

FAQ: Citizenship and Social Development in lieu of Liberal Studies

(Remarks: The EDB announced on 1 April 2021 that “Citizenship and Social Development” will replace Liberal Studies starting from Secondary 4 in the 2021/22 school year.)

1. Q: Is an issue-enquiry approach to learning and teaching not allowed to be adopted in Citizenship and Social Development?

A: Issue-enquiry approach is a learning and teaching strategy, which has been adopted in different subjects. Citizenship and Social Development is no exception. Through enquiries of issues relevant to the curriculum, teachers can help students construct knowledge, understand the origin and development of the issues, develop skills, and positive values and attitudes.

2. Q: Why is discussion on more mature topics proposed in the curriculum of Citizenship and Social Development?

A: The Task Force recommended in its final report that newly emerging current issues or those which are still developing are not suitable for enquiry. It is considered that the questions for enquiry have to be based on objective facts and knowledge so as to engage students in rational and impartial discussions. As there is a lack of comprehensive information on newly emerging issues or events which are still developing, it would not only hinder students’ mastery of the development of the issues holistically, but also limit students’ thinking or analysis, and even lead to misunderstanding. In view of this, the Task Force recommended that teachers should select mature topics with objective and reliable information for teaching, so that classroom discussions could be conducted based on objective facts, as well as rational and impartial attitudes so as to help students construct knowledge.

3. Q: Does the 150-hour lesson time of Citizenship and Social Development include conducting the Mainland study tour?

A: About 10 hours of learning time are allocated to the Mainland study tour so as to help students meet the learning requirements before and after the tour. For example, collecting and reading information related to the themes of the study tour before departure is required for the preparation of the study tour. After the study tour, achievement outcomes and personal reflection are also consolidated by means of project learning. Therefore, the 10-hour learning time does not include those for conducting the Mainland study tour, nor is it included in the 150-hour lesson time.

4. Q: Is it compulsory for students to participate in the Mainland study tour? Can schools arrange study tours according to their school contexts?

A: The Mainland study tour is an integral part of the curriculum of Citizenship and Social Development. Schools and parents should encourage students to participate in the Mainland study tour as far as possible. The EDB would provide Mainland study tours for schools, so that students could understand different facets of our country and its vision of development through first-hand experience. The EDB will also provide subsidy for students participating in the study tour. Schools can also arrange Mainland study tours for students to gain relevant learning experiences according to their schoolbased situations. However, the itinerary should be in line with the aims and objectives of Citizenship and Social Development with appropriate learning materials and learning experiences and schools have to arrange these activities at their own cost.

5. Q: What are the detailed arrangements of the Mainland study tour, such as resources, destination, frequency, and the number of days?

A: There are no compulsory requirements for the number of days and distance of the routes of the Mainland study tour in the curriculum of Citizenship and Social Development. In line with the curriculum aims and objectives of Citizenship and Social Development, the EDB will arrange Mainland study tours for schools to join with reference to the past itineraries of the Mainland Exchange Programmes, and provide subsidies for students participating in the Mainland study tour. Schools can decide the number of study tours in light of school-based situations. However, each student is eligible for the subsidy once in his/ her senior secondary years. The Bureau will develop relevant learning and teaching resources to support teachers guiding students to conduct project learning for the study tour, as well as provide professional development programmes, so as to enhance the effectiveness of the study tour. The Bureau will announce the details of the above-mentioned items in due course.

6. Q: If students choose not to participate in the Mainland study tour, would their public examination grades be affected (even graded as "Unattained")?

A: The Mainland study tour is an integral part of the curriculum of Citizenship and Social Development, which should not be perceived as a choice for students. Schools and teachers should strongly advise students to participate in the study tour as far as possible so that students are able to gain first-hand understanding of our country and its latest development. Students' performance in the study tour will not be counted towards their public examination results, and therefore their public examination grades will not be affected. However, students will lose precious learning experiences with their classmates if they do not participate in the study tour. In case students cannot participate in the study tour due to practical difficulties, schools may consider other practical means, e.g. making use of virtual reality (VR) or video or photos taken by participating students, etc., so as to provide remote study tour opportunities for those students to experience the development of our country. If students cannot participate in the study tour due to personal reasons, they should apply to their

schools and obtain the prior permission. Schools should handle these matters prudently on a case-by-case basis taking into account the situation and justifications provided by individual students.

7. Q: Students are required to conduct project learning for the Mainland study tour. Has the EDB formulated standard assessment criteria for the project?

A: Students are required to conduct project learning for the Mainland study tour but the requirement is completely different from that of the Independent Enquiry Study (IES) of the existing Liberal Studies curriculum. Apart from not involving the public examination, there is no standard report structure, word limit and assessment criteria, etc. for project learning. Schools may assess students' learning performance on their own and reflect it by appropriate means.

8. Q: What are the specific details about reflecting students' performance of project learning in the school report cards, HKDSE certificate, Student Learning Profile (SLP) or even Other Experiences and Achievements in Competitions / Activities (OEA) of JUPAS application. What are the specific details?

A: Students' performance in study tour will not be counted towards their public examination results. There are four options in the school questionnaire surveys provided by the EDB, including Student Learning Profile (SLP), Other Experiences and Achievements in Competitions / Activities (OEA) of JUPAS application, school report cards, and HKDSE certificate, for reflecting students' learning performance of project learning.

9. Q: The curriculum framework of Citizenship and Social Development inclines to teach contents with positive connotations. Is it not in line with the "arguments for and against" approach as emphasised in the existing Liberal Studies curriculum?

A: The existing Liberal Studies Curriculum and Assessment Guide requires students to grasp relevant knowledge and concepts, explore contemporary issues from multiple perspectives, and make reasonable judgements basing on evidence in an objective and impartial manner. The so-called "arguments for and against" is one of the inference processes only before students express their opinions and make judgements. In fact, not all the issues could be rigidly polarised by the "arguments for and against". Moreover, teachers have to help students understand the development background and conditions of the issues.

10. Q: As the optimising proposals aim to create space for students and cater for learner diversity, why does the EDB not simply cancel the public assessment of Citizenship and Social Development?

A: To uphold the professional-led principle, the EDB, taking into consideration the Task Force's recommendations of optimising senior secondary Liberal Studies (LS) as set out in the final report and in response to the concerns in society, has decided to, in accordance with the curriculum aims and objectives of Liberal Studies, simplify the curriculum content, establish a sound foundation of knowledge, refine the teaching materials and assessment arrangement, as well as rename the subject. These aim to create space for students to learn in a focused way and recognise their learning outcomes through public assessment.

11. Q: Will the international recognition of Citizenship and Social Development be affected?

A: The New Senior Secondary Curriculum has been implemented for more than 10 years. The international community has good understanding of the standards of the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination (HKDSE), which has been given a high recognition. Therefore, the international recognition of the HKDSE will not be affected by the changes in the curriculum content, mode of assessment and reporting of results of individual subjects. In the past, revisions had been made to the curricula and public assessment of individual HKDSE subjects, yet their recognitions remain unchanged. The HKEAA has explained on different occasions that the international recognition of HKDSE will not be affected by individual subjects.

12. Q: Why is the result of the public examination of Citizenship and Social Development only reported as "Attained" or "Unattained"? Would adding a level of "Attained with Distinction" be considered?

A: Reporting the results of the public examination of Citizenship and Social Development as "Attained" or "Unattained" aims at alleviating the study pressure of students so as to create space for them. With reference to the reporting of results in Applied Learning subjects, there were views of having an additional level of "Attained with Distinction" on top of "Attained". However, Citizenship and Social Development is a compulsory core subject for the public examination, while the latter is an elective subject without any public examination and the assessment is undertaken by individual course providers. Therefore, the two subjects are of different nature.

13. Q: What support measures would the EDB provide for the implementation of Citizenship and Social Development proposed by the EDB?

A: The curriculum of Citizenship and Social Development is not a brand new subject, but is formulated with reference to the aims and objectives of the streamlined Liberal

Studies (LS) curriculum. It is believed that the currently serving LS teachers would not be unfamiliar with it and would be competent for undertaking relevant teaching duties. In order to facilitate the implementation of the new curriculum in schools, the EDB would organise a new series of teachers' professional development programmes and curriculum-related Mainland study tours, enabling teachers to accurately grasp the rationale, aims and pedagogies of Citizenship and Social Development, which in turn helps them thoroughly understand the curriculum and assessment requirements. Moreover, textbook review mechanism has been put in place for the subject and the reviewed textbooks of theme1 and theme2 were included in the "Recommended Textbook List" in the 2021/22 school year whereas those for theme 3 are expected to be available in the 2022/23 school year. Simultaneously, the EDB would continue to provide professional development programmes as well as learning and teaching resources for teachers so as to support the implementation of Citizenship and Social Development.

14. Q: Can Citizenship and Social Development be taught in English? Can students prepare their report on study tours in English? Will the EDB provide teaching resources for NCS students?

A: As with the arrangement for SS Liberal Studies, English can be the medium of instruction for Citizenship and Social Development and students can write their Mainland study reports in English. As usual, the EDB will continue to provide appropriate learning and teaching materials for teachers' development and adoption of learning and teaching resources.

15. Q: Since the curriculum content and lesson time of Citizenship and Social Development will be half of the original, how should schools arrange for the Liberal Studies teachers?

A: Schools can flexibly arrange teachers' duties in accordance with the actual school based situation, for example, teachers originally teaching Liberal Studies (LS) can continue to teach Citizenship and Social Development, teach other core/elective subjects, or share the duties related to life-wide learning activities/life planning education. School sponsoring bodies can also arrange the LS teachers to teach Citizenship and Social Development or assume other duties through cross-school deployment. All along, the EDB has been communicating with the principals' representatives to understand the actual needs of schools.

16. Q: The EDB has announced that there would be "curriculum monitoring" for Citizenship and Social Development and the quality of learning and teaching of the subject will be monitored through inspections and curriculum visits. Would EDB have clear monitoring "criteria/requirements"?

A: Through measures such as focus inspections and curriculum visits of various subjects (including Citizenship and Social Development), the EDB understands the implementation of the relevant curricula in schools, including whether the teaching content and strategies are in line with the curriculum aims and objectives, etc. The EDB will also provide schools with specific professional advice to support their continuous implementation of the subject.

17. Q: Regarding the curriculum for special schools, will a corresponding curriculum framework (Citizenship and Social Development in particular) be provided?

A: On the principle of "one curriculum framework for all", special schools in general adopt the curriculum framework of the Hong Kong school curriculum and make reference to the Primary Education Curriculum Guide, Secondary Education Curriculum Guide and the curriculum guides of the various subjects for the development of their school-based curriculum that suits their students' abilities and addresses their specific needs. For implementation of Citizenship and Social Development, special schools should make reference to its suggested themes and learning foci for curriculum adaptation and development of the school-based learning and teaching materials according to the abilities and learning needs of students. The Education Bureau (EDB) will continue to provide professional support in various subjects to enhance teachers' professional capacity in school-based curriculum planning, curriculum adaptation and module planning for implementing Citizenship and Social Development. As for the Mainland study tour, if individual students would not be able to participate due to their specific situations, schools should make necessary arrangements with flexibility.