST	501	0.64%	BAFS PHY	436	0.58%
41	CHI_HIST CHI_LIT	488	0.62%	BAFS ECON PHY	434	0.58%
42	BAFS VA	480	0.61%	GEOG THS	426	0.57%
43	CHI_HIST ICT	479	0.61%	ECON GEOG HIST	413	0.55%
44	BAFS CHEM ECON	472	0.60%	CS ECON PHY	406	0.54%
45	BAFS ECON HIST	455	0.58%	BAFS CS	390	0.52%
46	BAFS CHI_HIST	452	0.58%	BAFS ECON APL	382	0.51%
47	BIO PHY	445	0.57%	BIO ICT	376	0.50%
48	ICT VA	444	0.57%	GEOG VA	367	0.49%
49	CS GEOG	442	0.56%	CS GEOG	356	0.48%
50	GEOG VA	434	0.55%	BAFS CHEM ECON	350	0.47%
51	ICT THS	433	0.55%	ECON VA	345	0.46%
52	BIO ICT	414	0.53%	BAFS ECON HIST	345	0.46%
53	ECON THS	409	0.52%	ECON THS	334	0.45%
54	CHI_HIST ECON GEOG	405	0.52%	THS APL	331	0.44%
55	CHI_HIST GEOG HIST	398	0.51%	BAFS APL	329	0.44%
56	ECON VA	362	0.46%	BAFS VA	326	0.44%
57	CHI_HIST VA	361	0.46%	CHI_HIST GEOG HIST	321	0.43%
58	THS VA	355	0.45%	CHI_HIST ECON GEOG	321	0.43%

Order	S4			S5		
	Subject Combination	No. of students	% of students	Subject Combination	No. of students	% of students
59	BIO VA	348	0.44%	CHI_HIST ICT	313	0.42%
60	CHEM GEOG PHY	348	0.44%	ICT APL	312	0.42%
61	CHEM ECON	332	0.42%	BAFS CHEM	309	0.41%
62	BAFS CHEM	323	0.41%	BAFS HIST	299	0.40%
63	HIST ICT	321	0.41%	CHEM ECON	293	0.39%
64	CHI_HIST THS	302	0.39%	CHEM GEOG PHY	286	0.38%
65	GEOG PHY	294	0.38%	ICT VA	279	0.37%
66	BAFS HIST	294	0.38%	ICT THS	276	0.37%
67	BIO ECON GEOG	290	0.37%	BAFS CS PHY	275	0.37%
68	CHEM CS	285	0.36%	CHI_HIST VA	271	0.36%
69	BIO CHI_HIST	267	0.34%	HIST ICT	258	0.34%
70	CHI_HIST CS	265	0.34%	VA APL	252	0.34%
71	BIO THS	264	0.34%	BIO VA	248	0.33%
72	BIO CHEM ICT	259	0.33%	GEOG PHY	246	0.33%
73	DAT ICT	253	0.32%	BIO CHEM ICT	240	0.32%
74	BIO HIST	253	0.32%	BIO CHI_HIST	234	0.31%
75	CS ECON PHY	253	0.32%	ECON APL	233	0.31%
76	BAFS ECON VA	248	0.32%	BIO ECON GEOG	233	0.31%
77	CHI_HIST ECON HIST	239	0.31%	BIO CHEM APL	224	0.30%
78	HIST VA	237	0.30%	BIO CS ECON	223	0.30%
79	CHI_HIST CHI_LIT GEOG	237	0.30%	GEOG APL	215	0.29%
80	CS VA	235	0.30%	HIST VA	208	0.28%
81	HIST THS	234	0.30%	DAT ICT	204	0.27%
82	CHI_HIST CHI_LIT HIST	232	0.30%	CHI_HIST CHI_LIT HIST	200	0.27%
83	ECON GEOG PHY	226	0.29%	CHEM CS ECON	200	0.27%
84	CHEM ICT	214	0.27%	CHI_HIST CHI_LIT GEOG	194	0.26%
85	CHEM GEOG	212	0.27%	CHI_HIST CS	193	0.26%
86	BIO ECON PHY	210	0.27%	CHEM ICT	192	0.26%
87	BIO CS ECON	210	0.27%	CS ECON GEOG	191	0.26%
88	BAFS CHI_LIT ECON	208	0.27%	BIO HIST	188	0.25%
89	CS HIST	207	0.26%	BAFS ECON VA	188	0.25%
90	BAFS CHI_HIST GEOG	207	0.26%	CHI_HIST THS	185	0.25%
91	DAT VA	205	0.26%	HIST THS	181	0.24%
92	CHI_HIST CHI_LIT ECON	203	0.26%	CHI_LIT GEOG	181	0.24%
93	BAFS ECON THS	202	0.26%	CHI_HIST CHI_LIT ECON	180	0.24%
94	CS ECON GEOG	202	0.26%	CHI_LIT ECON	179	0.24%
95	HMSC THS	196	0.25%	BIO ECON PHY	179	0.24%

Order	S4			S5		
	Subject Combination	No. of students	% of students	Subject Combination	No. of students	% of students
96	BAFS CS PHY	196	0.25%	CHI_HIST ECON HIST	178	0.24%
97	BAFS GEOG HIST	190	0.24%	BAFS CHI_HIST GEOG	165	0.22%
98	BAFS BIO PHY	189	0.24%	BAFS GEOG HIST	163	0.22%
99	CHEM CS ECON	185	0.24%	BAFS CHEM CS	161	0.22%
100	ECON GEOG ICT	183	0.23%	THS VA	157	0.21%
	TOTAL:	57,898	73.92%	TOTAL:	54,457	72.78%

Remarks:

ApL – Applied Learning

BIO - Biology

BAFS - Business, Accounting and Financial Studies

CHEM - Chemistry

CHI_HIST - Chinese History

CHI_LIT - Chinese Literature

CS - Combined Science

DAT - Design and Applied Technology

ECON - Economics

GEOG - Geography

HMSC - Health Management and Social Care

HIST - History

ICT - Information and Communication Technology

IS - Integrated Science

PHY - Physics

THS - Tourism and Hospitality Studies

VA - Visual Arts