

Quality Education

Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, China

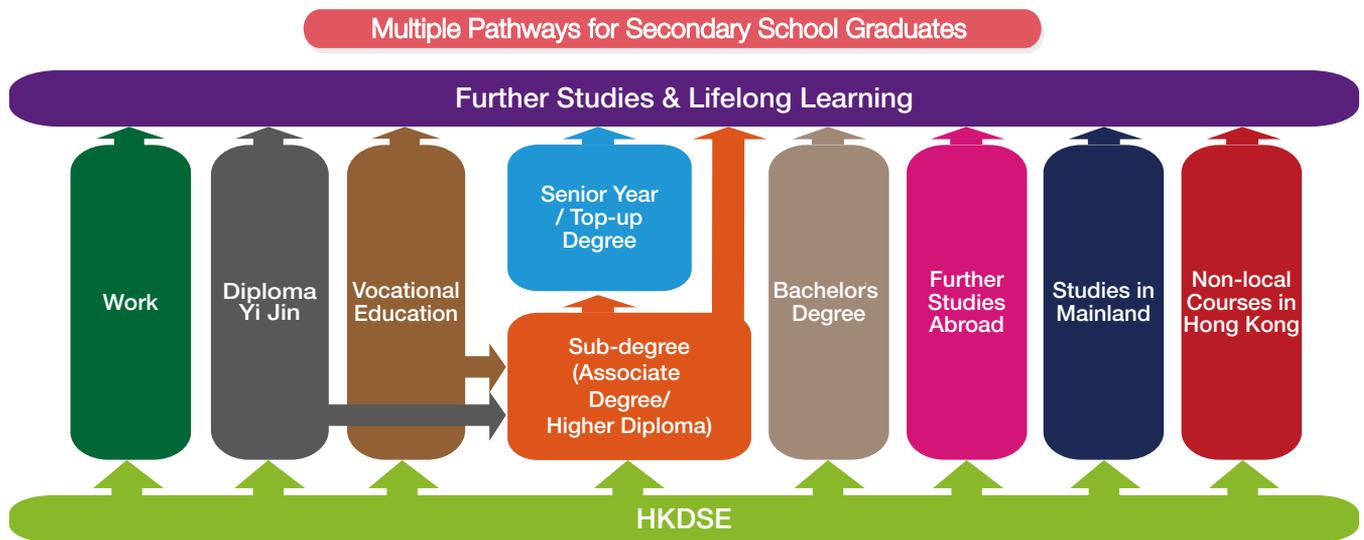


1 Introduction of the New Academic Structure

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) has implemented in September 2009 the New Academic Structure (NAS) which comprises a 3-year school curriculum at senior secondary (SS) level and a 4-year undergraduate programme at university level. Students take only one public examination – the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination (HKDSE) at the end of the secondary education. The first HKDSE has been successfully launched in 2012.

2 Benefits of the New Academic Structure – Global Citizens and Global Pathways

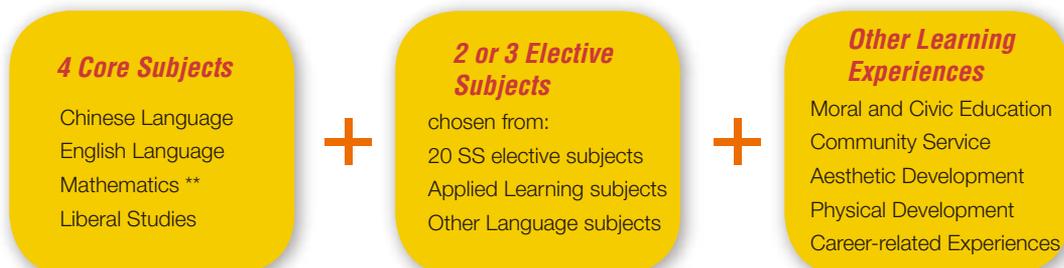
In Hong Kong, all students are entitled to receive twelve years of free school education. The NAS provides a broad and balanced SS curriculum with diversified choices to suit the different needs, interests and abilities of students. Great emphasis is placed on students' whole-person development, lifelong learning capability and global outlook. After taking the HKDSE, students have access to higher education and the workplace as well as better articulation with the academic systems of other countries via multiple pathways (see the following diagram).



3 Senior Secondary (SS) Curriculum

Framework

Under the NAS, the SS curriculum* comprises:



* The curriculum is designed on the basis of 2,500 lesson hours, with a flexible range of 2,400 ± 200 hours over three years to cater for school diversity.

** Mathematics comprises the Compulsory Part and two elective extended modules (optional, students could take at most one elective extended module):
Module 1 (M1) - Calculus and Statistics or Module 2 (M2) - Algebra and Calculus.

Liberal Studies

Liberal Studies is a core subject in the SS curriculum. It aims at broadening the knowledge base of students and enhancing their social, national and global awareness as well as developing their multi-perspective and critical thinking skills through the study of a wide range of issues adopting a multi-disciplinary enquiry approach.

Elective Subjects

A total of 20 SS subjects[#] under 8 Key Learning Areas, 6 Other Language subjects and a wide range of Applied Learning (ApL) subjects are offered to provide a broad and balanced curriculum.

8 Key Learning Areas



ApL offers studies with equal emphasis on practice and theory linked to broad professional and vocational fields. For holistic learning, a flexible combination of ApL with core subjects, elective subjects and Other Learning Experiences helps provide theoretical and applied learning opportunities to cater for students' diverse learning needs, interests and aptitudes. Through application and practice, students have the opportunities to develop generic skills and beginners' skill set, and to explore their career aspirations and orientation for lifelong learning. Different ApL courses are developed under the following six areas of studies:



Individual ApL courses are registered in the Qualifications Register as certificate programmes at Qualifications Framework (QF) Level 3. From the 2014/15 school year, Applied Learning Chinese (for non-Chinese speaking students) pegged at the QF Levels 1 to 3 is introduced by phases to provide an additional channel exclusively for non-Chinese speaking students to obtain an alternative Chinese language qualification.

Subject details are available on the New Academic Structure Web Bulletin (<http://www.edb.gov.hk/nas/en/curriculum>).

[#]The SS elective subjects offered in schools may vary according to individual schools' context and students' needs.

Other Learning Experiences (OLE) and Student Learning Profile (SLP)

Building on the foundation of learning experiences gained in basic education, OLE is an essential component of the SS curriculum which is designed to promote whole-person development. Within the school curriculum, students are provided with a range of OLE activities in five areas, namely, Moral and Civic Education, Career-related Experiences, Community Service, Aesthetic Development, and Physical Development. Students are encouraged to develop an SLP on their OLE, awards/achievements gained outside school, academic performance in school and more importantly, to carry out self reflections to tell their own stories of learning for reference of admission to post-secondary and university education as well as employers.

4 Assessment – the HKDSE

Under the NAS, students may take up to a maximum of eight subjects from Categories A, B or C.

Category A: 24 Senior Secondary Subjects (including 4 core subjects plus 20 elective subjects)

The HKDSE adopts a standards-referenced reporting (SRR) system. Students performance will be reported with reference to five levels (levels 1 to 5), with 5 being the highest. The top level 5 candidates will be awarded level 5** and the next top level 5 candidates will be awarded level 5*. Those not attaining the level 1 standard will not receive any result for that particular subject. There is a detailed set of prescribed descriptors to describe the typical performance of students at each of the levels. Please access the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA) website for further details (http://www.hkeaa.edu.hk/en/HKDSE/assessment/the_reporting_system/SRR/).

Category B: Applied Learning (ApL) Subjects

The assessment of Category B (Applied Learning) subjects is undertaken by course providers. After moderation by the HKEAA, the final results are recorded on the HKDSE certificate. For the 2012-2017 HKDSE Examinations, ApL results are reported as "Attained" and "Attained with Distinction" in the HKDSE. Students attaining the results of "Attained" and "Attained with Distinction" in the ApL courses are accepted as attaining the competencies required at Level 2 and Level 3 or above of Category A subjects of the HKDSE Examination respectively for the purposes of further studies and/or work.

Starting from the 2018 HKDSE, the reporting of students' performance in ApL subjects would be further refined with 3 levels:

Attained

Attained with Distinction (I)

Attained with Distinction (II)

Performance of "Attained with Distinction (I)" is comparable to level 3 while "Attained with Distinction (II)" is comparable to level 4 or above of the Category A subjects of the HKDSE. For ApL Chinese (for non-Chinese speaking students), the existing levels of results, i.e. "Attained" and "Attained with Distinction", will continue to be used.

Category C: Other Language Subjects

There are 6 Other Language subjects, namely, French, German, Hindi, Japanese, Spanish and Urdu. Students of these subjects will sit for the Advanced Subsidiary Level Examination of the Cambridge International Examinations (CIE) administered by the HKEAA. Marking and grading will also be conducted by the CIE. Results will be reported with reference to five grades (a-e), with grade e being the lowest and grade a being the highest. Achievements below grade e will not be reported on the certificate.

Recognition

Local Recognition

The minimum entrance requirements for undergraduate programmes offered by government-funded or self-financing institutions are level 3 for Chinese Language and English Language, and level 2 for Mathematics and Liberal Studies (i.e. “3322”). Individual institutions / faculties / programmes will determine the attainment level required for one or two elective subjects, and other admission requirements.

For non-Chinese-speaking students taking the SS curriculum and sitting for the HKDSE, institutions may consider, for the purpose of satisfying their entrance requirements, alternative qualification(s) in Chinese Language (under the General Certificate of Secondary Education, the International General Certificate of Secondary Education, and the General Certificate of Education) in lieu of general Chinese Language requirements for students who have met the specified conditions: (a) students who have learned Chinese Language for less than 6 years while receiving primary and secondary education; or (b) students who have learned Chinese Language for 6 years or more in schools, but have been taught an adapted and simpler Chinese Language curriculum not normally applicable to the majority of students in local schools.

University Grants Committee-funded institutions and most post-secondary institutions accept ApL(C) as an alternative qualification in Chinese Language for the admission of non-Chinese speaking students with “Attained” as the minimum level required

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 2 ApL subjects at “Attained” level can be accepted.

International Recognition

The HKEAA has been working closely with international bodies to secure recognition of the HKDSE by non-local and overseas institutions. Positive comments on the aims and design of the SS curriculum have been received from such institutions. More details of the recognition of HKDSE are available on the HKEAA website (http://www.hkeaa.edu.hk/en/recognition/hkdse_recognition/).

The UCAS Tariff Value for the HKDSE

Starting from September 2017, the new UCAS Tariff will be introduced to support higher education institutions in the UK for admission purpose. Level 3 to level 5** in the HKDSE are deemed comparable to grades E to A* in GCE A level examination. Level 5** in Category A Senior Secondary subjects is awarded the highest possible 56 points. Level 5** in the Compulsory Part and the Extended Part of Mathematics are awarded 28 points each, so candidates taking both parts of Mathematics can achieve tariff points that are on par with other HKDSE Category A subjects. (http://www.hkeaa.edu.hk/en/recognition/hkdse_recognition/overseas/uk/).

International Responses

With the objective of promoting the NAS and the HKDSE, the Education Bureau of the HKSAR and the HKEAA have visited the higher education sectors and education authorities in different countries to introduce the NAS and the HKDSE. Positive comments have been received.

An ‘exemplary’ curriculum reform

- “... as a means of taking a high-performing system and making it better still, [the Hong Kong curriculum and examinations reform] has proved to be exemplary.”
- “The government took a long-term, strategic view and ensured that each element of the system acted as an implementation tool to reinforce reforms. Because the design was coherent and deeply considered, this worked.”

Barber, M., Donnelly, K. and Rizvi, S. (2012). *Oceans of Innovation: the Atlantic, the Pacific, Global Leadership and the Future of Education*. London: IPPR.

- “Hong Kong is a prime example of successful education strategy and implementation.”
- “Hong Kong’s success has stemmed from its detailed and precise approach to whole-system implementation. It undertook implementation planning simultaneously with strategy design...”

Jensen, B. (2012). *Catching up: Learning from the best school systems in East Asia*. Grattan Institute.

7 Hong Kong as a Regional Education Hub

Hong Kong is a place where East meets West. It provides an attractive learning environment for preparing students to meet challenges in a globalized world. Hong Kong aspires to be a regional education hub to nurture talents for the region. We welcome overseas students to study, to conduct academic research, and to take part in educational exchange activities.

Top-notch Universities

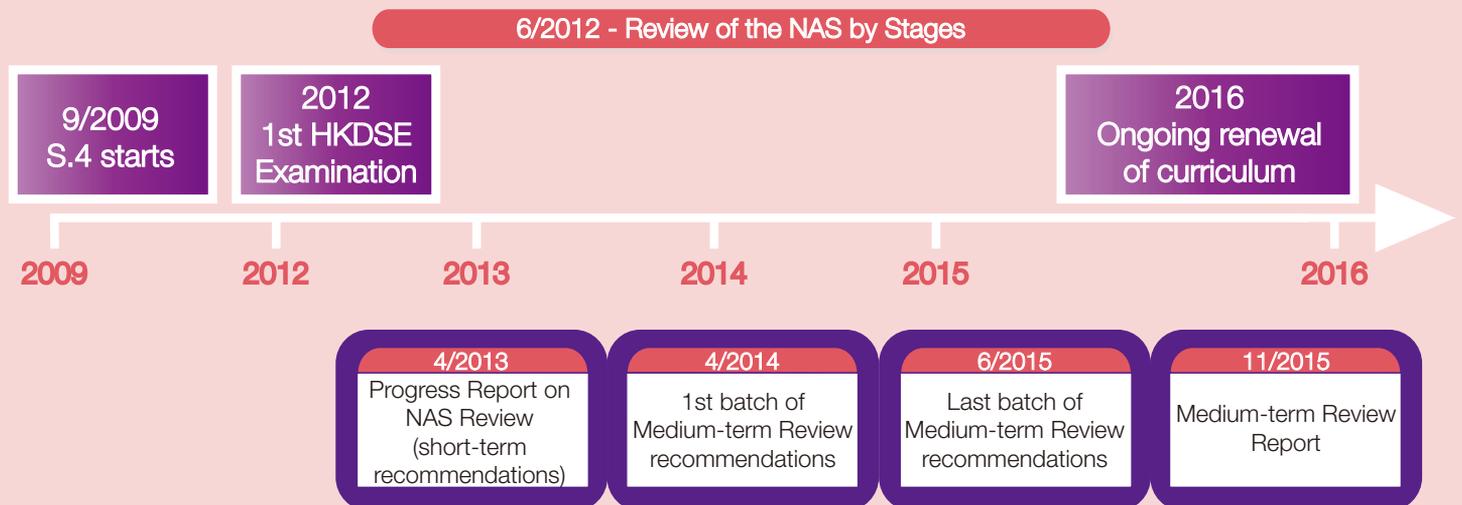
Hong Kong's universities are among the world's best. Of the 20 degree-awarding institutions, four were ranked within the top 100 in 2016 by Quacquarelli Symonds, and three of them were ranked within the top 100 by the Times Higher Education supplement in 2016.

World-class MBA and EMBA

Hong Kong's universities host Asia's (and the world's) best business administration and executive business management programmes. A Financial Times survey in 2015 ranked the Kellogg-HKUST EMBA programme second worldwide. In 2016, the MBA programme offered by The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology was ranked fourteenth worldwide.



8 NAS Review



For more details on the NAS review, please visit the NAS review website: <http://www.edb.gov.hk/nas/review>

9 Useful Websites

- Education Bureau: <http://www.edb.gov.hk>
- Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority: <http://www.hkeaa.edu.hk/en/>
- New Academic Structure Web Bulletin: <http://www.edb.gov.hk/nas/en>
- Applied Learning: <http://www.edb.gov.hk/apl/en>
- Other Learning Experiences and Student Learning Profile:
<http://www.edb.gov.hk/cd/ole>
<http://www.edb.gov.hk/cd/slp>
- Overseas Visitors' Corner: <http://www.edb.gov.hk/nas/overseas>
- Qualifications Register: <http://www.hkqr.gov.hk>
- NAS Review: http://334.edb.hkedcity.net/EN/334_review.php

Contact Us

Email: nas@edb.gov.hk
Tel: 2892 6460

