

Liberal Studies

Introduction

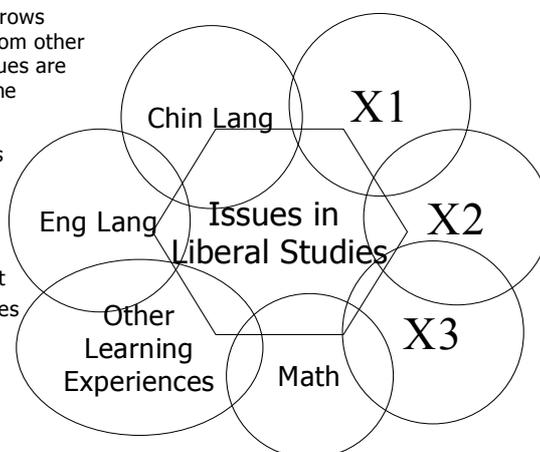
1. To prepare students for the challenges of life in today’s world, it is necessary to look for new ways of educating the young. Students need to be equipped with a broad base of knowledge, high adaptability, independent thinking and an ability to engage in lifelong learning in a rapidly changing society and knowledge-based economy.

2. Liberal Studies is a core subject in the New Senior Secondary School Curriculum. It aims to broaden the students’ knowledge base and enhance their social awareness. It adopts an issue-enquiry approach, which helps liberate the minds of students by having them study a wide range of issues and encouraging them to find out information themselves and develop their own opinions. It helps students understand complex issues in contemporary society, in the nation and in the world. Students are encouraged to draw knowledge from different disciplines in the analysis of the issues, and to develop their own views, construct personal knowledge, and become critical thinkers.

3. The proposed curriculum is a modification and extension of the existing ASL Liberal Studies, which also adopts an enquiry approach to learning and teaching. Capitalizing on its strengths, the proposed New Senior Secondary Liberal Studies curriculum further widens students’ horizons by examining a wide range of issues. The issues selected are significant to student life, to society and to the world, and have potential in linking different realms of knowledge. The learning experience provided through Liberal Studies will be appropriate to all senior secondary students and essential for them in becoming lifelong learners.

Liberal Studies interactively borrows knowledge and perspectives from other subjects to enrich its study. Issues are chosen so that students have the opportunity to:

- connect knowledge & concepts across different disciplines
- expand perspectives beyond single disciplines
- study contemporary events not covered by any single disciplines



Rationale

4. Liberal Studies provides obvious and rich opportunities for students to make explicit connections among different disciplines, examine issues from multi-perspectives, and construct personal knowledge with this experience. In doing so, this unique subject develops independent learning and cross-curricular thinking. Through exploring issues relevant to the human condition in a range of contexts, Liberal Studies equips students to understand the contemporary world and its pluralistic nature. Together with other core subjects and more specialized elective subjects, it helps achieve a balance between breadth and depth in the school curriculum.

5. Liberal Studies builds on the foundation of all prior learning in basic education. It seeks to maintain continuity in learning, and increase breadth of knowledge, depth of understanding and mastery of cross-curricular thinking.

6. Aiming at the liberation of the young mind, Liberal Studies plays an indispensable role in terms of the goals of the reformed senior secondary curriculum: a broad knowledge base for students, an understanding of important contemporary issues on different levels, helping students to become informed and responsible citizens. The learning experience Liberal Studies provides is crucial for students to become critical, reflective and independent thinkers.

7. The independent thinking, social awareness and adaptability to change which Liberal Studies seeks to cultivate in students provide a useful foundation for further studies, future employment and a life of fulfilment.

8. Hong Kong experience in curriculum development since the 1970s has built up good strengths in the use of the issue-enquiry approach. Besides the experience of ASL Liberal Studies, schools have also accumulated good practices on cross-curricular studies, such as civic education and thinking skills programmes. The recent introduction of Integrated Humanities (S4-5) and Science and Technology (S4-5) into the Hong Kong school curriculum further enriches the pool of resources and pedagogical knowledge relevant to the implementation of Liberal Studies in the new senior secondary curriculum.

9. The design of the subject has taken account of overseas experiences in cross-disciplinary studies related to critical thinking, life education, values education and civic education, giving due consideration to their relevance to the Hong Kong context.

10. The development of the Liberal Studies curriculum will be an on-going process, responsive to the changing context of student life and developments in society. The design will provide space for updating in the future.

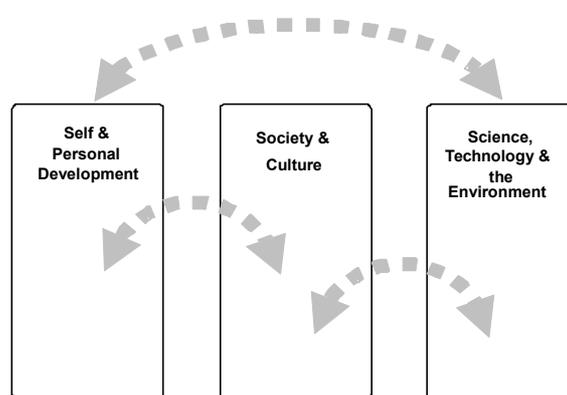
Curriculum Aims

11. The aims of Liberal Studies at the Senior Secondary level are:
- (a) to enhance students’ understanding of themselves, their society, their nation and the world;
 - (b) to enable students to develop multi-perspectives on perennial and contemporary issues in different contexts (e.g. cultural, social, economic and political contexts);
 - (c) to help students become independent thinkers so that they can construct knowledge appropriate to their own changing personal and social circumstances;
 - (d) to develop in students a range of skills for life long learning, including critical thinking skills, creativity, problem solving skills, communication skills and information skills;
 - (e) to help students appreciate and respect diversity in cultures and views in a pluralistic society and handle conflicting values; and
 - (f) to help students develop and reflect on their own values, so that they are able to defend their own decisions, judgments and convictions, and to become informed and responsible citizens in their community, nation and the world.

Curriculum Framework

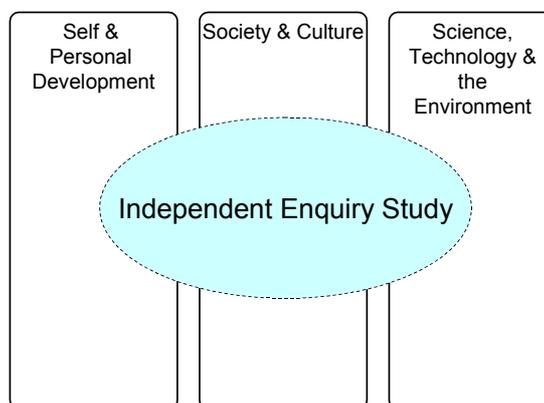
(This part should be read in conjunction with the section “Curriculum Framework” of the Main Document. It should be noted that the curriculum framework suggested below is for initial consultation only. Feedback from the public will be taken into account and further details will be provided in the next stage of consultation.)

12. The curriculum comprises three Areas of Study, namely ‘Self and Personal Development’, ‘Society and Culture’ and ‘Science, Technology and the Environment’. The three Areas of Study represent broad areas of concern about the human condition and the contemporary world. They will serve as platforms for the enquiry of related issues, so that students can appreciate the connections between concepts and



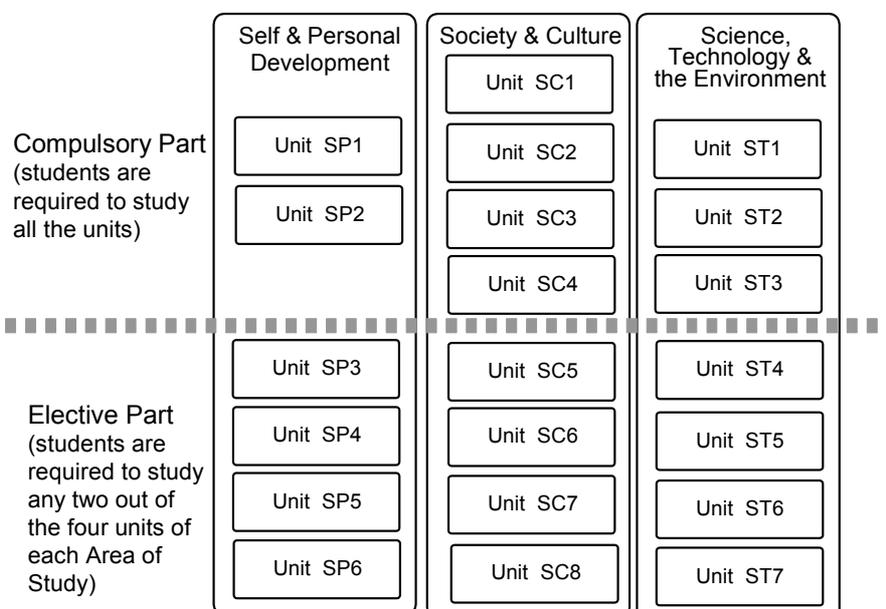
develop a more coherent understanding of the world. The three Areas of Study set out above should not be taken as independent fields of knowledge or self-contained disciplines. Students should be encouraged to look for interconnectedness between them and apply the perspectives developed in one area to the study of the others.

13. The curriculum also requires students to conduct an ‘Independent Enquiry Study’ on an issue of their own choice, which will involve related concepts, knowledge and perspectives learned during the course of study.



14. Each of the three Areas of Study is divided into a compulsory part and an elective part. The compulsory part embodies issues and ideas essential to the understanding of the area.

For the elective part, units are chosen to cater for student diversity in interests and needs. They should extend and enrich the understanding gained through the compulsory units. For each Area of Study, four elective units are proposed, out of which students will be required to study two. More elective units may be developed in the future to keep the curriculum up-to-date with developments in the world and to cater for students’ varied interests and needs.



15. It is intended that by having a balanced exposure to these areas, students will not only develop an awareness of the important issues facing the world, but also acquire a broad knowledge base to establish connections across different areas and units in the curriculum. The ‘Independent Enquiry Study’ will further enhance students’ ability to integrate knowledge and skills developed through the three Areas of Study.

16. The Area of Study on ‘Self and Personal Development’ focuses on issues that have relevance to students at a personal level. It aims at helping students to develop an understanding of themselves and a positive outlook on life. ‘Society and Culture’ focuses on the human condition in social and cultural contexts. Students will look into the development of the local community, the nation and the world and their cultural features. ‘Science, Technology and the Environment’ focuses on the development of society in relation to the physical world and advances in technology. It will also cultivate an awareness of the impact of technology and human activity on the environment.

17. Units in each Area of Study are designed to provide exposure to different aspects of the area. Each unit focuses on one scope of the area. The units do not correspond to any single specific traditional subject disciplines, but rather draw from different fields of knowledge and borrow perspectives from different cultures, professions, social groups, etc.

18. Issues are chosen for each unit and are presented in the form of guiding questions that are intended to highlight the issue-enquiry approach for learning and teaching. Exploration of these issues provides students with opportunities to pose questions, search for information, formulate arguments, and in the process to develop reasoning skills and a familiarity with a variety of viewpoints. There is no intention to provide students with sets of fixed factual knowledge, but rather to encourage students to appreciate the complexity of the contemporary world and to develop critical thinking skills.

19. The issues chosen should embody competing views and values that stimulate discussion and reflection. They should be significant to personal growth and/or the development of society. They should also appeal to a range of student interests, and develop their intellectual ability for lifelong learning. Self-directed study on the issues using a variety of available resources should be encouraged.

20. The Independent Enquiry Study provides an invaluable opportunity for students to learn to become self-directed learners responsible for their own learning. By pursuing an independent study on an issue of their own choice, students are enabled to explore their interests and enhance their independent learning skills. Reading, simple investigation, and the use of personal experience related to the chosen issue can all be part of an Independent Enquiry Study.

21. In summary, the curriculum framework for Liberal Studies is designed to ensure that senior secondary students experience a broad and interconnected education. The units of the three Areas of Study broaden their knowledge base and enhance their social awareness. After studying Liberal Studies, students will have developed a deeper and more multi-faceted understanding of self, society, the nation, and the natural and human world. The enquiry of contemporary issues within each area and the Independent Enquiry Study will help students to make meaningful connections across different disciplines, develop an understanding of a range of viewpoints, and construct their personal knowledge. The learning experiences provided in Liberal Studies will help students to become informed, responsible citizens and independent thinkers.

22. The table shows the proposed curriculum structure for Liberal Studies.

Area of Study	Compulsory Part	Elective Part (Select any TWO units from this part of each Area of Study.)	Independent Enquiry Study
Self & Personal Development	SP1: Understanding Oneself SP2: Interpersonal Relationship	SP3: Adversities in Life SP4: Sports & Health SP5: Art & Life SP6: Leisure & Life	An enquiry into an issue of the student's own choice, using the concepts, knowledge and perspectives acquired during the course of the study.
Society & Culture	SC1: Life in Hong Kong under 'One Country, Two Systems' SC2: Development of Modern China SC3: Globalization in a Diversified World SC4: Chinese Cultural Heritage in the Modern World	SC5: Religion & Society SC6: Media & Society SC7: Chinese Way of Life in Global Society SC8: Peace & War in the Modern World	
Science, Technology & the Environment	ST1: Diseases & Public Health ST2: Information Technology & Society ST3: Pollution & the Environment	ST4: Biotechnology & Ethics ST5: Space Exploration & Society ST6: Transport & Technology ST7: Energy & Resources	

23. The issues within each unit of the three Areas of Study are listed below:

Area of Study: Self and Personal Development

Compulsory Part

SP 1 Understanding Oneself

- How is self-awareness developed in a person?
- How does recognition by others affect self-esteem?
- How can one manage oneself?

SP 2 Interpersonal Relationship

- How can young people learn to communicate effectively with others?
- How can young people develop strategies to manage interpersonal conflicts?
- How can young people develop healthy relationships with others?

Elective Part

SP 3 Adversities in Life

- How do people understand adversity?
- Why do people respond to adversities differently?
- How can one prepare oneself for adversity?

SP 4 Sports and Health

- What motivates people to take part in sports activities?
- Does participation in sports activities contribute to physical health?
- What is the impact of participation in sports activities on mental health?

SP 5 Art and Life

- How and why do people understand art differently?
- How do people express themselves through the arts?
- How does art enrich one's life?

SP 6 Leisure and Life

- What is the meaning of leisure to an individual in modern society?
- How important is leisure to a person?
- How can one maintain a balanced life in an increasingly demanding society?

Area of Study: Society and Culture

Compulsory Part

SC 1 Life in Hong Kong under ‘One Country, Two Systems’

- How should our way of life continue to develop under ‘one country, two systems’ and the Basic Law?
- Is Hong Kong a place of opportunities or a place of inequities?
- How can the quality of life in Hong Kong be improved?

SC 2 Development of Modern China

- How desirable are the current strategies employed in China’s economic development?
- What is the way forward for China to ensure sustainable development?

SC 3 Globalization in a Diversified World

- What does globalization mean?
- Is globalization really a global trend?
- How are people affected by globalization?

SC 4 Chinese Cultural Heritage in the Modern World

- Why should our country conserve its cultural heritage?
- What is the meaning of Chinese cultural heritage to global society?
- To what extent and in what ways can Chinese cultural heritage be conserved?

Elective Part

SC 5 Religion and Society

- What roles does religion play in society?
- How does religion shape our ethical and social values?
- What impact does religion have on the development of society?

SC 6 Media and Society

- How do media influence our thoughts and lives?
- What factors influence the operations of media?
- What is the impact of media on society?

SC 7 Chinese Way of Life in Global Society

- What are some of the worldviews, beliefs and values common to the Chinese way of life as reflected in food and drink, festivals and rituals among people of Chinese descent living in the world?
- How is the Chinese way of life evolving as a result of the interactions among ethnic groups within China and, outside of China, among people of Chinese descent and people of other ethnicities?
- Is the impact of globalization positive or negative to the preservation and development of the Chinese way of life?

SC 8 Peace and War in the Modern World

- Has the world after the Cold War become more peaceful or more turbulent?
- What are the forces at work in the modern world that cause conflicts and wars?
- How can world peace be achieved?

Area of Study: Science, Technology and the Environment

Compulsory Part

ST 1 Diseases and Public Health

- How did people in the past understand the causes of diseases?
- How can different sectors in society prevent the spread of diseases?
- To what extent can international health organisations improve global public health?

ST 2 Information Technology and Society

- How do developments in information technology meet and shape human needs, and how do these developments change our life style?
- What are your views about etiquette, potential health risk and crimes associated with the use of information technology?
- How can governments, non-governmental organisations, business and international organisations tackle the problem of digital divide?

ST 3 Pollution and the Environment

- How can people be encouraged to produce less solid waste through education and government policy?
- How can people be encouraged to value the aquatic environment in Hong Kong, and what can we do to improve water quality?
- What are the impacts of air pollution on the environment and what measures should government take to control pollution?

Elective Part

ST 4 Biotechnology and Ethics

- To what extent do recent advances in biotechnology provide us with more choices over life?
- In what direction should genetic manipulation be developed and regulated?
- How can international organisations tackle the gap in biotechnology between the developed and developing worlds?

ST 5 Space Exploration and Society

- How has our understanding of the universe changed across the ages, and how do people react to new ideas about the universe?

- In what ways can people benefit from space exploration, and how can the technology be transferred effectively?
- To what extent should governments continue to fund programmes on space exploration, and how should decisions about this be made?

ST 6 Transport and Technology

- To what extent does public transport depend on modern technology, and how does it impact on our life style?
- How can Hong Kong’s transport system be improved to provide people with a safe, clean and comfortable environment?
- How far has transport infrastructure helped to facilitate economic, political and social development in Hong Kong?

ST 7 Energy and Resources

- How can we reduce the cost of electricity and other energy resources?
- How are energy consumption and production related to city development and how do these developments change our life style?
- What impact do the production and consumption of energy have on society and the environment? What are the prospects of renewable energy across the world?

24. Examples of further ‘suggested questions for enquiry’ for the compulsory units of each Area of Study are provided in the Appendix. They should not be taken as the sole possible routes for enquiry, nor be expected to lead to ‘correct answers’.

25. The total lesson time allocated to Liberal Studies under the new Senior Secondary Curriculum is 280 to 350 hours. Approximately 15 hours of lesson time are allocated to each unit, whether compulsory or elective. It is also proposed that 80 to 100 hours, i.e. around one-third of the total lesson time, be reserved for the Independent Enquiry Study, so as to provide students with enough time to develop ideas and practise their generic skills. This will also enable teachers to supervise and guide student progress through the study.

The table below shows the proposed overall time allocation:

Area of Study	Compulsory Part	Elective Part (Select any 2 units from this part of each Area of Study.)	Independent Enquiry Study
Self and Personal Development	120 – 150 hours for all 9 compulsory units	80 -100 hours for 6 elective units in total	80 – 100 hours
Society and Culture			
Science, Technology and the Environment			
TOTAL: 280 – 350 hours within the three years of Senior Secondary Education			

Learning and Teaching

26. The approach to learning and teaching for Liberal Studies is structured around enquiry into a range of issues. Students should be guided to appreciate the changing, complex and controversial nature of these issues and be encouraged to ask their own questions and search for their own answers to the issues. As students explore these issues, they should be encouraged to bring in their own experiences and have access to first-hand information. Enquiry into issues also requires that students learn to see things from multi-perspectives and to evaluate competing claims, so that they make judgements only after considering the pros and cons of different viewpoints towards an issue. Students also need to develop a range of thinking skills and information-handling skills, so as to make informed choices and sound decisions.

27. In enquiry learning, the learner shoulders the major responsibility for learning. It is neither necessary, nor likely, for a teacher to have a profound knowledge of all the issues in the curriculum. Teachers could be facilitators, information providers and consultants in Liberal Studies. They are expected to support enquiries by providing access to information to fill the gaps in students' knowledge. They also fuel the enquiry with timely stimulation and input in terms of different sources of data and information, so as to enrich the discussion, without dictating the direction.

28. Teachers need to equip students with a repertoire of generic skills. While some may be transmitted through instruction, most need to be developed through practice. Students should look upon their teachers as a coach in these skills and a guide through the enquiry process. They will also need advice and feedback from their teachers as they proceed with their enquiry.

29. Acceptance and tolerance are essential characteristics of an enquiry classroom. Students need to be allowed to take risks so that they can explore different views and perspectives of different people and freely express what they have in their minds, however odd or immature these may appear to be to the teacher or peers. An accepting atmosphere helps students develop open-mindedness, objectivity and respect for different views. The more students talk through what they believe, and listen to views and reactions from others, the more they will be able to develop their thinking. Thinking skills are best developed through the joint efforts of students and teachers. Teachers can help to foster tolerant attitudes in students through encouragement and personal example. Students also come to realise that their classmates are partners in learning. Through discussion, debate and other collaborative tasks, students interact with one another and learn to appreciate and evaluate the viewpoints of others.

30. While teaching Liberal Studies can be challenging, it is a task that can be fulfilled by teachers open to new knowledge and ready to take on the new paradigm about learning and teaching in line with the current curriculum reform. Team teaching, using the different strengths and interests of teachers, may also enhance the teaching of Liberal Studies.

Assessment

(This part should be read in conjunction with the section “Assessment” of the Main Document.)

31. Assessment is the practice of collecting evidence of student learning. The aims are to improve learning and teaching as well as to recognise the achievement of students. It should be viewed as an integral part of learning and teaching. Assessment design should be aligned with curriculum aim, design and learning processes of this subject. Assessment in Liberal Studies will focus on the following:

- ✧ Analysing and evaluating the nature of the evidence or argumentation put forward in a text, a set of data or other materials (e.g. cartoons and photographs);
- ✧ Understanding the crucial difference between knowledge and belief/opinion, and between objectivity and subjectivity in argument, and the need for mutual understanding;
- ✧ Appreciating what constitutes argument, cause and effect, truth, validity, justification, and the limitations of these;
- ✧ Recognising the existence of personal and social values, value judgements, partiality and bias in given circumstances; and
- ✧ Becoming aware of the impact of different phenomena upon people.

Internal Assessment

32. Internal assessment refers to the assessment practices that schools employ as part of the learning and teaching strategies during the three-year study in Liberal Study. During the three years of senior secondary education, schools should assess students formatively in order to collect information on what students have learned and achieved. This information, when passed as feedback to students, will help them know where they need to improve, and will also help teachers find ways of promoting more effective learning and teaching. Internal assessment should take account of factors such as the learning objectives, student abilities, the context of the school and the teaching and learning process. A range of assessment modes, including observation of individual performance, oral presentations and assignments, will be used to address the different learning targets and the content.

Public Assessment

Standards-referenced Assessment (SRA)

33. Public assessment of Liberal Studies leads to a qualification in the subject to be offered by the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority. In the public assessment of Liberal Studies, a standards-referenced approach will be adopted for grading and reporting student performance. The purpose of this approach is to recognise what each student can do in each subject at the end of the three-year senior education. Each student’s performance will be matched against a set of performance standards, rather than compared to the performance of other students. It makes the implicit standards explicit by providing specific indication of student performance. Descriptors will be provided for the set of standards at a later stage.

Mode of Public Assessment

34. The public assessment of Liberal Studies will comprise two parts: School-based Assessment (SBA) and External Written Examination. Its design, suggested below, is for initial consultation only. Feedback from the public will be taken into account, and further proposals will be sent for consultation at a later stage.

(a) External Written Examination

The External Written Examination carries 70% of the total subject marks. Students will be required to attempt two papers. Paper One will cover the Compulsory Part of the Curriculum and last for 2 hours 30 minutes. Paper Two will cover the Elective Part and last for 1 hour 45 minutes. The examination questions will use a variety of open questions such as data-response questions, structured-type questions and essay-type questions.

	Duration	Weighting of the Written Examination	Mode of Assessment
Paper One	2 hours 30 minutes	60%	Data-response questions
Paper Two	1 hour 45 minutes	40%	Structured-type questions Essay-type questions

(b) School-based Assessment (SBA)

The public assessment will include a School-based Assessment component, which will take up 30% of the total weighting. The merits of adopting SBA are as follows:

- SBA is able to provide a more valid assessment than external assessment, since it can cover a more extensive range of learning outcomes through introducing a wider range of assessment practices than is possible in external written examinations.

- SBA enables the sustained work of students to be assessed. It provides a more comprehensive picture of student performance throughout the period of study rather than their performance in a one-off examination alone.

It should be noted that SBA is not an “add-on” element in the curriculum. Assessing student performance through practices such as class discussion and class observation is a normal in-class and out-of-class activity. The modes of SBA selected in Liberal Studies will be appropriate to the learning objectives and processes to be assessed. The design and implementation of SBA should avoid unduly increasing the workload of both teachers and students. The Independent Enquiry Study will constitute the major part of the SBA of Liberal Studies. Coursework, performance in class activities, and results of school tests and examinations may also contribute to the student’s final score in the SBA component. The regulations, guidelines and methods of assessment will be discussed in later stage.

Supporting Measures

35. A large number of Liberal Studies teachers will be needed when this subject is introduced as a core subject at senior secondary level. The EMB is keenly aware of the concerns of schools and teachers about resource support and the know-how to teach the subject. To address these concerns, a coherent and well-coordinated professional development programme will be put in place to support teachers to teach Liberal Studies. Therefore, the following measures are recommended to support the curriculum development. The support provided will be helpful and flexible enough to suit the different needs of teachers and the varying contexts of schools.

36. The professional development programmes will be designed to equip teachers with the essential knowledge and practical skills needed to teach Liberal Studies. The programmes will cover curriculum planning, collaborative teaching, teaching and assessment strategies for issue-enquiry learning, knowledge updates, and how to support Independent Enquiry Study. Learning through practice, experience sharing and networking among teachers will be key features of the programmes.

37. Different modes of delivery (e.g. seminars, workshops, short courses, web courses) will be provided with sufficient number of places to meet the specific purpose of each area of the programme, and to cater for the different needs of teachers. Courses on issue-enquiry approach and critical thinking, for instance, will be conducted in the form of workshops to ensure active participation and to simulate classroom practices. On-site support services will be arranged for schools on a needs basis. Seminars and web-based materials will be used to update teachers’ information and knowledge.

38. Liberal Studies aims to develop in students an awareness of human conditions. Current issues will usually be employed as learning materials. For resources support, a website will be developed to provide essential learning and teaching materials for students and teachers. The website will establish a resource bank providing background information and knowledge for the various curriculum units. This will enable teachers to have a quick overview and a better understanding of the issues. A range of relevant information will be collected, categorized and updated regularly to assist teachers.

39. Teaching ideas and strategies for approaching a range of issues will be suggested with guidelines and materials. Teachers can adapt the strategies according to their students' needs and their school context. The sample materials will appear in different formats, such as video and CD-ROM. Exemplars of authentic classroom practices will be collected and disseminated as a way of sharing teaching ideas and personal reflection. Teachers are welcome to contribute in this aspect.

40. The Curriculum Development Institute will collaborate with educational bodies such as the Hong Kong Liberal Studies Teachers Association, and partner with different sectors of the community (e.g. university academics and experts in relevant fields, teacher training institutions, non-governmental organisations and government departments) to provide assistance to teachers and to promote the study of Liberal Studies in Hong Kong.

Suggested questions for enquiry in the Compulsory Units

Area of Study: Self and Personal Development

SP 1 Understanding Oneself	
How is self-awareness developed in a person?	How does one understand oneself? How does the way others see one help one know oneself? How does one find out one's interest, orientations and the things valued? How does the process of growth shape the person? How do gender formation and parenting affect one's understanding of oneself? How should one perceive one's own strengths and limitations? How does one's aspiration for the future influence the way one lives? What other ways are there that can help one to know oneself?
How does recognition by others affect self-esteem?	What is the worth of a person? Will a person's worth be affected by gender? By what standards does modern society evaluate a person? Are these standards worth identifying with? How does recognition by others influence one's values and behaviours? What does self-esteem have to do with the well-being of a person? How does a person with high self-esteem behave?
How can one manage oneself?	What physical and emotional needs does a person have? How are these needs appreciated? To what extent are one's behaviours affected by one's needs? What other factors affect behaviours? How does one cope with problems, difficulties and major changes in life? How do decisions of today affect one's long-term personal interest? How does one learn to set goals regarding education, career and finance and work to achieve these goals?

Area of Study: Self and Personal Development

SP 2 Interpersonal Relationship	
How can young people learn to communicate effectively with others?	What constitutes effective interpersonal communication? How can one become aware of one's style of interpersonal communication? How does cultural background influence one's ways of expressing ideas and feelings? What perspectives are available for understanding the feelings and behaviours of others? How do these different perspectives affect interpersonal communication and acceptance of others? How can one enhance one's ability to communicate with others?
How can young people develop strategies to manage interpersonal conflicts?	How do interpersonal conflicts arise? What are the possible consequences? How can these conflicts be handled? How are the different ways of handling conflicts assessed? How much should one compromise in order to resolve conflicts? How does one keep one's integrity intact when managing interpersonal conflicts?
How can young people develop relationships with others?	<p>What expectations do family members, peers and other members of society hold towards one another? Are these expectations reasonable? When these expectations are not met, what tensions do they bring to the relationships? How should one practice assertiveness reasonably and consistently?</p> <p>How does one prepare oneself for an intimate relationship, such as close friendship, courtship or marriage? What should we do to build and enrich an intimate relationship? Does intimacy imply mutual commitment? What factors should be considered in deciding whether to end an intimate relationship? How can an intimate relationship be ended positively and responsibly?</p>

Area of Study: Society and Culture

SC 1 Life in Hong Kong under ‘One Country, Two Systems’	
How should our way of life continue to develop under ‘one country, two systems’ and the Basic Law?	To what extent has the Basic Law protected our way of life without limiting its continuous development? The way of life in our country and the rest of the world have undergone rapid changes recently, how is our way of life being affected by this development? How does it affect our sense of belonging to Hong Kong as well as to our country as a whole?
Is Hong Kong a place of opportunities or a place of inequities?	<p>What are the major characteristics of the legal-political system in the HKSAR under the Basic Law? How do they affect the governance of Hong Kong? Do Hong Kong people have equal opportunities in political participation? What are the factors that influence Hong Kong people’s political participation? Under the existing system, does the government respond to the demands of the general public in a positive way? Are there adequate means for Hong Kong people to monitor the government and redress their grievances?</p> <p>To what extent is Hong Kong a developed society in terms of its socio-economic development? Towards what directions should economic development of Hong Kong go? What opportunities will be provided by these directions and to whom? To what extent is there an uneven distribution of wealth in Hong Kong and what is its impact on society? Are there different kinds of discrimination in Hong Kong? How can Hong Kong become a more caring society? To what extent are equal opportunities, integrity and uprightness guaranteed in Hong Kong?</p>
How can the quality of life in Hong Kong be improved?	To what extent should the government of Hong Kong be held responsible for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of life? Do Hong Kong people agree what aspects of life are important? Which aspects of the quality of life in Hong Kong are the most worrying and to whom? How can quality in these aspects be improved? What are the major stumbling blocks? Who or which organisation(s) can contribute to improvements and how? What would be the cost of such improvements and would they be worth it?

Area of Study: Society and Culture

SC 2 Development of Modern China	
How desirable are the current strategies employed in China's economic development?	What are the latest economic development strategies of China? What is their impact on the lives of the people? To whom and to what extent is it desirable? What are the opportunities and challenges in China's economic development? How can the challenges be met? What role should the government play? How should China position itself in the international arena in order to develop its economy? What should be the future direction and strategies in China's economic development?
What is the way forward for China to ensure sustainable development?	How can a balance be struck among the conflicting claims of economic development, conservation of a healthy environment, and the right of everyone to be a part of the development? Is 'sustainable development' a necessary and viable choice for China? What strategies and policies should be adopted to ensure sustainable development? What are the stumbling blocks, and how can they be overcome?

Area of Study: Society and Culture

SC 3 Globalization in a Diversified World	
What does globalization mean?	What is globalization? How do we know that it is taking place? What are its main features? Will globalization lead to uniformity? How can the world sustain diversity under globalization?
Is globalization really a global trend?	Is globalization always driven by economic forces? How do different parts of the world react to globalization? Is it possible for people to resist the trend? What are the possible consequences when globalization becomes more widespread?
How are people affected by globalization?	How does globalization affect the life style in different societies? Does globalization promote homogeneity or diversity in cultures and values? Does globalization benefit all humankind, or does it mean exploitation of some by others? What are the opportunities and impact of globalization for the mainland and for Hong Kong?

Area of Study: Society and Culture

SC 4 Chinese Cultural Heritage in the Modern World	
Why should our country conserve its cultural heritage?	What is the tangible and intangible cultural heritage in China? What part does it play in the life and development of Chinese society? Why is it important to identify them? Why should these tangible and intangible cultural heritage be conserved?
What is the importance of Chinese cultural heritage to global society?	Which aspects of Chinese cultural heritage have been considered to be of outstanding value to humanity? To what extent have these contributed to the cultural diversity of global society? Is the impact of globalization positive or negative on the conservation of Chinese cultural heritage? How can the vitality of Chinese cultural heritage be strengthened and passed on to future generations?
To what extent and in what ways can Chinese cultural heritage be conserved?	What is the impact of economic development on cultural heritage? Who are responsible for the identification and conservation of our cultural heritage and why? To what extent are legal instruments, such as declaration, convention etc. enough to protect our heritage? Are there any other means? Who benefit from the conservation of cultural heritage and who pay for it?

Area of Study: Science, Technology and the Environment

ST 1 Diseases and Public Health	
How did people in the past understand the causes of diseases?	What were thought to be the causes of disease throughout human history? What myths were used to explain the causes of diseases? What would now be different if we had not learnt about microbes? What are the common infectious diseases in Hong Kong and in neighbouring regions? How do the mass media report on causes when reporting diseases? How are disease issues reported in local, national and international media? Why are some people infected while others remain healthy? How have the spread of diseases been affected by globalization? To what extent are the causes of diseases explained scientifically?
How can different sectors in society prevent the spread of diseases?	How does life style affect health? To what extent can the various channels in the spread of infectious diseases be identified? How important are preventive measures? What are the relationships between the public health system and standard of living in the prevention of diseases? What experience does Hong Kong have in preventing and fighting against diseases? What can different sectors in society do to improve the public health system? What measures would we suggest to prevent diseases and maintain good health in schools and in the community?
To what extent can international health organisations improve global public health?	To what extent do societal attitudes, values and beliefs shape the policies for the prevention of diseases in different cultures? How far has technological advances helped in the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of diseases? What are the impact of biotechnology such as vaccines, antibiotics and proprietary drugs? What do international organizations such as World Health Organization do in the prevention of diseases?

Area of Study: Science, Technology and the Environment

ST 2 Information Technology and Society	
How do developments in information technology meet and shape human needs, and how do these developments change our life style?	How has the development of information technology met human needs through history? What are the most important considerations that influence our decision-making in choosing information technology products and services? In what way are consumer behaviours shaped by marketing strategies? How do information technologies change our life? What are the benefits and dangers of an increasing reliance upon these technologies? What are the possible trends in the development of information technology and how will they change our life style?
What are your views about etiquette, potential health risk, crime associated with the use of information technology?	What are the concerns in developing the technologies to transmit information from one place to another? What are the debates on security risks, potential health and crime associated with the use of these technologies including the network systems? Can education improve etiquette and regulations in using information technologies? How far can the Hong Kong government, scientists and other groups tackle or reduce the potential health risks, crimes and other problems associated with these technologies?
How can governments, non-governmental organisations, business and international organisations tackle the problem of digital divide?	Which social groups make great use of information technologies and which groups are excluded from these technologies? How can products and services be improved to cater for diversified modes of communication? What are the usual complaints against service providers? What are the problems created by digital divide and how can they be solved? How would you evaluate policies on promoting competition, encouraging investment and protecting consumer choice?

Area of Study: Science, Technology and the Environment

ST 3 Pollution and the Environment	
How can people be encouraged to produce less solid waste through education and government policy?	How many major types of solid wastes are produced in Hong Kong in recent years? What is the ecological impact of such solid wastes? What impact do such solid wastes have on the natural environment, public finance and economic opportunity? Are the current plans to manage, monitor and control the wastes adequate? What can be done to change the way people think and behave concerning waste in Hong Kong? To what extent does waste management throughout the world depend on modern technology? What can we learn about waste management strategies in other cities? What are the prospects of industries specializing in providing services in waste management? Is solid waste management a sustainable business in Hong Kong?
How can people be encouraged to value the aquatic environment in Hong Kong, and what can we do to improve water quality?	In what ways are our coastal waters important to us? How do human activities affect the aquatic environment? Which sources of pollution are considered to be the greatest threat to our coastal waters? What is the capacity of the sea to absorb the different kinds of pollutants that it currently receives? To what extent do current policies and measures by the government tackle the problems? How much money has been spent on the aquatic pollution problem in recent years? Who bears responsibility and what responsibilities do they bear for the maintenance of good water quality? How should these responsibilities be shared?
What are the impacts of air pollution on the environment and what measures should government take to control pollution?	What is the evidence for global warming and what are the causes? How does global warming threaten the environment, our health, our economy and our future? What can scientists, international organizations, governments, NGOs and business do to treat the pollution problems? What are the measures for air pollution control and how effective are they?

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