

Candidates' Performance

Principles of Question Design

The assessment of this subject is based on the Liberal Studies Curriculum and Assessment Guide (Secondary 4-6). According to the Guide, 'the curriculum aims at integrating, applying, consolidating and broadening the foundational knowledge of every student through studying a range of contemporary issues in different contexts' (Section 2.1). Questions in the public examination of Liberal Studies are designed in accordance with the principles of being issue-driven and assessing candidates' thinking skills, such as their ability to 'analyse issues, solve problems, make sound judgements and conclusions and provide suggestions, using multiple perspectives, creativity and appropriate thinking skills', and apply 'relevant knowledge and concepts to contemporary issues' (Section 5.3).

Questions in Paper 1 provide data about contemporary issues in various forms, such as tables of figures, graphs, cartoons and texts, to provide candidates with context when answering questions. Paper 2, which uses stimulus materials, requires candidates to draw on a more extensive range of knowledge and concepts to discuss issues in depth.

The public examination aims at assessing candidates' thinking skills and the ability to apply the knowledge and concepts they have learnt in the curriculum. The assessment objectives related to the public examination are broadly reflected in its various assessment items and question papers. Candidates need to apply relevant knowledge and concepts when making judgements about issues. The examination does not aim at assessing factual knowledge. A key assessment requirement is the ability to apply the skills and concepts learned in class to the analysis of contemporary issues.

Paper 1

Question Number	Performance in General
1	Fair
2	Fair
3	Weak

- Question 1
- (a) Most candidates cited the source when describing general trends. However, some candidates failed to generalise from the source in a holistic manner and considered the trend for the two groups of students to be two different trends. Some candidates extracted only some of the figures for comparison without generalising the trends, while others copied a large amount of data without organising it. Stronger candidates noted the generally increasing trends for both groups of students, with some individual items as exceptions.
 - (b) Candidates in general understood the behaviour of young people shown in the data. However, many discussed the consequences of the behaviour and some general impacts rather than relating their answers to personal development. Stronger candidates integrated data from various items in the source in support of generalisations about personal development problems. They were also able to provide appropriate explanations using relevant concepts.
 - (c) In general, candidates' answers were detailed, but many only pointed out the possible effects of Internet addiction on personal health and did not discuss the risks to public health. Some candidates did not show an in-depth understanding of relevant public health concepts. Some failed to discuss the risks from such perspectives as potential future problems. Stronger candidates used all the sources and included discussion points, arguments and examples in their answers.

- Question 2
- (a) Most candidates cited the source appropriately to support their arguments. However, some misunderstood features as trends and did not further generalise the changes in the data, thus failing to answer the question. Stronger candidates compared the population trends of more developed and less developed countries/regions from different aspects.
 - (b) The majority of candidates understood the requirements of the question and made use of the two sources in their answer. However, some candidates had a narrow understanding of 'challenges' and merely pointed out some of the phenomena in the sources. Stronger candidates used the sources to elaborate on the challenges, demonstrating an ability to use the sources and apply the concepts they had learned.
 - (c) Most candidates pointed out some basic solutions to the chosen challenge, but some did not fully understand 'international migration'. They did not refer to international migration in the discussion of the extent to which migration is a solution for the challenge. Stronger candidates were also able to fully use the sources to show the extent to which more developed countries/regions tackle challenges, demonstrating the skills of analysis and integration from multiple perspectives.
- Question 3
- (a) A majority of candidates generalised about public opinions on press freedom and the news media using the data in Source A. Stronger candidates did this comprehensively and appropriately. They were also able to describe the features using appropriate concepts. Some candidates generalised the features based on the data for only one item, and a small number were unable to determine whether the data reflected opinions or facts.
 - (b) A number of candidates did not fully understand 'the contexts for a dilemma'. Some candidates identified only the challenges that may be posed to press freedom. Some discussed only the negative impacts caused by the news media violating ethics. Some elaborated on a dilemma in principle but failed to cite the sources or provide examples. Stronger candidates gave specific contexts for a dilemma (e.g. citizens' right to know vs. public order) and cited appropriate examples when analysing and explaining the dilemma. It is worth noting that the question did not require candidates to evaluate the state of press freedom in Hong Kong. The data in the sources reflected public perceptions of press freedom only and were not presented as statements of fact.

Paper 2

Question Number	Popularity %	Performance in General
1	44.0	Weak
2	11.7	Fair
3	44.3	Fair

- Question 1 (a) In this question, candidates were expected to identify and to explain the difficulties in preserving Cantonese opera in Hong Kong, from different perspectives. Stronger candidates did this while weaker ones focussed narrowly on the unpopularity of Cantonese opera among young people. Some candidates deviated from the question requirements by writing too much about the things that young people like to do. Topics such as the nature of Cantonese opera, the essential elements for preserving cultural artefacts, cultural values in Hong Kong and the economic environment in the city were therefore neglected.
- (b) The performance of candidates was weaker in this part of the question. Many candidates did not grasp the key components of the question, i.e. 'intangible cultural heritage', 'contemporary life' and 'important contributions'. Some candidates misunderstood 'intangible cultural heritage' to mean 'old' or 'outdated' things or activities. Some only wrote about the advantages of preserving traditions without explaining how these could make important contributions to contemporary life. The advantages and disadvantages of preserving traditions were not closely linked to contemporary life in Hong Kong. Only stronger candidates explained the relationship between the preservation of intangible cultural heritage and contemporary life.
- Question 2 (a) Most candidates understood the question and their answers were on the whole fair. Strong candidates demonstrated a knowledge of the nature and characteristics of private enterprises and analysed the possible hindrances to their development in the context of the current situation in China. Weaker candidates just identified one or two general factors which might hinder the development of private enterprises without making reference to the current political and economic contexts of China. Some also discussed state-owned enterprises too much while neglecting the main focus of the question, private enterprises.
- (b) Stronger candidates discussed in the contexts of the global economy, as required by the question. They compared the contributions of state-owned enterprises and private enterprises in the economic development of China and linked this with the global economy. Weaker candidates failed to understand how the global economy could affect China's economic development and did not compare how state-owned and private enterprises could make China economically stronger in the global economy. Stronger candidates gave some common criteria for comparing state-owned and private enterprises while weaker candidates did not.

- Question 3
- (a) Quite a lot of candidates explained the positive environmental impacts brought about by the use of clean or renewable energy resources in smart cities. Some common mistakes made by the candidates included: (1) elaborating on the impact of smart cities on quality of life rather than the use of energy resources; (2) failing to understand the features of smart cities and not explaining how these features affect the use of energy resources; (3) failing to assess both the positive and negative impacts of smart cities on the use of energy resources.
 - (b) The following points were not well explained by many candidates: (1) the meaning and features of smart cities; (2) the meaning and features of a sustainable society; (3) how the features of smart cities might or might not bring about a more sustainable society. Some candidates also made mistakes by answering the question from the perspective of whether smart cities should be developed, and discussed only the difficulties in developing smart cities. The major difference between strong and weak candidates was that the former made a reasonable connection between a smart city and a sustainable society and gave a logical argument which referred to the key features of smart cities and the principles of sustainable development.

General Comments

In Paper 1, candidates demonstrated a basic mastery of data analysis and made reasonable attempts to use the data to answer the questions. However, many candidates failed to compare and integrate the sources as evidence when justifying their arguments. Candidates are advised to enhance their skills in making generalisations and using data to formulate arguments around knowledge and concepts.

Candidates should be aware that Paper 2 questions are not data response questions. Candidates are expected to go beyond the information given in the sources and use their own knowledge to answer the questions. The information given in the sources provides some hints to formulate their own arguments. Some candidates only copied the information in the sources, which limited the scope of the discussion in their answers. Candidates are expected to demonstrate mastery of relevant knowledge and concepts and apply them in their answers. Candidates should be aware of the expectations of Paper 2 questions and make improvements in these aspects.