

# Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA)

## *Benchmarking the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE)*

### **Understanding the Client's Aims**

In 2008, having recently introduced the HKDSE as the new secondary school qualification in Hong Kong, the HKEAA were keen to have an objective evaluation of how the HKDSE compared against the existing national secondary qualifications as well as international counterparts. The aim was to allay stakeholder concern relating to the relative difficulty of the new qualification, as well as to obtain recommendations for development, where needed.

### **The UK NARIC Approach**

UK NARIC adopted a three part approach: Part A aimed to analyse the HKDSE qualification design methodology and curricula against international counterpart qualifications in Australia, England and the USA. Particular focus was placed on subject curricula for Biology, Chemistry, Economics, Geography, Mathematics and Physics. Part B scrutinised learning outcomes, assessment and grading systems. The final report, Part C aimed to establish links between the HKDSE and the previously offered HKCEE grading system.

### **Delivering Quality Results**

The main findings confirmed that the HKDSE qualification design and assessment are thorough and rigorous, with a consistency of purpose, aims, and assessment evident in the structure of each of the subjects covered. The reports provided HKEAA and its stakeholders with additional assurance that the HKDSE is comparable to other international upper secondary awards, and that the standards of its assessment are suitably rigorous. The promotion of the study results by both UK NARIC and the HKEAA has in turn facilitated international recognition of the HKDSE in the global arena.