

Curriculum Development Council endorses optimising four senior secondary core subjects

The following is issued on behalf of the Curriculum Development Council:

After deliberating thoroughly on the optimisation proposals put forward by the relevant committees on the four senior secondary (SS) core subjects (i.e. Chinese Language, English Language, Mathematics, and Citizenship and Social Development in lieu of Liberal Studies), as well as perusing the views gathered in the school questionnaire survey, school briefing sessions, focus groups and more, the Curriculum Development Council (CDC) and the Public Examinations Board (PEB) of the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA) endorsed today (March 31) the proposals to optimise the four subjects and made recommendations to the Education Bureau (EDB).

As the four SS core subjects are different in nature, the optimisation proposal for each core subject is different. In optimising Chinese Language and English Language, emphasis is placed on streamlining/integrating the compulsory and elective parts, as well as reducing the number of papers in the public assessment or optimising the design of the papers. There would be no change in the curriculum and assessment of Mathematics. However, teachers and students would be clearly informed that schools could allow some students to study only the Foundation Topics and part of the Non-foundation Topics of the Compulsory Part of Mathematics in an effort to cater for learner diversity, and incorporate lessons on the Extended Part into the regular school timetable. Liberal Studies would be renamed as Citizenship and Social Development. The core content of the curriculum would cover three themes: Hong Kong, the nation and the contemporary world. While the subject would remain compulsory for public assessment, the school-based assessment component (i.e. Independent Enquiry Study) would be removed. Students would be provided with Mainland study opportunities. Overall, about 100 to 250 hours would be released upon the implementation of the proposals to optimise the four subjects, enabling schools to provide a more diversified curriculum and cater for learner diversity.

The Chairperson of the CDC, Professor Tam Kar-yan, said, "I am grateful to the Task Force on Review of School Curriculum, led by Dr Anissa Chan, for putting forward recommendations on creating space for students and catering for learner diversity. The CDC has followed up on these recommendations in a focused manner."

Professor Tam added, "I am pleased that there has been an active response to the optimisation proposals from the school sector. I firmly believe that school leaders would handle change management properly upon the implementation of the optimising proposals, which could ease students' examination stress and bring benefits to all students. Taking into

consideration their contexts and needs of students, schools can flexibly use the lesson time released to create space for students, to cater for their diverse interests, abilities and aspirations, as well as to enable them to develop their talents."

Furthermore, after thorough examination, the CDC and the PEB of the HKEAA endorsed at the joint meeting today the phasing out of Combined Science and Integrated Science starting from Secondary Four in the 2021/22 school year. It is envisaged that space will be created for schools offering these subjects to optimise their curricula concurrently. Students can also choose to take STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics)-related elective subjects or Applied Learning courses based on their preferences.

The CDC hopes that the EDB will accept the recommendations soon so that the optimisation proposals can be implemented at Secondary Four in the 2021/22 school year to benefit students as early as possible. The current SS students would continue to follow the existing curricula.