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The Editor
Forum Page
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Dear Editor

GRADING FOR NATIONAL EXAMINATIONS REFLECTS ACTUAL PERFORMANCE

1. We refer to the recent views and observations on the improvement in the GCE-level national examinations results (“The case of the ever-improving exam results” by Mr Mr Sum Siew Kee, Jan 26; “Ensure quality of exam grades” by Ms Maria Loh Mun Foong, Forum Online, Jan 27; and “Many reasons for results that are ever improving” by Mr Lee Teck Chuan, Jan 28).
2. We assure Singaporeans that the Singapore Examinations and Assessment Board (SEAB) has rigorous processes in place to uphold the standards of national examinations and ensure that the marks and grades awarded are accurate, reliable and fair.
3. The panel involved in the development of question papers and grading for our GCE-level national examinations comprises experienced teachers, assessment and curriculum specialists from the University of Cambridge International Examinations, the Ministry of Education (Singapore), and the SEAB.
4. They ensure that question papers are developed based on assessment objectives which are aligned to the teaching syllabus and learning outcomes, and that the overall demands of the respective examinations are comparable year on year.
5. Examiners are trained to understand the mark schemes and apply them accurately and consistently. Grades are awarded based on the quality of candidates’ work and whether they meet the expected achievement standards.
6. Due credit is awarded for candidates’ answers that show sound understanding and proper application of concepts and skills relevant to the context of the questions and the syllabuses.



7. Based on these processes, the overall standards of the examination have been maintained year on year. Improvements in cohort results are not the result of artificial “grade inflation” but do genuinely reflect improvements in the students’ actual ability and performance.

8. This can be attributed to the good teaching programmes, teachers’ deep commitment to helping their students learn better and students’ motivation to learn.

9. We thank the writers for the feedback and assure them that the grading process for our national examinations is rigorous and reliable.

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