

18 November 2009

Education Bureau Circular No. 23/2009

Education Support for Non-Chinese Speaking Students

Reduction of Examination Fee Level of the General Certificate of Secondary Education (Chinese) Examination

[Note: This circular should be read by:

- (a) Supervisors and Heads of secondary day schools offering local curriculum leading to the General Certificate of Secondary Education (Chinese) Examination for necessary action;
- (b) Supervisors and Heads of primary schools for information; and
- (c) Heads of Divisions/Sections for information.]

Summary

Further to our letter of 16 November 2007 on the administration of General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) (Chinese) Examination¹ in Hong Kong through the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA), this circular informs schools of the reduction of examination fee level of the GCSE (Chinese) Examination for eligible school candidates starting from 2010.

Background

2. Some non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students, particularly those who have a late start in the learning of the Chinese Language or have not been given full opportunities to learn the local Chinese Language curriculum, may wish to attain an alternative Chinese Language qualification through GCSE (Chinese) Examination for pursuing higher education and for work. We have administered the GCSE (Chinese) Examination through the HKEAA in Hong Kong since 2007. As this is a UK-based examination, the HKEAA, when

¹ On comparability of local and overseas public examination results, in general, a Grade D or above attained in the Chinese Language paper in respect of GCSE / International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) / General Certificate of Education Ordinary Level (GCE O-Level) is considered as satisfying the corresponding subject results requirements at Grade E / Level 2 in the HKCEE for the purpose of meeting the Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination entry qualification. Alternative Chinese Language qualification(s) is considered for acceptance by the University Grants Committee-funded institutions under the Joint University Programmes Admissions System (JUPAS) and schools in the Secondary 6 Admission Procedure.

determining the level of examination fee, has to take into consideration the charges of the overseas examination board and other operating expenses, leading to a difference in the fee level between the GCSE (Chinese) Examination and that of the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE) (Chinese).

Reduction of examination fee level of the GCSE(Chinese) Examination

3. As an incentive to encourage NCS students to learn the Chinese Language, the EDB has made arrangements with the HKEAA to reduce the GCSE (Chinese) examination fee for eligible school candidates to a level on par with the HKCEE (Chinese) or the future Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) (Chinese) starting from 2012 when HKCEE is no longer in place by then. Taking the 2010 HKCEE (Chinese) examination fee as an instance, the reduced examination fee for eligible school candidates sitting for the 2010 GCSE (Chinese) Examination is \$194. Please note that the examination fee of HKCEE and HKDSE in future is subject to annual adjustment by HKEAA.

Eligibility

4. To be eligible for the reduced examination fee, the candidates should be studying at Secondary 5 to Secondary 7 under the current academic structure or Secondary 4 to Secondary 6 under the New Academic Structure pursuing the local curriculum and are presented by their school to the GCSE (Chinese) examination as school candidates. These candidates should also have met either of the specified circumstances below:

- (i) The student has learned Chinese Language for less than 6 years while receiving primary and secondary education; or
- (ii) The student has learned Chinese Language for 6 years or more in schools, but has been taught an adapted and simpler curriculum not normally applicable to the majority of students in our local schools.

5. Eligible candidates will still be subsidized if they participate in the GCSE(Chinese) for more than once, and irrespective of whether they will take the HKCEE (Chinese) or the HKDSE (Chinese) in the future.

Certification for the reduced examination fee

6. The HKEAA will proceed with the registration for school candidates for the 2010 GCSE (Chinese) Examination from 2 to 8 December 2009. In line with the current practice for schools to certify their school candidates presented

for examinations administered by the HKEAA, **school heads are requested to certify the student particulars including, among others, the fulfillment of the specified circumstances for eligible school candidates for the reduced examination fee on the GCSE (Chinese) Entry Form issued by the HKEAA.**

7. As government funds are involved in this scheme, school authorities have the obligation to provide accurate information. The Education Bureau (EDB) reserves the right to take further action if inaccurate / false information is provided.

Enquiry

8. For enquiries regarding the registration arrangements of the 2010 GCSE (Chinese) Examination, please visit the HKEAA website [<http://www.hkeaa.edu.hk/en/>] or contact the HKEAA at 3628 8761 / 3628 8787. For enquiries on eligibility criteria for the reduced examination fee or on support measures for NCS students, please contact the respective Senior School Development Officer.

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for Secretary for Education