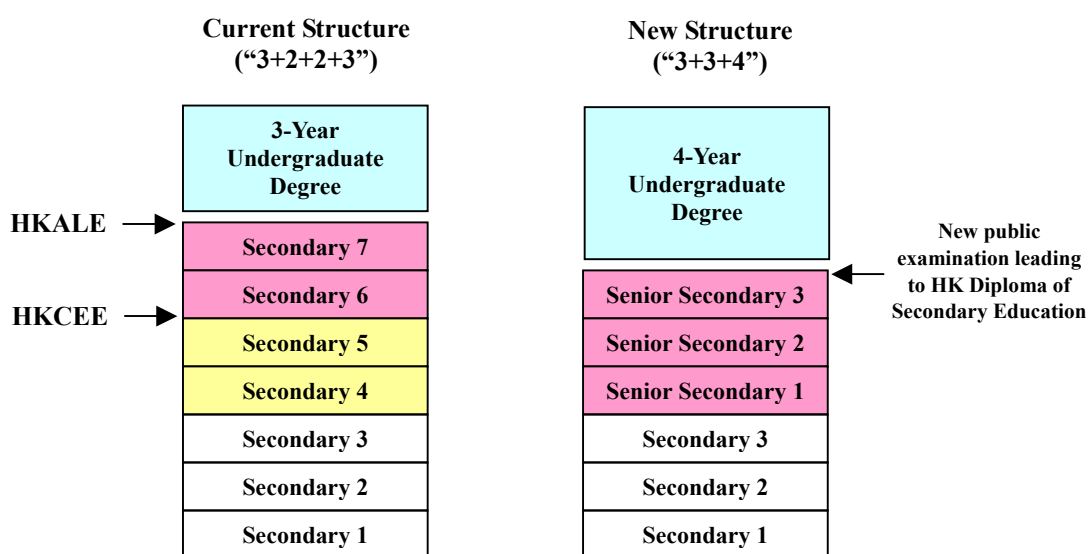


Purpose

1. The Chief Executive in his 2004 Policy Address set out the direction to develop a new senior secondary and university system that will effectively prepare our next generation to cope with the challenges of the 21st Century and the demands of our rapidly developing knowledge-based society. We now seek community feedback on the design blueprint, timing of implementation and financial arrangement for the reform.

The Change

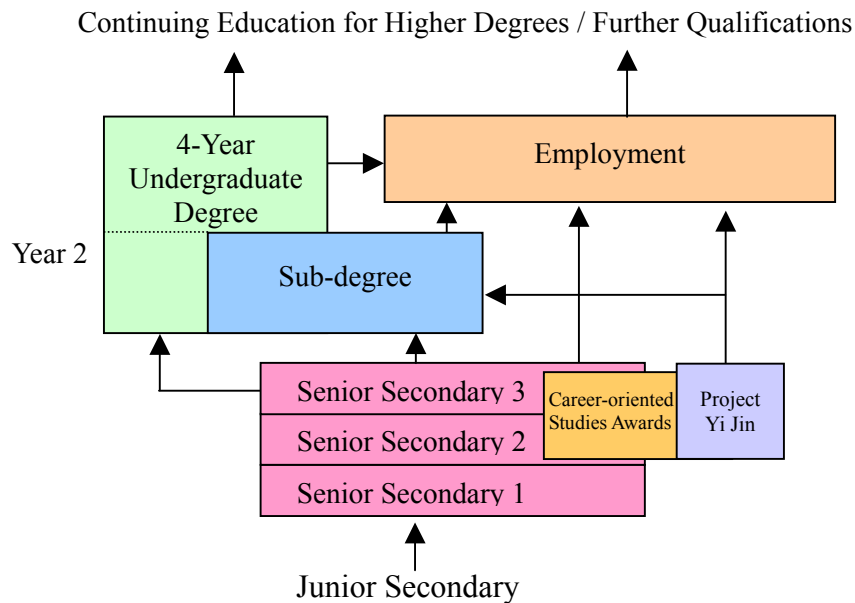
2. A comparison of the current and the new academic structure is shown below.



Benefits to Students and Society

3. The benefits of a "3+3+4" academic system are:
- ALL students will have an opportunity to study 3 years at the senior end of the secondary school and hence be better prepared for work or further learning, with enhanced language and mathematical abilities and a broadened knowledge base.
 - Higher education institutions will be better placed to provide students with balanced and all round development through undergraduate degrees which will normally take 4 years to complete.
 - The "3+3+4" academic system will align Hong Kong with a number of important international systems including Mainland China, and allow better international articulation.

- (d) The new system will provide smoother articulation to higher education qualifications (including academic, vocational and professional), so that every student will have opportunities for success in life. The articulation to multiple pathways is shown below.



The Curriculum – Whole-person Development with Diversification

4. The goals of the reformed senior secondary curriculum, building on those in basic education, are destined to help each student to:

- be biliterate and trilingual with adequate proficiency;
- acquire a broad knowledge base, and be able to understand contemporary issues that may impact on their daily life at personal, community, national and global levels;
- be an informed and responsible citizen with a sense of global and national identity;
- respect pluralism of cultures and views, and be a critical, reflective and independent thinker;
- acquire information technology and other skills as necessary for being a lifelong learner;
- understand one's career/academic aspirations and develop positive attitudes towards work and learning; and
- lead a healthy life style with active participation in aesthetic and physical activities.

5. The new curriculum is underpinned by the following guiding principles to achieve the goals above :

- (a) balance between breadth and depth;
- (b) balance between theoretical and applied learning;
- (c) a flexible and diversified curriculum;
- (d) learning how to learn and inquiry-based learning;
- (e) smoother articulation to multiple pathways;
- (f) greater coherence; and
- (g) alignment with the curriculum and assessment developed for basic education.

6. Under the new system, all students will pursue a programme of study made up of three components, namely Core subjects, Elective subjects and Other learning experiences that are built upon prior knowledge and skills acquired in basic education to cater for the different needs, interests, aptitudes and abilities of students.

- (a) Core subjects (45-55% of total lesson time)
Chinese Language, English Language, Mathematics and Liberal Studies
- (b) Elective subjects (20-30% of total lesson time)
All students will choose two or three elective subjects that suit their needs, interests, aptitudes and abilities. These may include one or more career-oriented studies.
- (c) Other learning experiences (15-35% total lesson time)
To meet important non-academic goals, schools will organise learning that fosters moral and civic education, involves community service or work-related experiences (such as job attachment), and includes aesthetic and physical/sporting activities.

7. Students will not be streamed into arts, science, commercial or technical studies as before, but are encouraged to choose subjects (see table below) that would develop their potential and open up more pathways into further studies and career choices.

Proposed New Senior Secondary Subjects

KLAs and Other Studies	Subjects
Chinese Language Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Chinese Language (Core subject)</i> ● Chinese Literature
English Language Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>English Language (Core subject)</i> ● Literature in English
Mathematics Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Mathematics (Core subject + two extensions)</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Liberal Studies (Core subject)</i>

KLAs and Other Studies	Subjects
Personal, Social and Humanities Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Chinese History ● Economics ● Ethics and Religious Studies ● Geography ● History ● Tourism and Hospitality Studies
Science Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Biology ● Chemistry ● Physics ● Science
Technology Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Business, Accounting and Financial Studies ● Design and Applied Technology ● Health Management and Social Care ● Home Economics ● Information and Communication Technology
Arts Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Music ● Visual Arts <p style="text-align: center;"># Performing Arts (to be developed)</p>
Physical Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Physical Education
Other Studies	<p>In the new senior secondary curriculum, courses in career-oriented studies are provided to offer choices and diversity to meet the different needs, aptitudes and interests of students. Courses may be offered in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Business (such as Logistics Fundamentals) ● Arts and Media (such as Multimedia Game Design) ● Design (such as Fundamental Fashion and Image Design) ● Services (such as Beauty Therapy) ● Performing Arts (such as Carnival Entertainer Training) ● Information Technology (such as Computer Networking) ● Engineering (such as Fundamental Vehicle Servicing) ● Food and Production (such as Fundamental Western Food Preparation) ● Leisure, Tourism and Hospitality (such as Introduction to Leisure and Tourism Studies)

For initial design of these subjects, please refer to *Proposed Core and Elective Subject Frameworks for the New Senior Secondary Curriculum* at <http://www.emb.gov.hk>

8. The curriculum for the new senior secondary subjects will be compared with international examples of best practice during their development to draw on the lessons they offer. Joint committees set up under the Curriculum Development Council and the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority Council comprising curriculum and assessment experts will bring all the relevant perspectives together and benchmark the new curriculum against international qualifications.

9. The existing practice in catering for students with special educational needs and gifted students will continue in the new senior secondary system.

Assessment and Certification

10. The new assessment system will lead to a single qualification, tentatively named as the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE).

11. The following are important principles for the proposed new qualification and associated assessment and examinations system:

- (a) alignment with the curriculum;
- (b) fairness, objectivity and reliability;
- (c) inclusiveness;
- (d) standards-referenced reporting;
- (e) informative to all parties;
- (f) internationally benchmarked standards; and
- (g) administrative feasibility and efficiency

12. A wider range of assessment methods/approaches will be used to ensure alignment between what is taught and what is assessed.

13. School-based assessment will be used as a part of the public assessment in each subject to deal with competencies such as generic skills that cannot be readily assessed within the confines of a public examination and to reduce the pressure of “one-off examination”.

14. A standards-referenced approach will be adopted to enable performance to be reported with reference to a set of five levels for which a set of descriptors and exemplars is available.

15. Information regarding the relative standing of students will still be available and may include an index for selection of students by tertiary institutions.

16. Each student will have a learning profile to record his/her learning experiences and achievements throughout the years of senior secondary schooling to serve as evidence of whole-person development and to motivate self-directed learning.

17. For students who leave school before the completion of 3 years when the public examination takes place, the learning profile will record their attainments up to the point of exit.

Supporting Measures

18. The following measures are designed to support the proposed changes:

- provision of adequate senior secondary school places to ensure every student will have the opportunity to complete 3 years of senior secondary schooling;
- where necessary, revision of the class structures and teacher-to-class ratios to allow schools to cater for the interests and abilities of all their students;
- professional development of teachers to be facilitated through tailored-made and timely programmes, school-based staff development and support for promoting learning culture in schools;
- quality learning materials and textbooks to be provided in a timely manner; and
- interface with universities and post-secondary institutions to be facilitated through broadening admission criteria, including general direction to admit students by faculty and the establishment of working group with universities to make further decisions

Funding Arrangement

19. Over recent years, the Government has been investing heavily in education. The approved provision for education for 2004-05 is \$59.5 billion, or 23% of the Government's total expenditure. We believe that the new system will better equip our students for study and work in a more competitive and globalised economy and for challenges and demands of a fast developing knowledge-based society. However, the reform is going to require commitment of significant resources. To manage public finance prudently, it is important to explore feasible financing options, and reach an understanding with the community on the way forward, particularly when the Government has been running an operating deficit budget since 1998-99. It intends to meet the costs of the reform through a combination of public funding and tuition fee contribution.

20. We estimate that the total non-recurrent cost of the new academic system will be about \$6.7 billion, which covers curriculum development, professional development of teachers, additional construction of university complexes and facilities, and increase in the

number of classes during the transitional period. As the overall secondary student population decline is expected to become obvious from the 2008/09 school year and onwards, we anticipate that the existing facilities in school will be able to cope with the extra demand arising from the additional classes of senior secondary students. The Government is prepared to set aside public funding for meeting all the non-recurrent cost. It will continue to heavily subsidise the new senior secondary school places and it remains the Government's policy to gradually bring the tuition fee back to the target cost recovery rate of 18% independent of the present reform.

21. On a recurrent basis, taking into account the economy of scale and the different learning approaches for an integrated four-year programme to be worked out by the tertiary institutions, it is estimated that the tertiary sector would require about \$1.8 billion per annum to fund and sustain the reform on the full implementation of the new programme. We believe that the reform will bring considerable benefits to our next generation and the community as a whole and propose that the recurrent cost of the reform be shared between parents by paying higher tuition fees, and the community through the general revenue of the Government. We would like to seek feedback from the public as to whether the university tuition fee should be increased from \$42,100 to \$50,000 per annum based on current price level, to be effective from the first year of implementation of the four-year undergraduate programme. The Government will continue to provide financial assistance to students so that no one will be denied the opportunity to study for lack of means. We will also explore new arrangements in the student assistance financial schemes to facilitate students' continuing study.

Critical Milestones

22. Assuming that the new senior secondary one level will be implemented in September 2008, the timetable for the key actions will be as follows:

Key Actions	Year2004	Year2005	Year2006	Year2007	Year2008
Policy on "3+3+4"	Public feedback on design blueprint, timetable and financing	Final report by March			First cohort of new SS1 students in September (Entry to 4-year first degree at university in September 2011)

Key Actions	Year2004	Year2005	Year2006	Year2007	Year2008
Curriculum Design	First consultation on curriculum aims and design of subjects	Finalise curriculum aims and design for all subjects Second consultation of CDC-HKEAA Curriculum and Assessment Guides	Completion of CDC-HKEAA Curriculum and Assessment Guides for all subjects in May		
Assessment and Examination		Initiate School-based Assessment framework Development of Standards-referenced Assessment		Consultation on examination rubrics, sample questions/papers in February Handbook to schools in August	
Textbook and Learning/ Teaching Resources		Textbook writing starts Start developing learning/ teaching resources			Recommended textbooks available to schools by February Learning/ teaching resources available
University admission criteria	Initial information on university admission criteria to schools	Specific university admission criteria to schools			
Professional development		Professional development programmes for teachers and principals will be undertaken in a timely manner to ensure adequate preparation for the change.			
Class re-structuring	Discuss with schools on a case-by-case basis and use a 3-year approach in planning class structure, starting when the year of implementation is finalised.				
Staff establishment	As agreed and implemented for the transition and ongoing years.				

Feedback

23. The Education and Manpower Bureau welcomes views and suggestions from the community, in particular, on the following:

- articulation to multiple pathways
- curriculum design
- assessment and reporting
- supporting measures
- funding
- implementation timetable

24. The full text of the document titled *Reforming the Academic Structure for Senior Secondary Education and Higher Education – Actions for Investing in the Future* and other supporting documents including Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) can be accessed at the website <http://www.emb.gov.hk>. Please send us your comments or suggestions **on or before 19 January 2005** by:

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