

# LCQ17: Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination programme offered outside Hong Kong

Following is a question by Professor the Hon William Wong and a written reply by the Secretary for Education, Dr Choi Yuk-lin, in the Legislative Council today (Mar 26):

Question:

It is learnt that the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination (HKDSE) is widely recognised, and its multiple pathways have attracted quite a number of students outside Hong Kong to register for it. To meet the needs of students, the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority has accepted four Mainland schools in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area as "Participating Schools" and allowed them to present their eligible candidates to register for the HKDSE as school candidates. These "Participating Schools" have been accredited by the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications as meeting the requirements for offering HKDSE programmes. In addition, other eligible students may register for the HKDSE as private candidates. There are views that, on the contrary, the quality and qualifications of teachers of HKDSE programmes offered by non-"Participating Schools" and other training institutions outside Hong Kong vary, and problems even frequently arise in some training courses for the HKDSE operated under affiliated overseas organisations, not only affecting the students but also tarnishing the image of the HKDSE. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the number of cases with people outside Hong Kong registering for the HKDSE as private candidates were rejected in the past three years, and the reasons for that; among such cases, the respective numbers of review applications involved and successful review applications;

(2) of the following information on the requests for assistance or complaints received by the authorities in the past three years in relation to training programmes for the HKDSE offered outside Hong Kong: (i) the number of cases received, (ii) the main details of the cases, (iii) the specific follow-up measures taken by the authorities, (iv) the number of cases for which follow-up actions were completed, and (v) the time taken by the authorities to complete the follow-up actions on these cases; and

(3) whether the authorities have considered setting up a qualification accreditation system for teachers, teaching materials and curricula of the HKDSE programmes offered outside Hong Kong; if so, of the specific standards and procedures; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination (HKDSE) is a widely recognised academic qualification in Hong Kong and abroad. Apart from using the HKDSE results for further studies or employment in Hong Kong, candidates can apply for direct admission to non-local universities or post-secondary institutions. Post-secondary institutions worldwide accept applications from students using their HKDSE results. More than 1 000 of them have published their entry requirements for HKDSE holders on the website of the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA) and the number of overseas institutions doing so is steadily increasing.

The reply to the question raised by Professor the Hon William Wong is set out below:

(1) In the past three years, there were 11 (2023), 52 (2024) and 77 (2025) cases in which applications from persons outside Hong Kong for entry to the HKDSE as private candidates were rejected. It is because the applicants concerned failed to meet the requirements of the examination regulations of the HKDSE for private candidates.

As at March 18, 2025, there were a total of 199 cases for review of the application for the 2025 HKDSE by persons outside Hong Kong, of which 169 were successful, with the vast majority involving the submission of additional supplementary information. For the 2024 HKDSE, there was only one case for review of the application by a person outside Hong Kong, which was successful. There was no application for review for the 2023 HKDSE.

(2) In the past three years, the Education Bureau has not received any requests for assistance or complaints relating to training programmes for the HKDSE conducted outside Hong Kong.

(3) The entry qualifications for the HKDSE are categorised into school candidates and private candidates. School candidates should be bona fide Secondary Six (or Secondary Six equivalent) students of HKDSE "Participating Schools" and studying at the registered address of the schools as per the record of the HKEAA. If a school for Hong Kong children/Hong Kong and Macao children in the Greater Bay Area in the Mainland intends to become a HKDSE "Participating School", for recommending its bona fide Secondary Six students to sit for the HKDSE as school candidates, it has to obtain the approval of the relevant Mainland authorities and the consent of the HKEAA. In order to meet the requirements for the implementation of the Hong Kong curriculum, the schools concerned must make complementary efforts in terms of the quality of teaching and learning and the administration of the senior secondary schools. It should also be fully accredited by, among others, the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications on its curriculum and operation to demonstrate that it is comparable to a registered school in Hong Kong before it can apply to the HKEAA to become a "Participating School" in the HKDSE. Since there is already a well-established system for schools to become "Participating Schools" in the HKDSE, the Education Bureau does not consider it necessary to set up other accreditation system for HKDSE

programmes outside Hong Kong at this stage.