

# Applied Learning Courses (2025-27 Cohort)

Applied Learning Section  
Curriculum Development Institute, Education Bureau

**ApL is a valued senior secondary elective subject** which complements other senior secondary subjects to form a flexible subject combination that helps enrich students' subject choices and cater for learner diversity, providing broad and balanced learning experiences for students. ApL focuses on practical learning elements linked to broad vocational and professional fields with dual emphasis on theory and practice. It develops students' knowledge, generic skills, proper values and attitudes through simulated or authentic contexts, as well as enhances students' understanding of vocational and professional education and training (VPET), preparing them for further studies and work in future.

Regarding the 2025-27 Cohort (i.e. the cohort of students sitting the 2027 Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE)), there are a total of 55 ApL courses, covering six Areas of Studies, namely Creative Studies; Media and Communication; Business, Management and Law; Services; Applied Science; and Engineering and Production. In addition, Applied Learning Chinese (for non-Chinese speaking students) (ApL(C)) is provided exclusively for non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students meeting specified circumstances<sup>1</sup>. The duration of each ApL course (except ApL(C)) is 180 contact hours, generally **spanning two school years at the senior secondary level**, commencing either at Secondary 4 (S4) (complete at Secondary 5 (S5) or S5 (complete at Secondary 6 (S6))). The duration of each ApL(C) course is 270 contact hours, spanning S4 to S6.



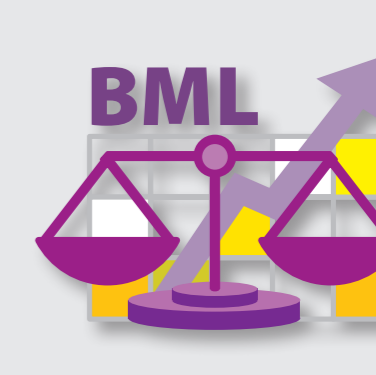
## Six Areas of Studies



Creative Studies



Media and Communication



Business, Management and Law



Services



Applied Science



Engineering and Production

## Application for ApL Courses

**All students MUST apply through their schools.** In general, each student can take a maximum of two ApL courses as elective subjects throughout his/her studies at the senior secondary level (NCS students meeting specified circumstances can in addition take one ApL(C) course). EDB will fully subsidise eligible schools<sup>2</sup> to pay the course fees.



<sup>1</sup> Students who have learned Chinese Language for less than six years while receiving primary and secondary education; or students who have learned Chinese Language for six years or more in schools, but have been taught an adapted and simpler Chinese Language curriculum not normally applicable to the majority of students in local schools.

<sup>2</sup> Students in aided, government and caput schools, schools under the Direct Subsidy Scheme and special schools with senior secondary classes studying the senior secondary curriculum prepared by the Curriculum Development Council and published for use in schools by EDB will be fully subsidised by EDB to take ApL courses.

## Course Providers





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## Recognition

ApL courses (2025-27 Cohort) are Category B subjects of the 2027 Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination (HKDSE). The reporting of students' performance in ApL subjects (except for (ApL(C))) is by three levels:

Attained with Distinction (II)

Attained with Distinction (I)

Attained



Performance of "Attained with Distinction (I)" is deemed comparable to Level 3 of Category A subjects of the HKDSE; and "Attained with Distinction (II)" is deemed comparable to Level 4 or above of Category A subjects of the HKDSE. As for ApL(C), students' performance is reported as "Attained" and "Attained with Distinction".

In addition to the HKDSE qualification, students who have successfully completed ApL courses that are registered in the Qualifications Register (as certificate programmes at Qualifications Framework (QF) Level 3), will obtain QF certificates issued by the course providers. Details are available at the Qualifications Register website ([www.hkqr.gov.hk](http://www.hkqr.gov.hk)).



## For further studies

**Undergraduate Programmes:** All along, student admission in tertiary institutions has followed the principle of institutional autonomy. For further studies in undergraduate programmes, tertiary institutions value the learning experiences that students acquire in ApL. ApL subjects are recognised as elective subjects, or considered for award of extra bonus or additional information, varying by individual institutions, faculties or programmes.

**Sub-degree Programmes:** The minimum entrance requirements for Associate Degree or Higher Diploma Programmes are Level 2 in five HKDSE subjects (including Chinese Language and English Language). In general, applicants are allowed to use ApL subjects.

ApL(C) provides NCS students with an additional channel to obtain an alternative Chinese Language qualification. Currently, University Grants Committee-funded universities and most post-secondary institutions accept ApL(C) as an alternative qualification in Chinese Language for the admission of NCS students with "Attained" as the minimum grade required. For details, please refer to the relevant websites of individual institutions or the EDB website ([www.edb.gov.hk/apl/en/quality-assurance-and-recognition](http://www.edb.gov.hk/apl/en/quality-assurance-and-recognition)).



## For employment

**The Civil Service Bureau (CSB) accepts students' ApL results in the HKDSE** (including "Attained" and "Attained with Distinction", up to a maximum of 2 ApL subjects) in civil service appointments. For details, please refer to the CSB website ([www.csb.gov.hk/english/info/2170.html](http://www.csb.gov.hk/english/info/2170.html)).



The CSB also accepts "Attained" and "Attained with Distinction" in ApL(C) as meeting the Chinese language proficiency requirements of relevant civil service ranks. For details, please also refer to the CSB website ([www.csb.gov.hk/english/admin/appoint/35.html](http://www.csb.gov.hk/english/admin/appoint/35.html)).



**Education Bureau**  
The Government of the  
Hong Kong Special Administrative Region  
of the People's Republic of China

Please scan the QR code for the latest information on ApL courses.

