

EMB welcomes university admission requirements announced by HUCOM

The Education and Manpower Bureau (EMB) today (July 5) welcomed the announcement of the Heads of Universities Committee (HUCOM) on the general admission requirements and programme specific requirements of the eight University Grants Committee (UGC)-funded institutions under the new "334" academic structure.

"The announcement is timely and allows ample time for schools to plan ahead of the introduction of the New Senior Secondary (NSS) curriculum in 2009," the Deputy Secretary for Education and Manpower, Mr Chris Wardlaw said.

"It reflects the strong consensus and collaboration across members of the education sector, including the tertiary institutions, EMB, Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority, UGC, and schools, to smoothly implement the new academic structure."

"It is also a critical milestone that marks HUCOM's support for one of the key goals of the new academic structure - to encourage a more broad-based curriculum for senior secondary students with more choices to suit individual aptitudes and interests".

Mr Wardlaw appreciated that universities had recognised all NSS elective subjects which complement the four core subjects of Chinese Language, English Language, Mathematics and Liberal Studies. "In particular the recognition of Combined Science as an alternative to a single-discipline science subject will provide schools with more flexibility in designing a broad and balanced NSS curriculum," he added.

One of the success criteria for the NSS system is to reduce the early streaming of students into narrow science or arts streams. Mr Wardlaw said, "The announcement by HUCOM today

facilitates a change in the way learning is organized and frees up choices for students."

As no institution will require more than two electives for admission, all students will have the opportunity and spare time to pursue a third elective including Career-Oriented Studies (COS) courses if they so wish. They can explore their interests among a variety of subjects, which are conducive to their all-round development.

This milestone in preparing for the new academic structure means schools can make due adjustment to their school culture, their pedagogy and assessment, and organisation structure and fully inform parents and students of the benefits of the changes. Schools will also need to plan for staff redeployment, such as deploying teachers to take up the teaching of Liberal Studies, and make effective use of support rendered by EMB, including professional development programmes, grants, learning and teaching resources.

"Always having the well-being of students as our top priority, we are confident that we can provide a broad and balanced NSS curriculum to stretch the potential of the students, facilitate their whole-person development and equip them with the necessary knowledge, attitude and skills to become a life-long learner," Mr Wardlaw added.

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