

**Summary of Q&As of 4 Seminars on Preparation for New Senior Secondary (NSS)  
and Communication with Parents**

Dates: 13 March 08, 18 March 08, 1 April 08 & 7 April 08

Speakers / Panelists: Mr Chris Wardlaw, Dr K K Chan, Dr S K Kwan, Dr Francis Cheung,  
Dr Thomas Cheung

Questions/Suggestions	Responses
<i>NSS Elective Subjects</i>	
1. Could students study other languages as elective subjects under NSS? Is the status of other languages equivalent to an elective subject under NSS?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students could take other language as an elective subject under NSS. Student result in other languages will also be reported under HKDSE following the way of reporting of the Cambridge International Examinations.</li> <li>• Under NSS, most students will take 2-3 elective subjects out of the 20 elective subjects or Applied Learning (ApL) courses or other languages. In particular cases, a small number of students might take another language as a fourth elective.</li> </ul>
2. Will Other Languages be considered as a non-specified elective in the university admission under 334? 3. Can students choose Other Languages as their 2 <sup>nd</sup> elective?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The institutions will be asked to consider the status of other languages along with other elective subjects in the university admission.</li> <li>• Students can take other Language as their 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> elective.</li> </ul>
4. How are the different categories of subjects: NSS electives, ApL, other languages handled in the HKDSE?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The reporting system for the subjects under different categories:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Category 1 : using “1 to 5** ”levels</li> <li>- Category 2 : ApL courses - using “unattained”, “attained” and “attained with distinction”</li> <li>- Category 3 : other languages - adopting the reporting system as adopted by the Cambridge International Examinations.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Results of students in Category 1 to Category 3 subjects will all be recorded in the transcript of HKDSE.</li> </ul>

Questions/Suggestions	Responses
<p>5. Students taking other languages have to sit for other examinations; therefore, schools have to arrange for separate curriculum and additional resources to support students learning. Could EDB increase the funding for hiring additional teachers as in the operating NET system?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools could flexibly use the funding provided by EDB. Network classes could be arranged if the no. of students taking other languages is small.</li> <li>• Funding arrangement for DLG is still being discussed and EDB is seeking the views of school councils. The provision for other languages is part of the ambit for the DLG.</li> </ul>
<p>6. Can Other Languages be offered as interest groups? Students may not have interest in taking other languages if they have to sit for public examinations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Other Languages generally will be offered as one of the elective subjects and the proficiency attainment will enable students to further their studies. HKEAA will offer the CIE examinations from the UK initially in six languages: French, German, Hindi, Japanese, Spanish and Urdu and the results will be recorded in the HKDSE certificate.</li> <li>• Interest groups in other languages might be offered by schools according to their own planning, student interest and resource arrangements, just like any other interest activities. However, these interest groups will not be subsidised by the Diversity Learning Grant.</li> </ul>
<b><i>Applied Learning (ApL)</i></b>	
<p>7. Schools still worry about the labeling effect if ApL courses are offered.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is no reason why ‘labeling effect’ should prevail. Many of the ApL courses are getting more popular such as courses related to hotel management and hospitality, laws, aviation, etc. The value of courses will be established over time by assurance of their quality and effectiveness in preparing students for post-school life.</li> </ul>

Questions/Suggestions	Responses
<p>8. The proposed shared contribution funding mode (EDB:70%, schools:30%) in ApL will discourage schools to offer ApL courses, especially when there is a large no. of students interested in ApL courses.</p> <p>9. There is great concern about the financial burden to schools to subsidise students for ApL courses. There is strong request for ApL to be fully subsidised by EDB.</p> <p>10. Could ApL be considered as one of the main-stream subjects like Maths, Physics, History, etc. and be granted subsidy like those subjects?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● ApL courses should complement the student programme and match their interest and aptitude. Not all students would or should take an ApL course. Schools should view all kinds of supporting resources/subsidies as a whole to consider how best to support student programme in NSS.</li> <li>● The proposed funding model is based on the principle of shared contribution. Schools are expected to contribute; otherwise, there is the issue of double dipping since schools have been resourced to support structured curriculum programme.</li> <li>● Under NSS, ApL courses will be offered as part of the NSS programme. For example, if 40 students take ApL courses, there will be a reduction in teachers' workload and hence saving school resources.</li> <li>● In some cases, if course providers are invited to conduct, at least in part ApL courses in school, the cost will be lowered.</li> <li>● The proposed sharing funding mode for ApL has undergone public consultation. The ApL courses are delivered differently from other NSS subjects by drawing in different expertise and learning experiences inside and outside school. Therefore, the funding model has to reflect this. We will further consult the school councils.</li> </ul>
<p>11. Could students complete ApL courses at S4 and S5 instead of S5&amp;S6?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Based on the experience from ApL pilot projects, it is found that S4 students often need counseling on their subject choices and possible career articulations. The standards expected of students in ApL are comparable to those expected for the HKDSE and students will need the benefit of three years senior secondary education across all their subjects.</li> <li>● Course providers will explore taster curriculum of ApL, e.g. 4-week programme /hands-on experience for students to have a taste of ApL courses before deciding on what to study in S5.</li> <li>● As there is no public examination for ApL courses, students will actually finish ApL courses earlier in S6.</li> </ul>

Questions/Suggestions	Responses
<i>Assessment</i>	
12. Will the results of HKCEE and HKALE gained in the existing system still be recognised after the introduction of HKDSE?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student results in HKCEE and HKALE will continue to be recognised by the CSB and relevant employers after the introduction of HKDSE.</li> </ul>
13. In 2011 HKCEE, only 22 subjects will be available for students to repeat. Will it be unfair? Subjects such as PE will suffer as fewer students will take the subject.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In deciding the subjects available for students to repeat HKCEE in 2011, HKEAA has taken into consideration the number of students taking these subjects, reference to past examinations and the need for workshop facilities. Repeating particular subjects in 2011 should be considered as only one of a number of possible pathways for students who take the HKCEE in 2010.</li> </ul>
14. Could the assessment of subjects such as PE be modified (e.g. by means of SBA) so that students could still repeat PE in 2011?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students could be advised to take PE under NSS instead of repeating the subject under the existing HKCEE system.</li> <li>• The 2011 examination syllabus for relevant CE subjects will be the same as the 2010 syllabus. Changes made to the 2011 syllabus would confuse candidates.</li> </ul>
15. When will HKDSE be in place?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The first cohort of HKDSE graduates will be in 2012.</li> <li>• 2012 is an important year for HKEAA as HKDSE and HKAL will be conducted in the same year.</li> <li>• It is anticipated that HKDSE will be implemented as late as possible in 2012. The results for HKDSE and HKALE are likely to be released separately. There will be further discussion with universities and schools on timing for this double cohort year.</li> </ul>

*Issue of the last cohort of students under the existing system*

<p>16. Concern about the issue of the last cohort of students under the existing system. What are the exit pathways available for them?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• HKEAA will organise one more HKCEE and HKALE in 2011 &amp; 2013 respectively for some subjects for S5 &amp; S7 repeaters and private candidates.</li><li>• Students are encouraged to repeat in S5 under NSS and sit for HKDSE in 2012 rather than resitting HKCEE. This will smooth the post-school pathway for those students. Some places in the new senior secondary will be available in schools similar to the arrangement now for students repeating HKCEE. Other students might enter the HKDSE as private candidates.</li><li>• Similar to the current situation, S5 exit student pathways include sub-degree courses, IVE courses, VTC courses, Project Yi-jin, studying overseas or to work.</li></ul>
<p>17. Will there be sufficient school places to accommodate students who wish to repeat in S5 of the new system?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Schools could make use of the 5% repetition rate to take in these students.</li><li>• We are assessing if any special measures might be needed.</li></ul>
<p>18. Although some of the last cohort of students may study S5 under NSS, they lack the background knowledge in LS, what should they do?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There is no problem in transition as all NSS curriculum are built on basic education.</li><li>• Some schools have prepared teachers and students for LS by introducing Integrated Humanities and Science and Technology at junior secondary levels to pave the way for LS.</li><li>• Returning to study NSS at S5 (either in schools or as private candidate) is one option for students. Appropriate counseling will be needed. There is no major curriculum impediment for students to take up NSS at S5.</li></ul>

<p>19. What if schools have not offered Integrated Humanities or Science and Technology under the existing system?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools are encouraged to provide students with wider choice of subjects, e.g. History, Technology to build up their foundation.</li> <li>• The moral and civic education programmes help to pave the way for students for studying LS. All the curriculum aims of the Basic Education can prepare students for NSS including LS.</li> </ul>
<p>20. Some parents of current S3 students request for repeating, could the rate for repetition be increased?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents should not prematurely hold back students from completing their studies.</li> <li>• The pathways for last cohort should be considered in a holistic way to enable the best possible arrangement for students.</li> <li>• There are many articulation pathways for students apart from proceeding to S6 in 2011 to study HKAL after HKCEE, including sub-degree courses, IVE courses, VTC courses, Project Yi-jin, studying overseas or to work.</li> </ul>
<p>21. Although S7 students could repeat HKAL examination in 2013, there is no 3-year university programme for them. Will universities allow these students to take the 4-year undergraduate programme even though they have not taken LS?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This issue will be raised and discussed further in meetings with universities.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Resources</b></p>	
<p><i>Other Learning Experiences (OLE)</i></p>	
<p>22. What are the resources available to support Other Learning Experiences (OLE)?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OEBG could be used to support the implementation of OLE.</li> <li>• Other resources include funding from Jockey Club</li> </ul>
<p>23. Will there be additional resources/grant to support OLE as it is a compulsory component under NSS?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The teacher ratios and Senior Secondary Curriculum Support Grant (SSCSG) are provided to schools to support the NSS programme for students. OLE occupies a minimum of 15 % of learning time.</li> </ul>

<i>Diversity Learning Grant (DLG)</i>	
24. Could Diversity Learning Grant (DLG) be used to support OLE?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ambit of DLG is fixed as stated in 334 Report. Hence, it could not be used to support OLE.</li> </ul>
25. Does it make any difference in Diversity Learning Grant if schools offer 14 elective subjects or 16?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The allocation of Diversity Learning Grant is not based on the number of elective subjects offered by schools.</li> <li>• On average, schools will offer about 11 NSS elective subjects plus 4 core subjects. The offering of subjects depends on factors such as space available, teachers' expertise, school culture and student interest and aptitude.</li> <li>• Schools could also form network with other schools in offering some NSS elective subjects.</li> </ul>
26. Under the new model, schools need to pay more to subsidise students in ApL. Could EDB provide subsidy of ApL to schools by capping the ceiling?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We are consulting the funding model of ApL and schools are welcome to submit suggestions/ proposals.</li> <li>• In the ApL pilot projects in 2005, schools pay for 41% of the course fee whereas in projects in 07, schools pay for about 30% of the cost.</li> </ul>
27. Some parents are willing to pay more for ApL courses, will that be considered acceptable?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The main concern is the principle of free education which has been extended to senior secondary from 2008/09 s.y. Some parents might say that they could afford to pay for ApL courses, others might not afford it. If it is up to the discretion of school, there might be difficulties to explain to parents the different approaches.</li> </ul>
28. Is the subsidy of \$6,500 per class for network programmes based on the number of senior secondary class or the actual number of classes, e.g. music classes/groups?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The subsidy of \$6,500 per class for network programmes is calculated on the basis of the number of senior secondary classes. For example, there are 4 senior secondary classes but only 1-2 groups/classes of music, schools will still be provided with a subsidy of \$6,500 x 4 = \$26,000. The subsidy is provided to support schools in offering these programmes. Combining resources with other schools can facilitate a networked class.</li> </ul>
29. Will the requirement of submission of a 3-year plan be simplified in the application for DLG?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools have to submit plans to indicate that they need additional support. The DLG application form will only be about a page and the administrative procedure will be minimal.</li> </ul>

*Senior Secondary Curriculum Support Grant (SSCSG)*

30. What is the Senior Secondary Curriculum Support Grant (SSCSG)?

- Under SSCSG, schools will be provided with a cash provision equivalent to 0.1 teacher per senior secondary class calculated on the basis of mid-point salary of GM teachers. It is to support flexible grouping in NSS and can be used at the discretion of the school.

*Teacher to class ratio*

31. There is practical concern about the resources to be provided under NSS. Is the revised teacher to class ratio of 1.7 and 2.0 fixed?

- Under NSS, schools will be provided with additional time-limited non-recurrent and recurrent resources.
- The basic provision of CEG will still continue.
- The revised teacher to class ratio under NSS has already included Top up Provision 1 and it could provide schools with greater flexibility.
- As for Top up Provision 2, it will carry on subject to any changes in policy parameters from time to time.
- DLG and SSCSG will be recurrent.

*Teaching Space & Conversion*

32. How to create space to accommodate the increasing no. of repeaters in the double cohort year? If the number of students to be promoted to S4 is 34 or more in a class, schools will have no capacity to take in repeaters in S4. Will the government have any guideline for schools on the line to take?

- Details of any new system for S4 places allocation will be announced in late 2008.
- It will address the issue on the no. of classes allocated to schools and whether students can change school in order to take a particular elective.

33. Will there be any special grants for schools to apply for conversion?

- Schools could make use of the New Senior Secondary Curriculum Migration Grant (NSSCMG) for minor conversion work.
- Schools are encouraged to maximise deployable teaching space, e.g. through time-tabling arrangement, flexible use of special rooms
- Schools could also discuss with REO colleagues.

<p>34. Will EDB limit the max. no of classes in a school to 24 in order to create sufficient space to offer more NSS subjects?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We encourage schools to adopt symmetrical class structure so that students can receive six years of secondary education in the same school. Schools should assess their own situation, such as school development strategy and availability of teaching space, and seek support from their stakeholders before turning to the 24-class mode. We will consider schools' applications to adjust their class structure on condition that the change will not give rise to surplus teachers and there is sufficient supply of school places in the district.</li> </ul>
<p>35. Regarding the use of special rooms such as laboratory for teaching space, what will be the consequence if accidents occur when the teacher in charge is not a science teacher?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For the use of special rooms, safety is the top priority. Safety could be ensured if precautionary measures are taken in particular towards the use of gas, electricity and dangerous chemicals.</li> <li>• Further information is available in the “Supplementary Notes on Using Special Rooms in Flexible Timetabling” uploaded to the 334 Web Bulletin.</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Language Policy for Non-Chinese Speaking (NCS) Students</i></b></p>	
<p>36. Will the existing GCE, GCSE Chinese Language results be recognized in NSS?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The UGC-funded institutions have agreed that alternative Chinese Language qualification(s) such as GCE, GCSE Chinese Language will be accepted in lieu of general Chinese Language requirement for university admission. They will formally include new arrangements in the current JUPAS cycle, i.e. for admissions in 2008.</li> <li>• Information on JUPAS acceptance of alternative Chinese Language qualifications could be found on the EDB 334 Web Bulletin.</li> </ul>
<p>37. Will the support for NCS include returnee children?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Returnee children will be considered as NCS students.</li> </ul>
<p>38. How to define the 6-year non main-stream Chinese Language education? Will it include the Chinese Language education in the primary levels?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The 6-year non main-stream Chinese Language Education includes the education at primary and secondary levels.</li> </ul>

<p>39. Is there any official document showing that universities will accept GCSE Chinese standard?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whether universities will recognize other languages and ApL in their admission will be further explored and it will be one of the agenda items in the coming meetings with universities representatives.</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Others</i></b></p>	
<p>40. Is there any exit point for students at S3 under NSS?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is anticipated that most students will study 6 years of secondary education. However, a small number of students may choose to leave school before completing S6. At present, the Vocational Training Council (VTC) is reviewing its curriculum planning for students not taking HKDSE.</li> </ul>