



ONTARIO UNIVERSITY REGISTRARS' ASSOCIATION

2010 Conference

The 3-3-4 Education Reform in Hong Kong

and

Implications on Undergraduate Admissions in Hong Kong and Canada

Academic Structure in Hong Kong

Current (5+2+3)		New (3+3+4)	
Year 3	3-Year	Year 4	4-Year
Year 2	Undergraduate	Year 3	Undergraduate
Year 1	Degree	Year 2	Degree
S7 (G13)	HKALE	Year 1	
S6 (G12)		SS3 (G12)	HKDSE
S5 (G11)	HKCEE	SS2 (G11)	
S4 (G10)		SS1 (G10)	
S3 (G9)		S3 (G9)	
S2 (G8)		S2 (G8)	
S1 (G7)		S1 (G7)	

Opportunities & Challenges

- Curriculum Changes
 - Why
 - What
- Academic Standard
 - Benchmarking



New Secondary School (NSS) Curriculum

- Holistic approach
- diversified with new learning experiences
- providing a more coherent and richer secondary education
- pitched at international standards

- reduce the number of subjects to be examined without compromising the academic standard of students so as to enhance space for learning and learning motivation
- encourage cross-curricular and inquiry-based approaches to learning to help students develop self-learning ability and life-long learning attitude

- **4 Core Subjects** – Chinese, English, Liberal Studies and Mathematics
- **2 to 3 electives**
- Other Learning Experiences (OLE) – Student Learning Profile (SLP)
- Applied Learning (career-oriented studies, deemed comparable to Level 3 of HKDSE in terms of academic rigor)

- **Mathematics** is one of the compulsory subjects for university admission in Hong Kong.
- The curriculum consists of a **Compulsory Part** and an **Extended Part**.
- The **Compulsory Part** covers fundamental concepts and knowledge of the subject.



- Students who intend to pursue further studies in Mathematics or related disciplines are expected to take a module in the more advanced Extended Part.
- Candidates' attainments in the Compulsory and Extended Parts will be reported independently.

NSS Elective Subjects

Key Learning Areas	Elective Subjects
Chinese Language Education	Chinese Literature
English Language Education	Literature in English
Personal, Social and Humanities Education	Chinese History Economics Ethics and Religious Studies Geography History Tourism & Hospitality Studies
Science Education	Biology Chemistry Physics Integrated Science, Combined Science



NSS Elective Subjects

Key Learning Areas	Elective Subjects
Technology Education	Business, Accounting and Financial Studies Design and Applied Technology Health Management and Social Care Technology and Living Information and Communication Technology
Arts Education	Music Visual Arts
Physical Education	Physical Education

Science Education

- Science education emphasises enhancing the scientific literacy of students, and helping them see the relationship between science and technology, society and the environment.
- In addition to Biology, Chemistry and Physics, two new subjects, Integrated Science and **Combined Science**, are also developed to provide students with more diversified subject combinations to cater for their different interests and aptitudes.

- The elective subjects **Biology, Chemistry, Physics, and Combined Science** are for science-inclined students.
- **Combined Science** adopts a combined approach where students can study parts of any two of the three science subjects – Physics, Chemistry and Biology.
- It is designed for students wishing to take two electives in the Science Education Key Learning Area.



- These students may take a specialised subject of Biology, Chemistry or Physics while at the same time study parts of the other two subjects by a combined approach to build a comprehensive knowledge in science, for example, Physics + Combined Science (Chemistry, Biology).

- **Integrated Science** adopts an interdisciplinary approach to the study of science. It is designed for students with more diverse interests, wishing to take up one elective subject in the Science Education Key Learning Area.
- It aims to arouse students' interest and curiosity about the world and help them understand the process by which scientific knowledge is constructed and validated.

New Assessment

- One public examination Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (**HKDSE**) to replace HKCEE and HKALE
- Assessing students' higher order thinking and ability to acquire and apply basic concepts and knowledge effectively
- More explicit information on standards – Standards-referenced reporting (in Levels 1 to 5 with level descriptors)
- Broader base of assessment – public examination plus school-based assessment

Benchmarking HKDSE

- HKDSE has been accepted by UCAS (the UK's higher education admissions service) onto the **Tariff**, a points-based system which benchmarks qualifications against the UK's A Level in order to assess their suitability for higher education.
- Upon completion of a comparability study on **HKDSE** and **GCE A Level**, the UCAS Board endorsed the recommendations of an Expert Group to include the HKDSE in the UCAS Tariff system with tariff points awarded to 24 HKDSE subjects.

- The UCAS Tariff covers a wide range of qualifications awarded by different examinations systems, including the Advanced Placement Program in the US and Canada, the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma as well as the CIE Cambridge Pre-U Diploma.
- The inclusion of HKDSE in the UCAS Tariff allows broad comparisons to be made between applicants holding different qualifications.

Conversion to Tariff Points

- An overall subject point score is recommended for the HKDSE subjects **except for Mathematics** which carries a unique structure.
- Level 5 of an HKDSE subject is awarded 120 points, implying attainment at this level is aligned to a Grade A of **GCE A Level**.
- Level 3 of an HKDSE subject is awarded 40 points, which is comparable to a Grade E in a GCE A Level subject.

UCAS Tariff points for 23 HKDSE subjects, except Mathematics

Grade	Tariff	Remarks
5**	N/A	To be allocated after the first administration of the HKDSE Examinations in 2012.
5*	130	Between grades A and A* in the 2010 GCE A Level examination
5	120	Comparable to grade A in the 2010 GCE A Level examination
4	80	Comparable to grade C in the 2010 GCE A Level examination
3	40	Comparable to grade E in the 2010 GCE A Level examination

Comparison with IB and AP

- Attainment of Level 5* in a HKDSE subject will be considered as equivalent to attaining HL Grade 7 in IB (both being converted to 130 Tariff Points).
- Attainment of Level 5 in a HKDSE subject will be considered as equivalent to attaining Grade 5 in an AP subject (both being converted to 120 Tariff Points).

HKDSE Mathematics

- For students taking both **Compulsory and Extended Parts of Mathematics**, their attainments will be reported independently.
- Tariff points will be awarded separately to the two parts of the subject and added together.

UCAS Tariff points for Mathematics

(The overall performance is indicated by the combined tariff points to both parts)

Grade	Compulsory Part	Extended Part	Remarks
5**	N/A	N/A	To be allocated after the first administration of HKDSE Examinations in 2012
5*	60	70	130 points (60+70) for 5* in both compulsory and extended parts – Between grades A and A* in the 2010 GCE A Level examination
5	45	60	120 points (60+60) for 5* in the compulsory part and 5 in the extended part – comparable to grade A in the 2010 GCE A Level examination
4	35	50	
3	25	40	

Implications on Undergraduate Admissions

The new 334 education system would affect:

- The number of applicants to tertiary education
- The academic standard of the applicants
- The preparedness (in terms of maturity) of the applicants for tertiary education

Number of Applicants

- Under the current system, about:
 - 100,000 students taking the HKCEE;
 - 35,000 students taking the HKALE;
 - 40,000 applicants with HKALE and 10,000 applicants with other qualifications are competing for 11,500 (fixed by the University Grants Committee) undergraduate places in HK universities
 - A growing trend of secondary school students seeking tertiary education opportunities overseas

Number of Applicants

- In 2012 (double cohort year for Hong Kong universities):
 - Last cohort of 35,000 students taking HKALE will compete for the 11,500 places;
 - First cohort of 100,000 students taking the HKDSE;
 - ? applicants with HKDSE and 10,000 (?) applicants with other qualifications will compete for 11,500 four-year undergraduate places in HK universities
- In 2013, additional number of applicants (being those unsuccessful in 2012) will apply to both HK and overseas institutions

Issues to be considered by Hong Kong institutions

- Are students taking the new curriculum adequately prepared for undergraduate studies?
- In view of the increased number of candidates taking the HKDSE, would the top 1/3 students achieve similar examination results making it difficult for admissions selection?
- If not, what other criteria should be considered?



- New “thresholds” for admission need to be defined:
 - 4 core subjects + 1 or 2 elective
 - The minimum “levels” of attainment required (e.g. 3,3,2,2,3)

Issues for Ontario Universities

- How to assess the academic standing of Hong Kong applicants taking the new curriculum.
- Possible increase in the number of applications from Hong Kong.
- Timing for the availability of HKDSE results (June in 2012 and July in 2013) that might affect when final decisions on admission could be made.
- New “thresholds” for admission need to be defined.

Useful Web-links:

- Education Bureau, Hong Kong SAR Government <http://www.edb.gov.hk/>
- New Academic Structure 334 Web Bulletin <http://334.edb.hkedcity.net/EN/curriculum.php>
- Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA) :
 - <http://www.hkeaa.edu.hk/en/ir/>
 - http://www.hkeaa.edu.hk/en/ir/Standards_of_HKEAA_qualifications/UCAS/
 - <http://334.edb.hkedcity.net/test/EN/outbound.php>



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Thank You !

Q & A