

EDUCATION BUREAU CIRCULAR MEMORANDUM NO. 170/2025

From : Secretary for Education
Ref : 0001-0125-8060-9105-0010-0001-P001
Date : 3 October 2025

To : Supervisors/Heads of all Aided (including Special Schools), Government, Caput, Private Secondary Schools, and Secondary Schools under the Direct Subsidy Schemes offering the local senior secondary curriculum

(Please circulate this Circular Memorandum to members of School Management Committees / Incorporated Management Committees and teachers concerned)

Optimised Senior Secondary Chinese History and History Curriculum Frameworks

Summary

This circular aims to announce the optimised senior secondary Chinese History and History Curriculum Frameworks, as well as related school questionnaires and the school briefing session.

Background

2. In 2020, the Task Force on Review of School Curriculum released the report “Optimise the curriculum for the future; Foster whole-person development and diverse talents”, recommending the creation of space to cater for learner diversity. Subsequently, the Education Bureau (EDB) promulgated the relevant optimisation measures in Circular Memorandum No. 39/2021 “Measures to Optimise the Four Senior Secondary Core Subjects”, while optimisation plans for other elective subjects (including humanities subjects like Economics and Geography) have also been explored or implemented successively to facilitate students’ learning. As for the curricula of the senior secondary Chinese History and History subjects that have been implemented since 2009 for over 16 years, it is necessary to review and update the curriculum content for continuous optimisation, so as to cover our country’s recent developments and strengthen the connection with the junior secondary curricula, ensuring that students’ learning keeps pace with the times.

3. Since mid-2023, the Curriculum Development Council – Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority Committees on Chinese History / History respectively responsible for the senior secondary Chinese History and History curricula have been discussing the optimisation of these two subjects. In May 2024, the optimisation plan for the senior secondary Chinese History subject was announced (Education Bureau Circular Memorandum No.111/2024). It was suggested

that starting from 2026, students may choose to take only Paper 1 (Compulsory Part, carrying 70% of the subject marks) and opt out of Paper 2 (Elective Part, carrying 30% of the subject marks) in the Chinese History subject of the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) Examination. This serves as an initial strategy to optimise the HKDSE assessment component. The measure aims to reduce students' examination pressure and cater for learner diversity. At the same time, the EDB has collected opinions from the education sector through various channels, such as school visits and focus group interviews, to continuously review the implementation of the two curricula at the junior and senior secondary levels. These findings provide references for relevant committees, and assist in planning the interface between the revised junior secondary curricula, after full implementation, and the senior secondary curricula accordingly.

4. To synthesise the opinions collected from the above different channels, the education sector generally agrees that the curriculum optimisation must uphold the core aims of the two subjects, and points out that the Chinese History subject has placed excessive emphasis on political history, and it is recommended that students should gain a comprehensive and balanced understanding of China's development from ancient to modern times, including basic developments in important aspects such as the economy, culture, science and technology, society, ethnic relations, and interactions between China and other countries. Regarding the History subject, to address issues related to overlapping and incoherent content, it is suggested developing students' foundation understanding of the major developments and interactions in modern and contemporary world history and national history from a broad perspective, particularly the role and contributions of our country during the above periods. Therefore, the curriculum optimisation work must be grounded in professional considerations and also take into account opinions from the sector. It must also respond to the unique situation of the school curriculum in Hong Kong, where both history subjects are offered concurrently, balancing and highlighting the complementary features of Chinese History and History subjects. Together, they aim to cultivate talents with spirit of patriotism, Chinese culture literacy, and a broad world vision, in line with our country's goal for education "cultivating values and nurturing people".

5. Based on the rationale of curriculum update and the specific suggestions mentioned above, the Curriculum Development Council agreed at its meeting in December 2024 that it was an appropriate time to conduct a comprehensive review of the curriculum content and assessment arrangements of the two subjects. In January 2025, the "Working Groups on Optimising the Senior Secondary Chinese History / History Curriculum" ("Working Groups") were established under the respective Curriculum Development Council – Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority Committees on Chinese History / History. These Working Groups are composed of experts and scholars, principals, experienced Chinese History and History teachers, representatives of professional bodies, as well as members from the EDB and the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA), representing a wide spectrum of stakeholders, and are guided by professional leadership principles in curriculum discussion and optimisation. The process

continuously incorporates different views from the education sector and experts. It is based on the recent curriculum guides and documents published by the Curriculum Development Council and the EDB, as well as the latest trends in curriculum development (including enhanced promotion of patriotic education). Ultimately, the optimised curriculum frameworks are established on the foundation of the current curricula, aiming to cultivate students' affection for our country, national identity, and global perspectives, aligning with the goal stated in the Chief Executive's 2025 Policy Address to integrate patriotic education into daily learning and teaching. The "Optimised Senior Secondary Chinese History / History Curriculum Frameworks" have been reviewed and approved at different levels of the curriculum development mechanism and accepted by the Curriculum Development Council. To promote student learning effectiveness and safeguard students' well-being, the curriculum update and implementation should commence as soon as possible. The optimised curricula for the two subjects are to be fully implemented in Secondary 4 in the 2027/28 school year, and will apply to the HKDSE Chinese History / History examinations from 2030 onwards.

Details

6. The **characteristics of the optimised senior secondary Chinese History curriculum** are as follows:

- Curriculum:
 - It updates the content of certain topics based on the current curriculum, aligning with the latest curriculum development trends;
 - The curriculum structure and content organisation align with the junior secondary Chinese History curriculum;
 - The content of the Compulsory Part equally emphasises both ancient and modern times, enabling students to gain a comprehensive and balanced understanding of the basic development of China from ancient times to the present in terms of politics, economy, culture, science and technology, society, ethnic integration, and interactions between China and other countries;
 - The Elective Part offers diversified topics that students may select for in-depth study, catering to their diverse interests;
 - It aims to cultivate students' spirit of patriotism, national sentiment, national identity, and affection for our country.
- Assessment:

The public assessment is being updated simultaneously, increasing flexibility in the assessment framework, introducing more diverse and objective question types, and balancing the breadth and depth of the examination papers.

(The Working Group on Optimising the Senior Secondary Chinese History Curriculum, the Curriculum Development Council – Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority

Committee on Chinese History and The Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Chinese History Subject Committee of the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority are currently discussing the direction for optimising the public assessment and the specific assessment arrangements. The details will be released by the HKEAA as soon as possible.)

7. The **characteristics of the optimised senior secondary History curriculum** are as follows:

- Curriculum:

- It updates and integrates content from different topics based on the current curriculum;
- The curriculum structure and content organisation align with the junior secondary History curriculum;
- The Compulsory Part aims to develop students' foundation understanding of the major developments in modern and contemporary world history and national history from a broad perspective, strengthen the connection between world history and national history, and help students understand our country's role, impact and contributions during the above periods;
- The Elective Part extends and deepens the learning content of the Compulsory Part, catering to learner diversity by offering various historical themes for selection;
- It cultivates students' affection for our country, national identity and global perspectives, developing proper values and attitudes to become knowledgeable and responsible citizens of our country and the world.

- Assessment:

The public assessment is being updated simultaneously, increasing flexibility in the assessment framework, introducing more diverse and objective question types, and balancing the breadth and depth of the examination papers.

(The Working Group on Optimising the Senior Secondary History Curriculum, the Curriculum Development Council – Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority Committee on History and The Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education History Subject Committee of the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority are currently discussing the direction for optimising the public assessment and the specific assessment arrangements. The details will be released by the HKEAA as soon as possible.)

8. The Bureau now invites all schools that currently offer or plan to offer the senior secondary Chinese History and History curricula to complete the questionnaires and return them to the Personal, Social and Humanities Section, Curriculum Development Institute, EDB by mail or email on or before 10 November 2025 (Monday). This is to collect information on schools' preparedness and support needs for the implementation of the optimised curricula, which will serve as a reference for the Curriculum Development Institute in formulating support strategies and measures. Each school

needs to submit only one questionnaire per subject after consolidating the opinions of the respective subject panel members.

Website for Curriculum Frameworks and Questionnaires	https://www.edb.gov.hk/en/curriculum-development/kla/pshe/ssch_h_opt.html
Link	

9. To enable schools to have a more detailed understanding of the optimisation measures, the Bureau will hold a “Briefing Session on the Optimised Senior Secondary Chinese History and History Curriculum Frameworks” (Course ID: CDI020251458) on 20 October 2025 (Monday), for which teachers will be able to register later via the Training Calendar System.

Enquiry

10. For enquiries, please contact Mr CHOW Kwong-yuen (Chinese History) (Email: cdopshe61@edb.gov.hk; Tel.: 3540 6829) or Mr HO Man-shek (History) (Email: cdopshe51@edb.gov.hk; Tel.: 2892 5867) of the Personal, Social and Humanities Education Section, Curriculum Development Institute, EDB.

IP Sum-ming
for Secretary for Education

c.c. HKEAA and Heads of Sections – for information