

Common Recruitment Examination (CRE) (Examination to be held in Hong Kong in September 2025)

Frequently Asked Questions

About CRE results

- Q1 : How are the CRE results classified?
- A1 : Candidates' results in the Use of English (UE) and Use of Chinese (UC) papers are classified as Level 2, Level 1 or Fail, with Level 2 being the highest. Results in the Aptitude Test (AT) paper are classified as Pass or Fail. For the CREs held from December 2006 onwards, Level 2 and Level 1 results of the two language papers and Pass result of the AT paper are of permanent validity.
- Q2 : What are the required levels of results in the two language papers for the application of different civil service posts at degree or professional level?
- A2 : In general, applicants for [civil service posts at degree or professional level](#) are required to obtain either Level 2 or Level 1 in the UE and UC papers of the CRE for meeting the language proficiency requirements of the post concerned. Such requirements will be stipulated by individual recruiting departments / grades in the relevant recruitment advertisements. Applicants with Level 2 in the UE and UC papers will be considered as meeting the general language proficiency requirements of all degree or professional grades.
- Q3 : If I intend to join the disciplined services grades, do I need to take the CRE?
- A3 : [Some disciplined services grades](#), such as Police Inspector, offer different entry pay points to candidates according to their academic qualifications. Degree holders without the requisite CRE results may apply for these posts but will not be eligible for obtaining the pay points for degree entry. Therefore, it is advisable for degree holders who wish to join these grades to take the CRE.
- Q4 : I have Level 2 or Level 1 in the UE and UC papers only. Is it a must for me to take the AT paper?
- A4 : [Certain civil service posts at degree or professional level](#) require Level 2 or Level 1 in the UE and UC papers only. If you wish to apply for [civil service posts that also require a Pass in the AT paper](#), you will need to take the AT paper.
- Q5 : Is it a must to take all three papers in the coming CRE if I have just failed one or two of the papers? Will you accept valid results in the three papers obtained from different CREs?
- A5 : Results are issued for individual papers. You may therefore choose to take only one or any combination of papers which you have failed to attain the requisite results of particular civil service posts. For the purpose of applying for civil service posts, results obtained from different CREs can be taken together as long as the results are all valid at the time of the job application. (Please also see Q&A 12)

About HKDSEE, HKALE, GCE A Level and IELTS results

- Q6 : I have obtained Level 5 or above in English Language and / or Chinese Language of the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination (HKDSEE). Is it necessary for me to take the UE and / or UC paper(s) of the CRE?
- A6 : Level 5 or above in **English Language** of the **HKDSEE** is accepted as equivalent to Level 2 in the UE paper of the CRE. Level 5 or above in **Chinese Language** of the **HKDSEE** is accepted as equivalent to Level 2 in the UC paper of the CRE. If you have the above result(s), you need not, and will **NOT** be arranged, to take the UE and / or UC paper(s) of the CRE.
- Q7 : I achieved Level 4 in the said subject(s) of the HKDSEE. Does it mean that I have to take the UE and / or UC paper(s) of the CRE?
- A7 : Level 4 in **English Language** of the **HKDSEE** is accepted as equivalent to Level 1 in the UE paper of the CRE. Level 4 in **Chinese Language** of the **HKDSEE** is accepted as equivalent to Level 1 in the UC paper of the CRE. In general, applicants for civil service posts at degree or professional level are required to obtain either Level 2 or Level 1 in the UE and UC papers of the CRE for meeting the language proficiency requirements as stipulated by individual recruiting departments / grades. You may wish to refer to the [requirements of civil service post\(s\)](#) in which you are interested to decide whether you need to take the UE and / or UC paper(s) to obtain Level 2.
- Q8 : I have passed Use of English in the Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination (HKALE) (or English Language in the General Certificate of Education (Advanced Level) (GCE A Level)) and / or Chinese Language and Culture in the HKALE. Will I be exempted from the CRE?
- A8 : Grade C or above in **Use of English** of the **HKALE** or in **English Language** of the **GCE A Level** is accepted as equivalent to Level 2 in the UE paper of the CRE. Grade C or above in **Chinese Language and Culture** or **Chinese Language and Literature** of the **HKALE** is accepted as equivalent to Level 2 in the UC paper of the CRE. If you have the above result(s), you need not, and will **NOT** be arranged to, take the UE and / or UC paper(s).
- Grade D in **Use of English** of the **HKALE** or in **English Language** of the **GCE A Level** is accepted as equivalent to Level 1 in the UE paper of the CRE. Grade D in **Chinese Language and Culture** or **Chinese Language and Literature** of the **HKALE** is accepted as equivalent to Level 1 in the UC paper of the CRE. If you have the above result(s), you may wish to take this into account in deciding whether you need to take the UE and / or UC paper(s) having regard to the [requirements of civil service post\(s\)](#) in which you are interested.
- Q9 : I have taken the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) test. Will I be exempted from the CRE?
- A9 : An overall band score of 6.5 or above with no subtest score below band 6 obtained in the same sitting in the Academic Module of the IELTS within the 2-year validity period of the test is accepted as equivalent to Level 2 in the UE paper of the CRE. If you have the above results, and are certain that the relevant IELTS results will still be valid at the time of the job application, you may consider whether to take the UE paper of the CRE.

- Q10 : I have valid IELTS results as mentioned in A9. Can I still take the UE paper of the CRE?
- A10 : You can still take the UE paper of the CRE even though you have valid IELTS results.
- Q11 : Will you accept a combination of the IELTS results obtained from different sittings as an equivalent to the results of the UE paper of the CRE?
- A11 : No, we only accept IELTS results in the overall band and subtests obtained in the same sitting.
- Q12 : Will you accept a combination of results obtained from the CRE, HKDSEE, HKALE, GCE A Level and IELTS?
- A12 : For meeting the general language proficiency requirements of degree or professional grades, a combination of results obtained from the CRE, HKDSEE, HKALE, GCE A Level and IELTS will be accepted, provided that all the results are valid at the time of the job application. Relevant results obtained in different CRE / HKDSEE / HKALE / GCE A Level sittings will be accepted (e.g. a Pass in AT paper obtained in the CRE held in December 2013, Level 2 obtained in UE paper of the CRE in June 2014 and Grade C in Chinese Language and Culture of the HKALE in 2010; or a Pass in AT paper, Level 2 in UC paper of the CRE in October 2021 and Level 5 in English Language of the HKDSEE in 2018, etc.). As for IELTS, only results obtained in the same sitting will be accepted.
- Q13 : Apart from the results of the HKDSEE, HKALE, GCE A Level and IELTS, are there any public examination results being accepted as equivalent to CRE results?
- A13 : At present, only the relevant results of the HKDSEE, HKALE, GCE A Level and IELTS are accepted as equivalent to CRE results.

About eligibility

- Q14 : Who can apply for the coming CRE?
- A14 : Applicants for the coming CRE should be –
- holders of degree (**not** including Associate Degree); or
 - individuals who will have attained a degree (**not** including Associate Degree) in the academic year of 2025-26 or 2026-27; or
 - holders of a qualification meeting the entry requirement on professional qualifications for civil service degree or professional posts (only applicable to those who are not in the above categories). (Please also see Q&A 15)
- Q15 : I possess a professional qualification but not a degree. Can I apply to sit the CRE?
- A15 : Non-degree holders may only apply to sit the CRE if they are eligible to apply for any of the civil service degree or professional posts with the professional qualification they possess. For example, if you are a registered student of the Hong Kong Institute of Certified Public Accountants' Qualification Programme (QP) and you have completed the Associate Level of QP, you may apply for sitting the CRE even if you do not possess a degree since the said qualification is accepted for applying for the Assistant Assessor post. However, if you have registered as registered social worker under the Social Workers Registration Ordinance but do not possess a degree, you are **NOT** eligible for sitting the

CRE since the entry requirements for the Assistant Social Work Officer post include both a professional qualification and a relevant degree.

Before submitting an application for the CRE, you are required to check from the [CSB website](#) and / or with the recruiting departments / grades concerned to confirm whether the qualification that you are holding is accepted for appointment to the relevant civil service degree / professional post(s).

Q16 : I am expected to get the bachelor's degree within 2026 or 2027. Can I apply to sit the coming CRE?

A16 : Persons who will have attained a degree (**not** including Associate Degree) in the academic year of 2025-26 or 2026-27 may apply to sit the coming CRE. Applicants who have questions about their attaining the degree qualification in the academic year of 2025-26 or 2026-27 should first confirm with their tertiary institutions.

CRE and paper-based Basic Law and National Security Law Test (Degree / Professional Grades) (BLNST) to be held outside Hong Kong

Q17 : I have applied for sitting the coming CRE scheduled for September 2025 in Hong Kong. Can I apply again to sit the examination tentatively scheduled for 29 November 2025 outside Hong Kong?

A17 : For the convenience of those studying or residing outside Hong Kong, CRE and BLNST is also tentatively scheduled to be held on 29 November 2025 in seven cities outside Hong Kong, namely Beijing, Shanghai, London, New York, Toronto, Vancouver and Sydney. Applicants may apply to sit the examination both in Hong Kong in September 2025 (application has been closed) and in one of the cities outside Hong Kong in November 2025. For persons who apply for sitting both the examinations in Hong Kong in September 2025 and outside Hong Kong in November 2025, if they subsequently obtain the highest results of the CRE paper(s) in the examination in September 2025, they will not be arranged to take the same paper(s) again in the examination outside Hong Kong in November 2025.

Application deadline for taking the examination **outside Hong Kong** is **11:59 p.m. on 3 October 2025 (Hong Kong time)**. Please refer to the Frequently Asked Questions applicable to the CRE and BLNST to be held in November 2025 outside Hong Kong for details.

Q18 : I am studying / residing overseas but planning to return to Hong Kong in / before September 2025. I have applied for sitting the coming CRE scheduled for September 2025 in Hong Kong. If I change my mind and would like to take the examination tentatively scheduled for 29 November 2025 outside Hong Kong, what should I do?

A18 : If you have submitted an application for sitting the examination scheduled for September 2025 in Hong Kong and wish to change to sit the examination tentatively scheduled for 29 November 2025 outside Hong Kong, you **should make a separate application for the examination tentatively scheduled for 29 November 2025 outside Hong Kong on or before the application deadline, i.e. 11:59 p.m. on 3 October 2025 (Hong Kong time)**. Late application after the deadline will **NOT** be considered. If you wish to withdraw your application for the examination tentatively scheduled for September 2025 in Hong Kong, you are required to inform the Civil Service Examinations Unit in writing separately.

CRE in connection with the application for the post(s) of Administrative Officer (AO), Executive Officer II (EOII), Assistant Labour Officer II (ALOI), Assistant Trade Officer II (ATOII) and / or Management Services Officer II (MSOI)

- Q19 : The joint recruitment exercise for AO, EOII, ALOII, ATOII and MSOI starts on 13 September 2025. If I intend to apply for the post(s) of AO / EOII / ALOII / ATOII / MSOI, do I have to apply for the coming CRE?
- A19 : For persons interested in applying for these posts, if they possess the requisite CRE results, or equivalent, they will be arranged to take the Joint AO / Executive Officer / Labour Officer / Trade Officer / Management Services Officer Recruitment Examination (JRE) in accordance with their choice of examination centres in or outside Hong Kong. As for job applicants who do not possess the requisite CRE or equivalent results, they will be arranged to take the relevant CRE paper(s) on the same day of JRE or another date within November 2025.

Attaining a pass result in the BLNST (Degree/Professional Grades) is an entry requirement for civil service jobs requiring degree / professional qualifications. Only those candidates who have passed the BLNST will be considered for appointment. For job applicants who have not attained a pass result in the BLNST (Degree / Professional Grades) at the time of application, they may still apply for the post(s). Candidates who will sit the JRE **in Hong Kong must submit a separate application for the Digitalised BLNST (Degree / Professional Grades) on their own (please refer to www.csb.gov.hk/eng/dblnst.html for application details) and obtain a pass result before 29 November 2025 in order to be considered of appointment.** Job applicants choose to sit the JRE **outside Hong Kong** will still be arranged to attend paper-based BLNST on the same day of JRE.

For job applicants who do not possess the requisite CRE (or equivalent) and/or BLNST results and will choose / have chosen to take the JRE **outside Hong Kong**, they can also make a separate application for the CRE and BLNST to be held in November 2025 outside Hong Kong during the application period. These applicants should choose the same city outside Hong Kong in the applications for taking the JRE and CRE/BLNST to be held in November 2025. Application deadline for taking the CRE and BLNST **outside Hong Kong** is **11:59 p.m. on 3 October 2025 (Hong Kong time)**. Please refer to the Frequently Asked Questions applicable to the CRE and BLNST to be held in November 2025 outside Hong Kong for details.

General

- Q20 : Where can I get past papers of the CRE for reference?
- A20 : The CRE papers are not published. Sample questions of the [CRE](#) papers are available on the CSB website.
- Q21 : What is the syllabus for the CRE?
- A21 : There is no prescribed syllabus for the CRE. The UE and UC papers assess candidates' language proficiency whereas the AT paper assesses their reasoning abilities. The [examination format](#) and [sample questions](#) can be found on the CSB website.

- Q22 : If I want to amend my personal particulars, what can I do?
- A22 : If you want to amend your personal particulars, such as your name, identity document number and correspondence address, etc, you may write to Senior Executive Officer (Examinations)2 of the Civil Service Examinations Unit at Room 2511, 25th Floor, Immigration Tower, 7 Gloucester Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong or by e-mail to csbcseu@csb.gov.hk, giving your name in English and HKID / Passport No.
- Q23 : Will a fee be charged for the CRE?
- A23 : There is no application fee for the CRE.

About result notification and job application

- Q24 : When and how will I receive the results of the CRE?
- A24 : Examination results in the form of electronic result certificates will be issued to you within one month after the examination. The Civil Service Examinations Unit will send an e-mail to you through eproofcseu@csb.gov.hk with the download link of electronic result certificate for the CRE. For further information on electronic result certificate for the CRE, please refer to the [CSB website](#).
- Q25 : What should I do if I want to have a review on my CRE result(s)?
- A25 : Your review request should be made in writing and sent by e-mail to csbcseu@csb.gov.hk **within two weeks** from the issuance date of the electronic result certificate. Late submissions will **NOT** be considered. If candidate has obtained Level 2 in the UE and UC papers of the CRE, or a Pass in the AT paper of the CRE, the review request of the concerned paper(s) will **NOT** be considered.
- Q26 : If I obtain Level 2 or Level 1 in the UE and UC papers and a Pass in the AT paper of the CRE, will I be qualified for applying for civil service posts? When and how can I apply for these posts?
- A26 : Individual recruiting departments / grades will stipulate in the relevant recruitment advertisements their CRE requirements. As the CRE is held independently of the recruitment process for any civil service post, you should apply to the recruiting departments / grades direct in response to [recruitment advertisements](#) published in newspapers and on the CSB website. The acquisition of the requisite CRE results does not imply that a candidate has fully met the entry requirements of any civil service post at degree or professional level. Vetting of academic and / or professional qualifications will be carried out by the recruiting departments / grades which may also conduct separate examinations / interviews in addition to the CRE.
- Q27 : Do I need to retain the electronic result certificate of CRE results?
- A27 : You must retain the electronic result certificate, which is a proof of your attainment in obtaining the requisite CRE results when you apply for civil service posts at degree or professional level.
- Q28 : I have lost the electronic result certificate of CRE result(s). Can I request another copy?

- A28 : If the soft copy of the electronic result certificates are lost or accidentally deleted, you may first retrieve the result notification e-mail sent by the CSEU through eproofcseu@csb.gov.hk to access the download link of the electronic result certificate. You can download the certificate again upon completion of identity verification at the e-Proof website. In case the relevant e-mail is deleted, you may contact the CSEU by e-mail at csbcseu@csb.gov.hk for resending the download link of the electronic result certificate.
- Q29 : Can I use the CRE results to apply for jobs outside the civil service?
- A29 : The CRE is a threshold examination for the appointment of civil service degree or professional posts. It is not a general academic qualification.
- Q30 : Can I take the Basic Law and National Security Law Test (BLNST) (Degree / Professional Grades) on the same day of the CRE?
- A30 : The CSB has launched the Digitalised Basic Law and National Security Law Test (Degree / Professional Grades) (Digitalised BLNST) in May 2025 for prospective applicants for civil service jobs requiring degree or professional qualifications to take the BLNST (Degree / Professional Grades) at their own selected timeslots throughout the year. In view of the launch of Digitalised BLNST, with effect from June 2025, the CSB will no longer organise the paper-based BLNST on the same day of the CRE in Hong Kong. Persons who wish to sit for the Digitalised BLNST may visit the [Digitalised BLNST website](#) for more details and application method.

For the convenience of those studying or residing outside Hong Kong, the year-end CRE together with the paper-based BLNST (Degree / Professional Grades) will also be held in some cities outside Hong Kong. Please visit the [CSB website](#) regularly for the latest information.