

Common Recruitment Examination and Basic Law and National Security Law Test (Degree / Professional Grades) (CRE and BLNST)

(Examination to be held in Hong Kong in October 2024)

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 BLNST (Degree/Professional Grades)

- Q14 : What is BLNST?
- A14 : For all civil service recruitment exercises **advertised on or after 1 July 2022**, attaining a pass result in the BLNST is an entry requirement for all civil service jobs. The BLNST will assess candidates' knowledge on both the Basic Law and the National Security Law. All candidates for civil service jobs must pass the BLNST in order to be considered for appointment, regardless of whether the candidates have previously taken the Basic Law Test (BLT) (either a BLT centrally conducted by the Civil Service Bureau (CSB) or a BLT arranged by individual bureaux/departments in their past civil service recruitment exercises) and the result. Candidates who have taken any BLT in the past and wish to apply for any civil service job advertised on or after 1 July 2022 must take the BLNST and attain a pass result in order to be considered for appointment.

The BLNST (Degree/Professional Grades) is a 30-minute bilingual paper (in both English and Chinese) comprising 20 multiple-choice questions. Answering at least 10 out of 20 questions correct will be deemed to have a pass result in BLNST (Degree/Professional Grades). A pass result in the BLNST (Degree/Professional grades) has permanent validity and is acceptable for the purpose of applying for all civil service jobs. Candidates who possess a pass result in BLNST (Degree/Professional Grades) will **not** be arranged to take the BLNST again.

Q15 : What is the content for the BLNST?

A15 : The scope of the BLNST will be based on the text of the Basic Law (which includes all its annexes, instruments, attachments and appendices) (Basic Law (full text) (<https://www.basiclaw.gov.hk/en/basiclaw/index.html>)) and the National Security Law (National Security Law – (a) Preamble (English) (<https://www.gld.gov.hk/egazette/pdf/20202444e/es220202444136.pdf>) (b) Full text (English) (<https://www.gld.gov.hk/egazette/pdf/20202448e/egn2020244872.pdf>)).

Candidates who wish to acquire a better understanding of the Basic Law and the National Security Law may refer to the following links -

- Government's website on the Basic Law (<https://www.basiclaw.gov.hk/en/index/index.html>)
- Government's website on the Basic Law Court Case Database (<https://www.basiclawcourtcase.gov.hk/en/home/index.html>)
- Government's website on National Security Education Day (<https://www.nsed.gov.hk/?l=en>)
- Government's website on Safeguarding National Security in Hong Kong (<https://www.isd.gov.hk/nationalsecurity/eng/index.html>)

The [examination format](#) and [sample questions](#) can be found on the CSB website.

Q16 : If I have previously taken and passed the BLT, do I need to take the BLNST paper?

A16 : Regardless of whether the candidates have taken a BLT before, they are required to take the BLNST and attain a pass result in order to be considered for appointment.

Candidates who possess a pass result in BLNST (Degree/Professional Grades) will **not** be arranged to take any BLNST again. The relevant pass result is acceptable for the purpose of applying for all civil service jobs.

Q17 : If I have previously taken and passed the BLNST (degree level) conducted by the Education Bureau (EDB) for persons who plan to join or change to another secondary school, primary school or kindergarten to take up a graduate teaching post, do I need to take the BLNST (Degree/Professional grades) conducted by the CSB if I wish to apply for civil service jobs?

A17 : For all civil service recruitment exercises **advertised on or after 28 July 2023**, job applicants could apply for the BLNST conducted by the CSB, the EDB or various recruiting departments/grades, the pass result of which is mutually acceptable for applying for both civil service jobs and teaching posts in public-funded schools or kindergartens joining the Kindergarten Education Scheme.

The mutual acceptance arrangement is applicable to pass results issued by the CSB, the EDB or recruiting departments/grades, regardless of whether the BLNST is conducted before or after the implementation of the new arrangement. Details of the mutual acceptance of results are as follows –

Level of BLNST		Applicability
BLNST conducted by the CSB and recruiting departments/grades	BLNST conducted by the EDB	
BLNST (Degree/Professional grades)	BLNST (degree level)	All civil service jobs and teaching posts
BLNST (non-degree / non-professional civil service grades at or above completion of secondary education level)	BLNST (non-degree level)	All civil service jobs requiring qualifications below degree / profession level, and all non-degree-holding teaching posts

Candidates who possess a pass result in the BLNST (degree level) conducted by the EDB will **not** be arranged to take any BLNST again. The pass result of the BLNST (degree level) is acceptable for the purpose of applying for all civil service jobs **advertised on or after 28 July 2023**.

About eligibility

Q18 : Who can apply for the coming CRE and BLNST?

A18 : Applicants for the coming CRE and BLNST 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 2024-25 or 2025-26; 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 19)

Q19 : I possess a professional qualification but not a degree. Can I apply to sit the CRE and BLNST?

A19 : Non-degree holders may only apply to sit the CRE and BLNST 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 and BLNST 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 and BLNST 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 and BLNST, 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).

Q20 : I am expected to get the bachelor's degree within 2025 or 2026. Can I apply to sit the coming CRE and BLNST?

A20 : Persons who will have attained a degree (not including Associate Degree) in the academic year of 2024-25 or 2025-26 may apply to sit the coming CRE and BLNST. Applicants who have questions about their attaining the degree qualification in the academic year of 2024-25 or 2025-26 should first confirm with their tertiary institutions.

CRE and BLNST to be held outside Hong Kong

Q21 : I have applied for sitting the coming CRE and BLNST scheduled for October 2024 in Hong Kong. Can I apply again to sit the examination tentatively scheduled for 7 December 2024 outside Hong Kong?

A21 : For the convenience of those studying or residing outside Hong Kong, CRE and BLNST is also tentatively scheduled to be held on 7 December 2024 in seven other cities, namely Beijing, Shanghai, London, New York, Toronto, Vancouver and Sydney. Applicants may apply to sit the examination both in Hong Kong in October 2024 (application has been closed) and in one of the cities outside Hong Kong in December 2024. For persons who apply for sitting both the examinations in Hong Kong in October 2024 and outside Hong Kong in December 2024, if they subsequently obtain the highest results of the CRE paper(s) in the examination in October 2024, they will not be arranged to take the same paper(s) again in the examination outside Hong Kong in December 2024. Similarly, for persons who have attained a pass result in BLNST in the examination in October 2024, they will not be arranged to take any BLNST again.

Application deadline for taking the examination **outside Hong Kong** is **11:59 p.m. on 4 October 2024 (Hong Kong time)**. Please refer to the Frequently Asked questions applicable to the CRE and BLNST to be held in December 2024 outside Hong Kong for details.

Q22 : I am studying / residing overseas but planning to return to Hong Kong in / before October 2024. I have applied for sitting the coming CRE and BLNST tentatively scheduled for October 2024 in Hong Kong. If I change my mind and would like to take the examination tentatively scheduled for 7 December 2024 outside Hong Kong, what should I do?

A22 : If you have submitted an application for sitting the examination scheduled for October 2024 in Hong Kong and wish to change to sit the examination tentatively scheduled for 7 December 2024 outside Hong Kong, you **should make a separate application for the examination tentatively scheduled for 7 December 2024 outside Hong Kong on or before the application deadline, i.e. 4 October 2024 11:59 p.m. (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 October in Hong Kong, you are required to inform the Civil Service Examinations Unit in writing separately.

In connection with the application for the post(s) of Administrative Officer (AO), Executive Officer II (EOII), Assistant Trade Officer II (ATOII) and / or Transport Officer II (TOII)

Q23 : The joint recruitment exercise for AO, EOII, ATOII and TOII starts on 14 September 2024. If I intend to apply for the post(s) of AO / EOII / ATOII / TOII, do I have to apply for the coming CRE and BLNST?

A23 : For persons interested in applying for these posts, if they possess the requisite CRE (or equivalent) and BLNST results, they will be arranged to take the Joint AO / Executive Officer / Trade Officer / Transport Officer Recruitment Examination (JRE) in Hong Kong or in cities outside Hong Kong according to their choice. For job applicants who do not possess the requisite CRE (or equivalent) and / or BLNST results, they will be arranged to take the relevant CRE paper(s) and / or BLNST on the same day of JRE or another date within December 2024.

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 December 2024 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 December 2024. Application deadline for taking the CRE and BLNST **outside Hong Kong** is **11:59 p.m. on 4 October 2024 (Hong Kong time)**. Please refer to the Frequently Asked questions applicable to the CRE and BLNST to be held in December 2024 outside Hong Kong for details.

General

Q24 : Where can I get past papers of the CRE or mock papers of BLNST for reference?

A24 : The CRE and BLNST papers are not published. Sample questions of the [CRE](#) and [BLNST](#) papers are available on the CSB website.

Q25 : What is the syllabus for the CRE?

A25 : 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.

Q26 : If I want to amend my personal particulars, what can I do?

A26 : 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.

Q27 : Will a fee be charged for the CRE and BLNST?

A27 : There is no application fee for the CRE and BLNST.

About result notification and job application

Q28 : When and how will I receive the results of the CRE and BLNST?

A28 : Result notifications will be sent **by post** to candidates within one month after the examination.

Q29 : What should I do if I want to have a review on my CRE / BLNST result(s)?

- A29 : Your request should be made in writing and sent by post to 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 **within two weeks** from the date of the result notification. Late submissions will **NOT** be considered.
- Q30 : If I obtain Level 2 or Level 1 in the UE and UC papers and a Pass in the AT paper of the CRE as well as a pass result in the BLNST (Degree/Professional Grades), will I be qualified for applying for civil service posts? When and how can I apply for these posts?
- A30 : 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.
- Q31 : Do I need to retain the letter of CRE results?
- A31 : You must retain the letter, 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.
- Q32 : Do I need to retain the letter of BLNST result?
- A32 : You must retain the letter of BLNST result. It is a proof of your BLNST result and you are required to present the result notification letters to the recruiting departments / grades when attending the trade test / recruitment examination / interview.
- Q33 : I have lost the letter of CRE / BLNST result(s). Can I request another copy?
- A33 : You may make a request in writing which may be sent by post to 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.
- Q34 : Can I use the CRE results to apply for jobs outside the civil service?
- A34 : The CRE is a threshold examination for the appointment of civil service degree or professional posts. It is not a general academic qualification.