

Fourth cohort of School Nominations Direct Admission Scheme opens for applications in October

The Education Bureau (EDB) today (October 25) announced that the fourth cohort of the School Nominations Direct Admission Scheme (SNDAS) will be open for applications by local Secondary Six students who will be taking the 2025 Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) Examination and commencing their undergraduate studies in September 2025.

A spokesman for the EDB said, "Launched in the 2022/23 academic year, the SNDAS is a scheme that recognises the exceptional talents of students in specific disciplines that may not be fully assessed by the HKDSE Examination by allowing students with special and diversified talents to be matched with programmes that suit their potential. It provides opportunities for these students to be considered for direct admission to local universities."

The nomination period of the fourth cohort of the SNDAS will run from October 25 to December 4, 2024. Students who intend to apply for their preferred programmes through the SNDAS must be nominated by their secondary schools. Each local secondary school can nominate two students with exceptional talents and interests in specific disciplines/areas, and each student nominee can apply for admission to one designated University Grants Committee (UGC)-funded undergraduate programme participating in the SNDAS.

Participating universities will arrange interviews for all students nominated for the SNDAS and make firm offers to successful students prior to the release of the 2025 HKDSE Examination results.

The eight UGC-funded universities have designated around 300 publicly funded undergraduate programmes to participate in the fourth cohort of the SNDAS and set admission criteria that are not based on HKDSE Examination results for individual programmes. Details of the SNDAS and specific admission requirements of the participating programmes have been uploaded to the scheme's website (www.edb.gov.hk/en/edu-system/postsecondary/policy-doc/SNDAS/index.html).

The EDB adds that the SNDAS was introduced to provide an additional pathway to university for students with exceptional talents. Those nominated for the SNDAS, like other Secondary Six students, are required to apply for admission to universities through the Joint University Programmes Admissions System in parallel and to sit for the HKDSE Examinations, ensuring they do not limit their opportunities for further studies.

Starting from this 2025/26 academic year, the Home and Youth Affairs Bureau will introduce a new scholarship scheme for successful SNDAS admittees with remarkable achievements in arts, sports and/or community service. Among the students formally admitted to their respective universities under the

SNDAS, each of the eight UGC-funded universities will be invited to nominate SNDAS admittees demonstrating outstanding performance in arts, sports and/or community service for the award of scholarships, in addition to the firm offers made. The quotas for nominations and scholarships will be distributed proportionally, taking into account the number of students admitted to each university through the SNDAS. Each awardee, who will not be subject to means testing, will be granted a scholarship of \$10,000 per year throughout their four-year tuition period.

The EDB set up the Task Force on Review of School Curriculum in November 2017 to holistically review the primary and secondary curricula. The review report submitted by the Task Force to the EDB in September 2020 put forward six directional recommendations, including the implementation of a new direct admission scheme to enhance flexibility in university admissions. The EDB accepted the recommendation and introduced the SNDAS starting with the 2022/23 academic year.