

## Candidates' Performance

### Paper 1

| Question Number | Performance in General |
|-----------------|------------------------|
| 1               | Satisfactory           |
| 2               | Fair                   |
| 3               | Poor                   |

- Question 1 (a) Candidates were generally able to describe the trends of each of the four data sets. Stronger candidates were able to generalise from the whole data set to identify the overall phenomenon of an ageing population in Hong Kong.
- (b) The majority of candidates were able to identify some social problems with reference to the trends of the population statistics. Nevertheless, some candidates did not provide an adequate elaboration of the problems or did not focus on problems brought about by an ageing population.
- (c) Most candidates were able to put forth clear standpoints. However, some candidates were not able to engage in the debate on the suggestion about legislation for young people to provide financial support to their own parents, rendering one-sided answers, which lacked consideration of both the merits or demerits of the suggestion. Stronger candidates were able to discuss the question from different perspectives.
- Question 2 (a) Some candidates were not able to interpret the cartoon properly, thus failing to identify the public health risk which was related to smoking and passive smoking. For example, many candidates put down air pollution which was, however, too general and went too far from the main idea expressed in the cartoon.
- (b) Stronger candidates were able to provide a full picture of the relative importance of different tobacco control policies and the relative changes in coverage as shown in the diagram. Weaker candidates were only able to list either the changes or coverage of each of the tobacco control policies.
- (c) The majority of candidates simply explained why the two chosen policies were effective. Not many candidates were able to compare the effectiveness of the two chosen tobacco control policies with other policies in the context of Hong Kong.
- Question 3 (a) Many candidates were not able to make a holistic interpretation of the data about the views of Hong Kong people towards the political organisations in Hong Kong. They missed the main focus of the question, which was to identify the "views" on political organisations rather than describe the figures for individual organisations shown in the sources.
- (b) Some candidates did not make full use of the information in Source B to account for the views of Hong Kong people towards the political organisations in Hong Kong. As such, they tried to comment on and explain people's views on each of the political organisations and failed to explain the factors for their views.
- (c) Many candidates showed inadequate knowledge of the roles and functions of political organisations as well as the structure and composition of the Hong Kong government. As a result, the answers became vague and superficial. The majority were not able to justify their arguments on the relationship between "the effectiveness of governance" and "the presence of various political organisations" with reference to the Hong Kong context.

### Paper 2

| Question Number | Popularity % | Performance in General |
|-----------------|--------------|------------------------|
| 1               | 15           | Poor                   |
| 2               | 44           | Fair                   |
| 3               | 41           | Satisfactory           |

- Question 1 (a) Many candidates did not attempt to compare the relative importance of the interests of the whole of society and personal interests. Another weakness found in the answers was that candidates only discussed the construction of the new airport runway, neglecting to give an account of overall developments in the transport infrastructure.
- (b) Candidates were able to identify a number of different stakeholders to be involved in the planning process of transport infrastructure projects. Stronger candidates were able to focus their discussions on the extent of stakeholders' involvement that should be allowed and justify with sound reasons.
- Question 2 (a) Some candidates failed to understand the question correctly and focused wrongly on the influences of globalization on different aspects of Chinese culture.
- (b) Some of the answers were one-sided, candidates failing to demonstrate their awareness of counter-arguments. Another observation was that some candidates only used Chinese culture as an example to illustrate their standpoints, while overlooking other cultures and responses in different parts of the world.
- Question 3 (a) Most candidates were able to suggest some possible reasons from the cultural and policy perspectives to explain why some mainland mothers-to-be might use the genetic test. Stronger candidates were able to explain the proper use of the genetic test as a contrast to the abuse of the genetic test by mainland mothers-to-be.
- (b) Some candidates were not able to differentiate between social and ethical problems, thus giving a vague answer that did not demonstrate a knowledge of the social issues and ethical values concerned.

#### General Comments

In terms of subject knowledge, candidates showed a general awareness of the topics in the curriculum. They proved to be familiar with different issues, yet the values and concepts behind such issues were not competently grasped. Many candidates failed to identify and to adopt relevant values and concepts to discuss the questions, thus rendering many answers superficial. Many answers were one-dimensional. Candidates should be encouraged to explain different perspectives to widen the scope of their analysis.

As far as skills are concerned, candidates should interpret the data and information provided in sources holistically. Many candidates had difficulties in generalising the overall pattern or picture as reflected by the data. Quite a number of candidates just focused on one set of data and did not compare and integrate all the data sets, hence misrepresenting the data and missing even the main focus of the question as a whole. This problem appeared in Paper 1 Questions 1(a), 2 (b), and 3 (a).

Another problem is subjectivity in answering the questions. Candidates are encouraged to consider both arguments and counter-arguments before making a judgment. A more detailed analysis is expected in Paper 2 questions. However, quite a number of candidates either gave one-sided answers or listed the supporting arguments and counter-arguments without any attempt to compare and evaluate them.

## Independent Enquiry Studies

The overall students' performance in Independent Enquiry Study (IES) was fairly satisfactory. It is evident that most students put in a great deal of effort to fulfill the requirements of the IES. A total of 523 schools participated in the IES this year. The 'Process' mark was not moderated and the moderation data of the 'Task' mark shows 53.3% of schools fall into the 'within the expected range' category, with 21.5% of schools having marks higher than expected, and 25.1% of schools having marks lower than expected. Among the schools with marks higher or lower than expected, the majority only deviate slightly from the expected range. The moderation data shows most teachers have been adopting the marking standard of IES stipulated in the SBA Handbook for Teachers and illustrated by exemplars even though this is the first year of examination.

To familiarise teachers with the requirements of IES, seminars and workshops have been organised. Annotated exemplars of Tasks of the three different stages have been uploaded to the HKEAA Homepage. For each Stage of IES, authentic samples of Tasks were selected for marking standardisation in seminars and group meetings for School Coordinators.

### Performance of Process

In order to help teachers to improve the design and plan of assessment activities, at first, District Coordinators distributed samples of assessment plans and activities to School Coordinators. Then, School Coordinators submitted Process assessment activity documents for each Stage (including assessment plans, documents showing the design of sample Assessment Activities, rubrics and samples of student work with marks/ grades) for the review and feedback of District Coordinators (DCs).

There have been some good practices of IES in schools. Some schools have designed some Process assessment activities which were well integrated with the IES teaching activities such as using mind mapping for formulating the enquiry question and group discussions, etc. These activities not merely demonstrated the nature and assessment objectives of IES, but also fully demonstrated IES as an integral part of the LS curriculum.

Process assessment is used to evaluate the mastery of enquiry skills of students through completing the IES. Schools are advised not to rely on the drafts of Tasks as the Process assessment, instead, they should devise enquiry-based learning and assessment activities to students so as to equip students with enquiry skills in conducting IES. One of the major objectives of the Process assessment is to provide feedback to students for improving their IES Tasks.

Some schools relayed to DCs their concerns about the difficulties encountered in the Data Collection Stage such as designing assessment activities and the work load involved in this stage. As the presentation and analysis of data are inseparable in the enquiry process, both teachers and students had to put in extra effort in accomplishing the Data Collection Stage, which requires students to justify the data collection process and the quality of the data gathered. To address these concerns, the Data Collection and Product Stages will be integrated after the streamlining of the IES implementation for the 2013 examination.

### Performance of Third Stage Task

In 2012, external assessors appointed by the Authority reviewed the six Product samples submitted by each school. Based on the assessment criteria, general comments on candidates' performance in these samples of Product were as following:

Method(s) used and analysis of data: Some students were unable to adopt the appropriate research methods in response to their enquiry questions. For example, some of them relied on the questionnaire as a tool of data collection but did not have a thorough understanding of the design and limitations of this tool. As a result, they were not able to collect useful and important data, and the quality of the enquiry was undermined. Some weaker students only presented the findings in statistical charts instead of analysing the data. However, some stronger students were able to consolidate the significant findings from different sources of data with an integrated analysis.

Perspectives for analysis: The scopes of enquiry of some students were too broad, and not very focussed. The enquiry process was superficial and, thus did not fully demonstrate their enquiry skills. Other students took the opinions of the interviewees as factual data, resulting in some misinterpretations of the data. Only a few

stronger students were able to integrate the facts and views collected from different sources and analyse the findings from multiple perspectives effectively.

The expression of ideas, views and arguments: The stronger students were able to establish and justify their stances with strong arguments. However, quite a lot of students failed to use the data collected when doing analysis, conducting discussions and drawing conclusions. Many of them failed to properly acknowledge the sources in formulating their arguments by using footnotes, notes or appendices and to follow the format of giving citations. As a result, the viewpoints or arguments in the report could possibly be regarded as plagiarised. Students should be aware that they will be subject to severe penalties for proven plagiarism in SBA. In the 2012 examination, the IES Product of a candidate was identified by the HKEAA as plagiarised work and eventually a subject disqualification was imposed on the candidate. As such, schools should advise students on what malpractice is and what the consequences are. Teachers should guide students on how to use second-hand sources and on quoting references in a proper manner. Students can also have a better understanding of how to quote and acknowledge sources properly by referring to the examples as provided in the booklet "HKDSE Information on School-based Assessment", which is available on the HKEAA website (<http://www.hkeaa.edu.hk/en/sba/>).

The framework illustrating the enquiry process and results: Some students followed some standard formats of the Product framework but neglected the essence of enquiry. Furthermore, apart from statistical charts, some students seldom used tables, flowcharts or photos as tools to present their findings.

Reflections: Many students only reflected on an operational level, citing the need for preparations before interviews. Others focused their reflections on the implications of enquiry on their personal growth, for example, how it helped them become more concerned with certain social issues. Only a few students were able to further reflect on the enquiry process, such as evaluating how a certain hypothesis could not be verified. Similarly, the recommendations given by the students in the reflection were sometimes not related to the findings, and hence the effectiveness of these suggestions was greatly reduced.

Performance of non-written Product: Although the presentation mode was different, the set of criteria for marking non-written and written Products is the same.

Only a small proportion of students selected the non-written form for the presentation of the Product. Many of the non-written form Products were in the mode of PowerPoint Presentations which were mainly comprised of texts. While some non-written Products simply recorded the students' presentations in lessons, and were not able to fully take advantage of the varieties of the non-written presentations, their creativity and enquiry ability were not sufficiently demonstrated. Different ways of presentation such as videos, images and narration are encouraged to effectively present the enquiry findings. The appearance of the students or the schools' names is not allowed in the non-written form of Products.

### Conclusion

In general, most students achieved a basic level of performance in IES. Some of the better Products with good performance comprised of an enquiry type question, an appropriate enquiry scope, a sharp and clear enquiry focus, (a) relevant data collecting method(s), an analysis from different perspectives, and appropriate presentation methods. However, the work of weak students included the use of inappropriate data collection method(s), limited enquiry perspectives and conclusions not based on the data analysis. When students design their data collection method(s), the relevance between the expected findings and the enquiry question should be the prime factor for consideration. Questionnaire surveys, in some IES projects, were inappropriately used and that resulted in irrelevant data collected and unfocussed discussions. Moreover, it was observed that some students misunderstood the requirements of IES. They just selected two to three relevant articles and extracted the major viewpoints of the articles for completion of IES. Though in conducting an IES, an analysis of related articles is needed and is one of the methods for collecting data in response to the enquiry question, it should not be regarded as the sole requirement of IES.