

Press Release

Common English Proficiency Assessment Scheme for 2005-06

The University Grants Committee (UGC) announced today (April 29) that students of UGC-funded undergraduate degree programmes who expect to graduate at the end of the 2005-06 academic year can register for the Common English Proficiency Assessment Scheme (CEPAS) from today until 22 October 2005.

“With the assistance of the institutions, we will arrange a series of testing sessions from July 2005 to May 2006 under the Scheme for all final-year students of UGC-funded undergraduate degree programme who will be in their final year in 2005-06 academic year,” a UGC spokesman said.

“Offering summer testing sessions from July to October is a new initiative aimed at facilitating both students and employers. In 2004-05, tests were offered between November and May. Several major employers, whose annual recruitment cycle takes place in around October/November each year, have informed us that there is a need to know students’ CEPAS results at an earlier date so that the scores can taken into account in their annual recruitment exercise. We believe that both job-seekers and employers will benefit from having more options,” the spokesman added.

“In line with the offering of summer testing sessions, and in order to offer even more convenience to students, we have extended and advanced the registration period of CEPAS. This year, the registration period is from April 29, 2005 to October 22, 2005. Students who want to register for the testing sessions from July to October should submit their application forms before June 9, 2005,” he said.

As in the past three years, participating students are eligible for reimbursement of the test fee (once only), if they agree to have a statement printed on their transcript indicating that they have participated in the Scheme. The statement only indicates participation; it does not contain the actual score.

For more detailed information, please visit the CEPAS website

(www.ugccepta.com), call the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) hotline at 2620 0321 or contact the Registrar's Offices of the eight UGC-funded institutions. Application forms can be downloaded from the above-mentioned website. Applicants are reminded that applications should be submitted through their respective institutions.

CEPAS is a voluntary assessment scheme intended to encourage students to be more aware of the importance of proficiency in English and to provide a common framework for assessing and documenting graduating students' English proficiency. Through the assessment, the UGC aims to benchmark the English proficiency of local tertiary students against a reliable, internationally validated instrument which will serve as useful reference for students when they enter the workforce after they graduate or when they pursue further studies.

“Despite its voluntary nature, about 8,700 final-year students participated in the Scheme last year. This year, we again encourage each and every eligible student to take part in the Scheme,” the spokesman said.

“In addition, we shall continue to strengthen our efforts in promoting the CEPAS targeting at employers, students, as well as the wider community,” he added.

The UGC announced the adoption of IELTS as the testing instrument for CEPAS in July 2002. IELTS is an internationally validated English testing instrument. In recent years, over 475,000 candidates took the IELTS test annually around the world. It covers all the four skills in English language, namely listening, reading, writing and speaking. Its results are reported on a band scale from 0 to 9.

An overall band of 6.5 or above with no subject score below band 6 obtained in one sitting in IELTS is accepted as equivalent to a pass in the Use of English paper of the Hong Kong Government's Common Recruitment Examination within two years from the date of the IELTS test.

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