

# Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination (HKDSE)

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## HKDSE

- Since the inception of the HKDSE in 2012, it has been an important credential for senior secondary students aiming to pursue their further studies locally or abroad, or to embark on a career.
- Nearly 900,000 candidates entered the HKDSE over the years, including 55,000 candidates in the 2025 HKDSE.



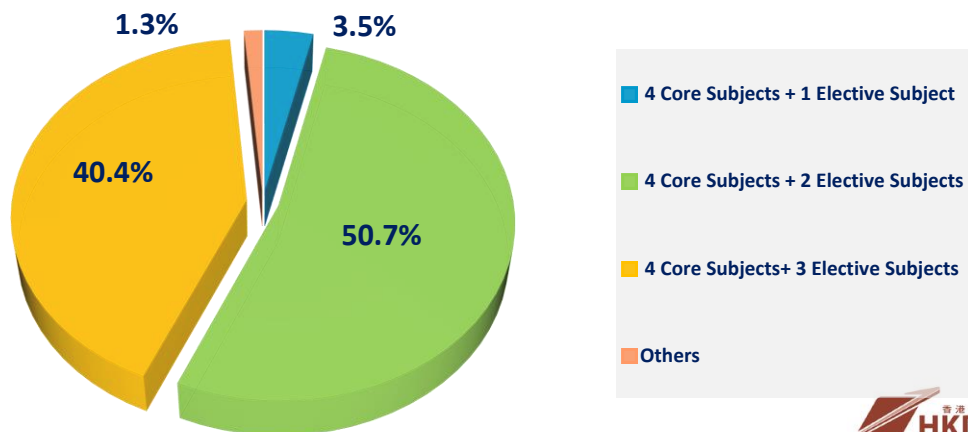
## The Edge of the HKDSE

- Hong Kong's unique characteristics of **multilingualism** and **inclusiveness**
- Taking the examinations in **Chinese** (Traditional or Simplified Chinese) or in **English**
- Providing a **wide-ranging, balanced, flexible, and diversified** curriculum that includes both **academic subjects** and **Applied Learning subjects**, as well as **Other Languages subjects**, to meet the diverse needs and interests of candidates (including non-Chinese and non-local candidates)



## Registration Statistics for the 2025 HKDSE

Over **55,000** candidates, with more than **45,000** day school candidates



# HKDSE Certificate (Category A and B Subjects)

At least one subject achieved:

**Level 1 or above**  
Category A subject

**Attained or above**  
Category B subject

\* Starting from the 2025 HKDSE, Candidates' Category C subject results will be reported on the HKDSE certificate separately.



# The Reporting System - Category A Subjects

Performance of candidates in Category A subjects is reported in five levels\*



## Standards-referenced Reporting system:

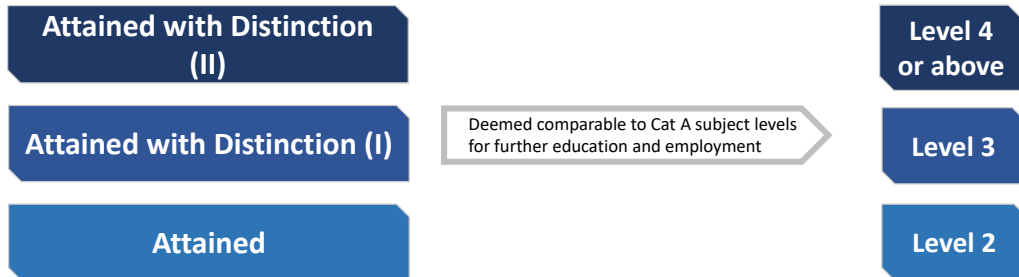
- Candidates' levels are reported with reference to a set of explicit and fixed standards of performance
- **Level Descriptors** and **exemplars** are provided to indicate standards required for each level
- Facilitate tertiary institutions and employers to set appropriate entrance/ job requirements

\*The results of Citizenship and Social Development are reported in one level: **Attained**



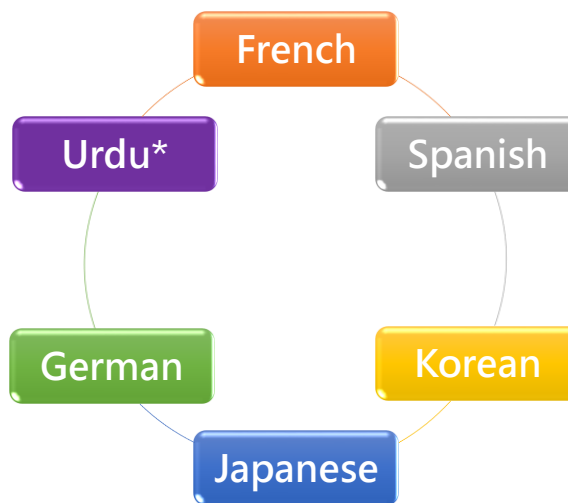
## The Reporting System - Category B Subjects

Except for ApL Chinese (for non-Chinese speaking students), three levels of performance are reported:



## Category C (Other Languages) Subjects : New Exam Arrangements for 2025 HKDSE and Beyond

*\*Urdu Language exam will be offered from the 2026 HKDSE*



## Category C (Other Languages) Subjects : New Exam Arrangements for 2025 HKDSE and Beyond

- Candidates have to take the **stipulated language examinations** administered in Hong Kong by the **official organisations**
- Candidates will have to **enroll directly** with the administrators of the stipulated language examinations and opt for the respective Category C subject during HKDSE registration
- Candidates' results obtained in these examinations **at the stipulated proficiency level or above** will be included in the HKDSE Category C results
- Candidates may take the language examinations **more than once within the two years preceding the HKDSE they sit** (for example, for the 2025 HKDSE, candidates may take the language examinations in 2023 and 2024, and should complete the examinations by the end of 2024)



## Details of the Examinations

Subject	French	German	Japanese	Korean	Spanish	Urdu
Exam	Diplôme d'Études de Langue Française (DELF) Diplôme Approfondi de Langue Française (DALF)	Goethe-Zertifikat	Japanese-Language Proficiency Test (JLPT)	Test of Proficiency in Korean (TOPIK)	Diplomas de Español como Lengua Extranjera (DELE)	Urdu (International)
Exam provider (official organisation)	Alliance Française de Hong Kong (AFHK)	Goethe-Institut Hong Kong	Japan Foundation	National Institute for International Education (NIIED), Korea	Instituto Cervantes (Shanghái)	The Federal Board of Intermediate & Secondary Education (FBISE), Islamabad
Exam administrator	Alliance Française de Hong Kong (AFHK)	Goethe-Institut Hong Kong	Society of Japanese Language Education, Hong Kong (SJLEHK)	NIIED, Korea Implementing agency: Korean International School & HKEAA	University of Wollongong (UOW) College HK Spanish World HK & other DELE exam centres that may open in the future in HK	FBISE, Islamabad



## Details of the Examinations

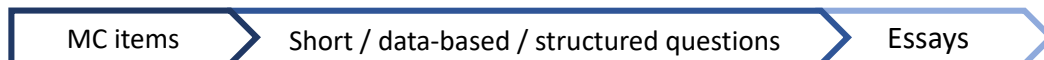
Subject	French	German	Japanese	Korean	Spanish	Urdu
Language proficiency level to be accepted into the HKDSE results	A2 or above	A2 or above	N3 or above	TOPIK II: Grade 3 or above	A2 or above	Grade E or above
Exam component	Listening, Reading, Writing, Speaking	Listening, Reading, Writing, Speaking	Language Knowledge (Vocabulary / Grammar), Reading, Listening	Listening, Reading, Writing	Listening, Reading, Writing, Speaking	Reading and Writing, Essay Writing
Time of exam*	March/April, November	April to June	July, December	April, July, October	May, November	April-May, September-October
Website	<a href="http://www.afhongkong.org/en/exams/delf-dalif/">www.afhongkong.org/en/exams/delf-dalif/</a>	<a href="http://www.goethe.de/ins/hon/en/spr/exams/dse.html">www.goethe.de/ins/hon/en/spr/exams/dse.html</a>	<a href="http://www.japanese-edu.org.hk/zh/jlpt/jlpta.html">www.japanese-edu.org.hk/zh/jlpt/jlpta.html</a>	<a href="http://www.topik-hk.org/chi/index.asp">www.topik-hk.org/chi/index.asp</a>	<a href="http://www.uowchk.edu.hk/study-at-uowchk/find-programmes/international-language-proficiency-tests/diplomas-de-espaol-como-lengua-extranjera-dele/">www.uowchk.edu.hk/study-at-uowchk/find-programmes/international-language-proficiency-tests/diplomas-de-espaol-como-lengua-extranjera-dele/</a>	<a href="http://www.fbise.edu.pk/hongkong_papers.php">www.fbise.edu.pk/hongkong_papers.php</a>

Remark: Urdu (International) will be offered from 2026 HKDSE while the other language exams will be offered from 2025 HKDSE

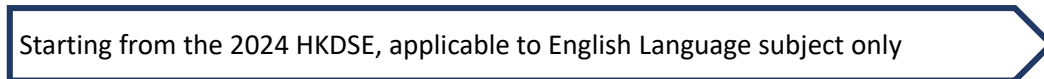


## Category A – Public Examinations

### Written Exam



### \*Listening and Integrated Skills + Speaking Assessments



Details: HKDSE Assessment Frameworks of each year's examination.  
[www.hkeaa.edu.hk/tc/hkdse/assessment/assessment\\_framework/](http://www.hkeaa.edu.hk/tc/hkdse/assessment/assessment_framework/)



## Core Subjects

	Weighting of Written Examinations	Weighting of SBA
<b>Chinese Language</b>	85% <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paper 1 (Reading) (40%)</li> <li>• Paper 2 (Writing) (45%)</li> </ul>	15%
<b>English Language</b>	85% <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paper 1 (Reading) (20%)</li> <li>• Paper 2 (Writing) (25%)</li> <li>• Paper 3 (Listening &amp; Integrated Skills) (30%)</li> <li>• Paper 4 (Speaking) (10%)</li> </ul>	15%
<b>Mathematics Compulsory Part</b>	100% <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paper 1 (Conventional questions) (65%)</li> <li>• Paper 2 (Multiple-choice questions) (35%)</li> </ul> <p>A good mastery of Foundation Topics of the Compulsory Part is sufficient for candidates who perform well in the HKDSE Examination Mathematics Compulsory Part to attain up to Level 4 in the Examination</p>	No SBA required
<b>Citizenship and Social Development</b>	100% <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Results reported will be either 'Attained' or 'Unattained'</li> </ul>	No IES required



Details: HKDSE Assessment Frameworks  
[www.hkeaa.edu.hk/tc/hkdse/assessment/assessment\\_framework/](http://www.hkeaa.edu.hk/tc/hkdse/assessment/assessment_framework/)



## Category A: School-based Assessment (SBA)

- Assessments administered in schools and marked by the students' own teachers
- SBA scores awarded will count towards students' public assessment results

### Advantages

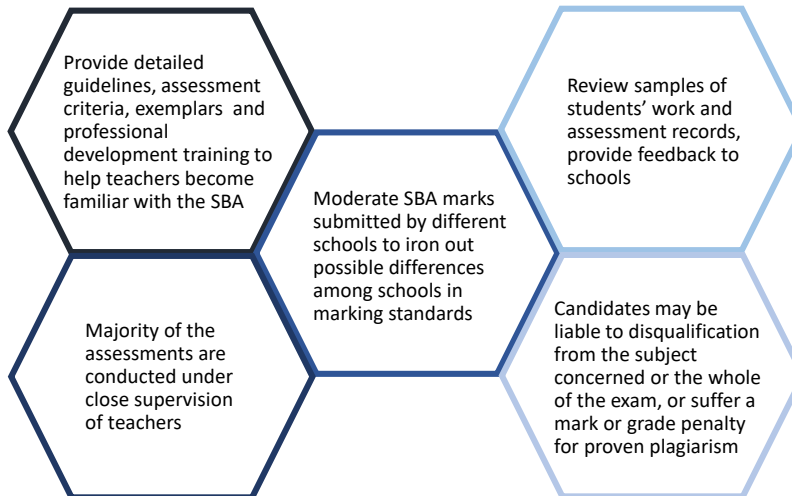
**H**elps students understand their strengths and weaknesses through quality feedback from teachers

**E**mphasises the assessment of a wide range of abilities and offers a comprehensive appraisal of students' performance

**R**educes dependence on the results of public examinations and boosts students' confidence and motivation to learn



## How will fairness be ensured in SBA?



## HKDSE Category A Subjects: School Based Assessment (SBA)

### 12 Subjects with an SBA Component

Chinese Language	Chinese Literature	English Language	Literature in English
Health Management and Social Care	Information & Communication Technology	Technology and Living	Design & Applied Technology
Biology	Physics	Chemistry	Visual Arts



<https://www.hkeaa.edu.hk/en/sba/introduction/>





# Question Papers and Exam Report

HKDSE Question Papers are published in every November

Introducing the assessment requirements of Category A Subjects

Question papers with marking schemes and comments on candidates' performance

HKDSE Exam Report are published in every December

Providing useful information and statistics related to the examinations to schools, students and the public at large



[www.hkeaa.edu.hk/tc/hkdse/assessment/exam\\_reports/](http://www.hkeaa.edu.hk/tc/hkdse/assessment/exam_reports/)



# Exemplars of Candidates' Works

Category A Subjects: English Language Paper 2 – 2023 Samples of Candidates' Performance

Level 5 exemplar 1  
Part A

## Pop-up Shop Application Form

Company Name: Planet Smart

A. Company Profile (Introduce your company):

Planet Smart is an environmentally-friendly company that aims to produce high quality products that would not only increase the quality of life of the citizens, but also the planet itself. Our eco-friendly products are specifically made to aid global problems such as deforestation and plastic waste. By expanding our company in various areas, such as setting up a pop-up shop inside the shopping centre, will not only promote and ~~increase~~ raise awareness on these devastating topics, but also ~~also~~ allow the general public to learn how to incorporate simple eco-friendly products into their lives. As the saying goes, 'A single step goes a long way.'

Category B Subjects: Interior Design – 2023 Samples of Student Performance



Category A: [www.hkeaa.edu.hk/tc/hkdse/assessment/subject\\_information/](http://www.hkeaa.edu.hk/tc/hkdse/assessment/subject_information/)

Category B: [www.hkeaa.edu.hk/tc/hkdse/assessment/subject\\_information/category\\_b\\_subjects/](http://www.hkeaa.edu.hk/tc/hkdse/assessment/subject_information/category_b_subjects/)



# Quality Assurance Framework for the HKDSE

## Safeguarding of Standards

To ensure that the standards of the examination papers are consistently upheld at the expected and required level.

## Compliance & Quality of Delivery

To ensure that the examinations are conducted in compliance with the established regulations and guidelines so that fairness and reliability can be maintained.

## HKDSE Recognition

To ensure that the data and results are processed and reported appropriately, at the necessary standards of reliability and integrity to achieve both local and international recognition.

## Continuous Improvement

To ensure that feedback is collected from and provided to stakeholders by conducting regular reviews and quality audits in order to improve our service continuously



# Recognition of the HKDSE

## Hong Kong Qualifications Framework (HKQF)

The HKDSE is considered as equivalent to Level 3

## Non-local Undergraduate Degree Programmes

The HKDSE qualification has been recognised by thousands of oversea universities/ institutions



## Local Undergraduate Degree Programmes

Chinese Language, English Language, Mathematics Compulsory Part, and Citizenship and Social Development at '332A'



## International Recognition of the HKDSE

> 1,000

**Non-local institutions and universities** have published its admission requirements on the HKEAA webpage and/or its official websites

### The Greater China Region

145

**Mainland China institutions** admit Hong Kong students on the basis of their HKDSE result

> 135

**Higher education institutions in Taiwan and Macau** consider the HKDSE results for admission purpose



## World-renowned institutions released latest entry requirements

### North America

- ✓ Yale University
- ✓ New York University
- ✓ The University of Toronto
- ✓ Simon Fraser University

### The UK & Continental

#### Europe

- ✓ The University of Cambridge
- ✓ University College London
- ✓ University of Glasgow
- ✓ University of Galway
- ✓ Leiden University

### Asia Pacific

- ✓ Peking University
- ✓ Tsinghua University
- ✓ Nanyang Technological University
- ✓ National University of Singapore
- ✓ Kyoto University
- ✓ Kyung Hee University

### Australia & New Zealand

- ✓ The Australian National University
- ✓ The University of Sydney in Australia
- ✓ University of Melbourne
- ✓ The University of Auckland

## International Recognition — Europe



The Ministry of Education of Spain has admitted the recognition of the HKDSE qualification. HKDSE holders have access to over 90 Spanish universities.

- Requirements: At least five subjects at levels 2 to 5\*\*



In Austria, the HKDSE is considered as equivalent to the Austrian school leaving certificate (Matura) which allows admission for academic studies in the chosen subject area offered by 76 Austrian higher education institutions/ universities. (The admission requirements depend on programmes and universities)



In Germany, the HKDSE is considered as equivalent to the [German school leaving certificate \(Abitur\)](#). Candidates can apply for admission to over [300 German public universities](#) in the subject area of their HKDSE subjects.

- Requirements: Level 3 or above in 4 core subjects and 2 elective subjects (Citizenship and Social Development: Attained)



The HKDSE qualification has been recognised by the [Nuffic of the Netherlands](#), which considered the candidates have achieved a [HAVO diploma](#) for applying to [78 tertiary institutions there](#).

- Requirements: Level 2/Attained or above in 5 subjects (included Chinese Language and English Language)



# Thank You

