

CHINA STUDIES IN ENGLISH

SYLLABUS

Pre-University

H2

Implementation starting with
2016 Pre-University One Cohort



Ministry of Education
SINGAPORE

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1. INTRODUCTION: CHINA STUDIES IN ENGLISH

1.1 VALUE OF CHINA STUDIES IN ENGLISH

The growing importance of China as a regional and global power reinforces the relevance of this subject in equipping our students with the skills and dispositions that allow them to gain a better understanding of China. Political leaders and business leaders in Singapore have highlighted the necessity for Singaporeans to acquire a good understanding of China and the Chinese mindset, and be equipped with the requisite knowledge, skills and attitude to ride on China's growth in the future. The growing interest in China can be seen in the prevalence of courses on contemporary China and the East Asia region in local and overseas universities.

Furthermore, the contemporary nature of China Studies in English (CSE) enables students to apply what they have learnt to their understanding of current developments in China and the world. The subject has strong relevance to real-world developments, which allows students to participate in ongoing discussions about these developments within and outside the classroom. It helps students develop analytical thinking as they examine the challenges and opportunities facing China from multiple angles and perspectives. Students will experience basic policy planning because they will postulate future trends and make recommendations based on current developments, and evaluate the feasibility of their recommendations.

1.2 DESIRED OUTCOMES OF EDUCATION

CSE seeks to nurture in students the attributes outlined in the Desired Outcomes of Education, which are embodied by the following attributes:

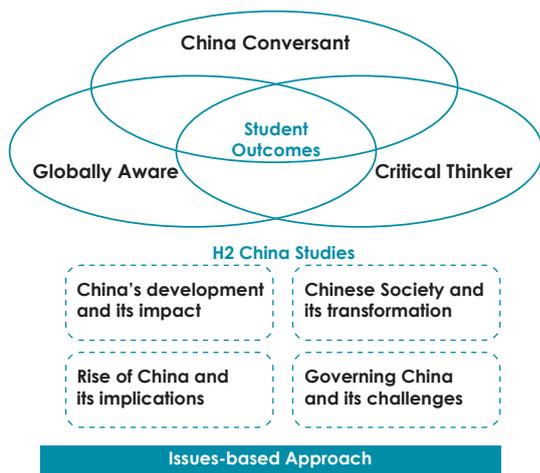
- (a) a **confident person** who has a strong sense of right and wrong, is adaptable and resilient, knows himself, is discerning in judgement, thinks independently and critically, and communicates effectively;
- (b) a **self-directed learner** who questions, reflects, perseveres, and takes responsibility for his own learning;
- (c) an **active contributor** who is able to work effectively in teams, is innovative, exercises initiative, takes calculated risks and strives for excellence; and
- (d) a **concerned citizen** who is rooted to Singapore, has strong civic consciousness, is informed about Singapore and the world, and takes an active part in bettering the lives of others.

These attributes are cultivated as the subject guides students towards an analysis of the domestic and external forces that shape contemporary China. Students are encouraged to participate in ongoing discussions about important issues facing China's transformation and its future. In doing so, students become independent and critical thinkers who ask pertinent questions and offer their viewpoints about global issues. They will also become aware of the developments around the world and how these developments will affect Singapore.

1.3 AIMS OF CHINA STUDIES IN ENGLISH

Aligned with the Desired Outcomes of Education, CSE aims to develop in students the relevant knowledge and critical thinking skills to pursue a holistic understanding of contemporary China and to be cognisant of larger global trends. In the long run, it seeks to enable students to potentially contribute in their own capacity to further Singapore-China interactions. Hence, the CSE curriculum seeks to achieve the following student outcomes:

- (a) a person who is **'China-conversant'**, where the student will be knowledgeable about the developments in China and sensitive to the thoughts and behaviour of the people of China;
- (b) a person who practices **critical thinking**, where the student will exercise sound reasoning by considering different perspectives and sources of evidence; and
- (c) a person who is **globally aware**, where the student will possess an awareness of global issues and trends through the study of China's relations with other countries and its growth as a regional and global power.



To achieve these aims, the syllabus has adopted an **issues-based approach**, which will focus on key developments and discourse with regard to contemporary China.

In developing in students a critical understanding of contemporary China through an issues-based approach, the study of CSE will be grounded upon an inquiry of four key issues in H2 CSE. The key issues serve to guide the discourse on key content dimensions involving China's economy, politics, society and international relations.

Figure 1: H2 China Studies in English Curriculum Shape

The graphic representation of the curriculum shape in Figure 1 captures the relationship between the issues based approach and the key issues derived for the study of contemporary China, and how it would lead to achieving the aims of developing students who are China-conversant, critical thinkers and globally aware. The curriculum shape provides a clear and shared understanding of how and what should be taught and learnt in H2 CSE in order to ensure greater alignment between the planned and enacted curricula.

1.4 DEVELOPING 21ST CENTURY COMPETENCIES AND CHARACTER AND CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

The CSE curriculum is aligned with the 21st Century Competencies framework. Through issues-based learning, students will acquire knowledge of contemporary China while developing 21st century competencies in a constructivist setting. For instance, in examining key issues facing China’s transformation, students will continuously engage in critical questions of why China has formulated certain policies or undertaken certain actions. They will also examine how these, in turn, impact China’s economic development and her role in the international arena as a potential great power.

In this regard, the students’ understanding of contemporary China will be undergirded by their ability to study the dynamic interrelationships across China’s economy, politics, society and international relations (**civic literacy, global awareness and cross-cultural skills**). The discussion of different issues in the classroom (**communication, collaboration and information skills**) will serve as a platform to develop analytical and evaluative skills (**critical and inventive thinking**).

In the same vein, the CSE curriculum supports Character and Citizenship Education (CCE) through the development of skills related to citizenship competencies as articulated in the components of the domain of civic literacy, global awareness and cross-cultural skills. The CSE curriculum serves as a platform for students to attain the CCE learning outcomes, which involve learning concepts such as governance that can also be applied to the study of other countries. In addition, discussions about China’s development as well as its external relations allow students to reflect on and engage with issues at the community, national and global levels as informed and responsible citizens.



**Figure 2: Framework for 21st Century Competencies and Student Outcomes¹
(from 2014 onwards)**

¹ More information on MOE’s 21st Century Competencies can be obtained from <http://www.moe.gov.sg/education/21cc/>.

2: PEDAGOGY: LEARNING THROUGH THE ISSUES-BASED APPROACH

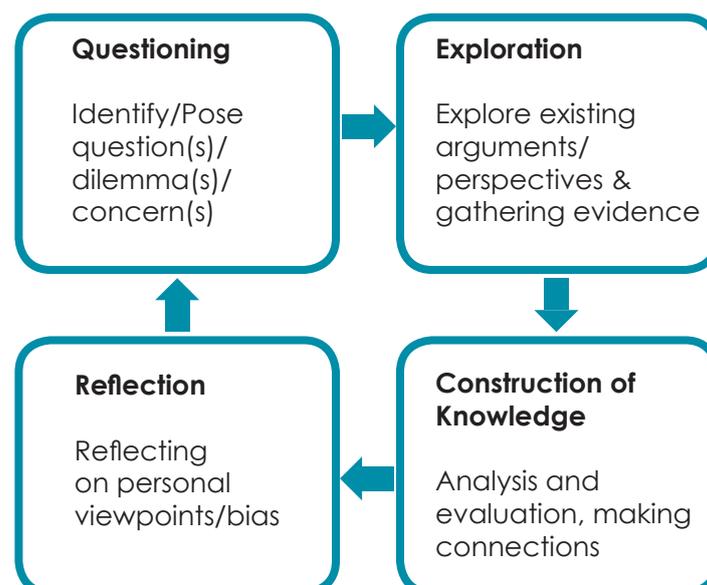
2.1 ISSUES-BASED LEARNING

Considering the aims of CSE, the issues-based learning process seeks to develop in students a critical understanding of key concepts, big ideas and skills necessary to understand China today. The study of key issues facing contemporary China is presented as questions that will engage students in contemporary debates among scholars and policymakers studying China. This is reflected in the aspect of **questioning**.

Furthermore, the process will make the study of the subject more interesting and relevant to the students' experiences, since it goes beyond the study of abstract ideas and principles featured in textbooks or classroom lessons. Through **exploration**, students will make connections between what is studied and the real-world context, connecting individual choices to public policy issues and to the ongoing and fundamental dilemmas of human existence (Ross, 2006).

Construction of knowledge results from the earlier exploration in which students were given the opportunity to analyse, evaluate and make connections using the data and evidence gathered. In the context of H2 CSE, this process can contribute to a serious examination and discourse concerning contemporary economic, political and social issues within the society and the country.

The process of **reflection** will help students be aware of how their experiences and deeply rooted beliefs may affect judgement. Engaging in reflective thinking will help students practise persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge (Dewey, 1933), so that they can arrive at a more informed and balanced judgement in dealing with complex dilemmas.



The characteristics and value of issues-based learning can be summarised in four main points:

- (a) **Questioning:** The study of issues poses real-life situations and dilemmas that can create a form of cognitive dissonance, which then stimulates a student's need and desire to investigate.
- (b) **Exploration:** The study of issues highlights multiple perspectives and interpretations that motivate students to evaluate and reflect.
- (c) **Construction of Knowledge:** The study of issues promotes more meaningful and constructivist-based classroom activities.
- (d) **Reflection:** The learning experiences created through an issues-based approach will promote more critical and reflective thinking in students.

2.2 CONSTRUCTIVISM IN CHINA STUDIES IN ENGLISH

Issues-based learning supports and offers opportunities for constructivism to take place within and outside the classroom. Issues-based learning is appropriate for CSE because it places emphasis on contemporary problems and makes connections with students' current realities. Furthermore, it encourages students to carry out research and learn from multiple sources beyond lecture notes.

There are also many similarities in the pedagogical methods fronted by constructivist approaches and issues-based learning. Richardson (2003) describes constructivist pedagogies as being 'student-centred', purposeful group-dialogue, using different modes of instruction, creating opportunities for learners to change their understanding, and developing their awareness of metacognition. Issues-based learning seeks to create critical dialogue and reflective discussion. The possible formats to encourage dialogue and discussion are group work, role-playing, simulation, student research, the Socratic seminar, and a variety of formats for large and small group discussion.

3. CONTENT: H2 CHINA STUDIES IN ENGLISH SYLLABUS

3.1 UNDERSTANDING THE SYLLABUS DESIGN

Bearing in mind the aims of China Studies, the H2 CSE syllabus was designed based on several principles. The syllabus should:

- (a) identify key issues related to China's transformation and its future that would allow for the study of the interrelationships between different dimensions and perspectives;
- (b) also allow for the
 - i. examination of economic, political, social and international relations dimensions
 - ii. inclusion of multiple perspectives to be adopted in the exploration of each issue
 - iii. use of inquiry and guiding questions to provide focus in the examination of issues
 - iv. study of key concepts transferable to other subjects beyond China Studies; and
- (c) ensure alignment with the outcomes and intent of MOE's Desired Outcomes of Education, 21st Century Competencies and outcomes, and ICT Masterplan 3.

3.2 SYLLABUS AIMS

H2 CSE seeks to enhance the students' understanding of contemporary China through a study of the interrelationships between China's economy, politics, society and international relations. Hence, H2 CSE is a starting point for students to pursue and obtain a holistic understanding of contemporary China in order to be China-conversant, to be sensitive to the differences between Singapore and China and, in the future, to potentially contribute in their own capacity to further Singapore-China interactions. In addition, it aims to develop students' critical thinking skills and awareness of global developments.

H2 CSE aims to enable students to understand China's transformation and its future by:

- examining key issues relevant to contemporary China, its people and its current stage of development;
- developing an understanding of the different dimensions of China's development, in its economy, politics, society and international relations; and
- developing skills in evaluating multiple perspectives to arrive at an informed judgement of issues as well as to assess the feasibility of the students' personal recommendations.

3.3 KEY FEATURES OF THE SYLLABUS

Knowledge and Understanding of Key Issues

The syllabus focuses on China's transformation since 1978 and its future, and is grounded in an examination of four key issues facing contemporary China. This syllabus frames four key issues:

- China's development and its impact
- Governing China and its challenges
- Chinese society and its transformation
- Rise of China and its implications

The study of these four key issues will help students engage in contemporary debates centred on the following key questions:

- ❖ Is China's development sustainable?
- ❖ How stable is China's socio-political system?
- ❖ How does the rise of China impact its external relations?

Making Connections across Content Dimensions

The four content dimensions of economy, politics, society and international relations constitute the knowledge domain in CSE. Even though the study of each key issue is foregrounded by one main content dimension, students will draw from relevant content dimensions and examine the interrelationships between two or more dimensions in addressing the key issues. For example, as students study the consequences of China's economic growth, they can extend their knowledge to better understand the plight of migrant workers by examining China's social transformation. Such an approach enables students to distil relevant concepts and understanding from various content dimensions and consider different perspectives before arriving at a conclusion to address any of the four key issues. Making connections across the relevant dimensions is vital to appreciating the complexity of the challenges and developments facing contemporary China.

Issues-based Learning Outcomes

Instead of having a specific learning outcome for each content topic, the learning outcomes in the new H2 CSE syllabus are pegged to each key issue, framing the scope of content topics. The purpose of the revised learning outcomes is to enable students to understand how the content topics fit into a broader understanding of each of the four key issues.

In addressing these learning outcomes, teachers could refer to the following guidelines in engaging with the content topics located within each content dimension. This will allow them to identify and scope the specific content to be taught in alignment with the requirements of the learning outcomes.

- Identify the key issue.
- Identify the learning outcome from the issue identified.
- Select content topic from the main content dimension and select relevant knowledge that would help students address the key issue and meet the learning outcome.
- Finally, draw connections with at least one other content dimension that is relevant to the key issue and learning outcome identified above.

Key Concepts

Key concepts are aligned with the learning outcomes and drawn from the main content dimensions to help students deepen their study of each key issue as well as equip them with the ability to transfer their learning to new contexts beyond China. The transferability of key concepts to studies beyond China helps students see the value of CSE as a subject that equips them with critical thinking skills and knowledge that they can apply beyond the study of China.

3.4 SYLLABUS CONTENT

Key Issue 1: China's Development and its Impact	
<p>With the success of China's Open Door policy and its state-led growth since 1978, the factors that contributed to the country's rapid economic growth have received much attention as a model for success. However, China's economic success has also started to yield problems such as environmental degradation and a growing income gap. In addition, China's economic strategy with its strong dependency on exports and foreign investments is increasingly seen as unsustainable, with the changing global economic climate as well as domestic factors such as rising wages and energy depletion. A reformulation of China's developmental trajectory is thus urgently needed, and a more holistic view of development has become a major consideration on the Chinese agenda.</p> <p>Learning Outcomes</p> <p>Through the study of this issue, students will be able to discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • China's success in achieving rapid economic development; • the challenges facing China's sustained economic development; and • China's approaches towards sustaining its economic development. 	
<p>Main Content Dimension: Economy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic growth strategy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Export-oriented o Investment-driven o Rapid industrialisation • Economic challenges <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Unbalanced development o Reform of state-owned enterprises o Energy demands o Environmental problems • Economic restructuring <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Increasing domestic demand o Urbanisation o Green development 	<p>Key Concepts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development • Economic Liberalisation • Economic Sustainability <p>Connecting the Dimensions</p> <p>To understand China's economic development and how China can maintain its status as an economic superpower, it is essential to consider the political and social changes that are taking place within the country that can either further China's development or retard it, depending on how they are managed. In addition, with the rise of a globalised economy, China's foreign relations will also play a large role in influencing China's future economic trajectory.</p>

Key Issue 2: Governing China and Its Challenges

Chinese political leaders are facing a fast-changing political and social landscape. Despite the shift towards a decentralisation of power and a more collective form of leadership, there have been criticisms regarding the pace of political reforms. In addition, the challenges brought by China's rapid economic growth have created tensions between the state and society that may pose a threat to the ruling government's legitimacy. Hence, ensuring social stability and, ultimately, political stability remain the top priority on the agenda of the Chinese leadership. For the political leaders to stay in power, it will become imperative for them to govern China effectively beyond just delivering economic growth.

Learning Outcomes

Through the study of this issue, students will be able to discuss:

- the strengths and weaknesses of China's political system;
- the effectiveness of the Chinese government in meeting people's needs; and
- the challenges to governance.

Main Content Dimension: Politics

- **Features of China's politics**
 - o One-party rule
 - o Power of the provincial governments
 - central-local interactions
- **Challenges facing the Party**
 - o Leadership renewal
 - o Securing political legitimacy
 - importance of ideology
 - performance-based legitimacy
- **Governance**
 - o Transparency and corruption
 - sources of corruption
 - rule of law
 - o Provision of social welfare
 - o Management of ethnic groups

Key Concepts

- Governance
- Political Legitimacy
- State Power

Connecting the Dimensions

To understand how China is being governed and its challenges, there is a need to look into how the diverse groups in Chinese society respond to the ways in which they are being governed. The growing social issues as well as rising expectations to deliver the promise of a 'well-off society' will put pressure on the government to implement economic, political and social reforms. In addition, the growing Chinese confidence in their achievements has become a force that will influence the government's handling of its foreign relations to ensure China's place as an emerging global power.

Key Issue 3: Chinese Society and Its Transformation

With more than 30 years of opening and reform, Chinese society has been plunged into the midst of rapid transformation with its growing economic affluence. Confucian norms and values that govern the society are now meeting with an influx of foreign cultures and ideas. In addition, changing demographics and social trends are playing an important role in influencing Chinese values, social mentality and relational structures. As Chinese society becomes more open and diversified, there is an increasing tension between the different groups of people in China. Working towards a harmonious interaction between the government and people, the rich and the poor, will therefore become key factors contributing towards ensuring China's social stability and future development.

Learning Outcomes

Through the study of this issue, students will be able to discuss:

- the implications of China's changing demographics;
- China's social diversity and its challenges
- the impact of development on Chinese society.

Main Content Dimension: Society

- **Changing demographics**
 - o Population policies
 - o Population structure
 - sex ratio
 - ageing population
 - o Population movement
 - rural-urban migration
- **Social organisation and stratification**
 - o Family and kinship
 - inter-generational support
 - parental role/parent-child interaction
 - o The urban middle class
 - o The migrant workers
- **Society and the state**
 - o Rise of religiosity
 - o Non-governmental organisations
 - o The Internet

Key Concepts

- Social Change
- Social Structure
- Civil Society

Connecting the Dimensions

To understand Chinese society, it is necessary to consider the economic and political changes taking place within China and China's relations with the world. This is because much of the societal transformation taking place within China is a result of economic modernisation, state policies and interaction with other countries. On the other hand, it is also important to study the impact of societal transformation on the Chinese government, the country's economic trajectory and its foreign policies.

Key Issue 4: Rise of China and Its Implications

With growing international concerns regarding the direction of China’s foreign policy goals resulting from its stellar economic growth, the Chinese leadership embarked on a diplomatic campaign that sought to allay concerns over its military spending, more aggressive territorial claims and increased global presence. Furthermore, China has begun to play a larger role in global governance through participation in international and multilateral institutions. Parallel to these efforts, however, China has also sought to safeguard its national interests through policies that have been perceived as aggressive and running contrary to Chinese claims regarding its ‘Peaceful Rise’. Consequently, an understanding of the various forces that shape Chinese foreign policy would allow a better understanding of this dichotomy in the way China manages its external relations.

Learning Outcomes

Through the study of this issue, students will be able to discuss:

- China’s views towards its external relations;
- China’s emergence as a global power and its implications
- China’s effectiveness in pursuing its foreign policy goals.

Main Content Dimension: International Relations

- **Domestic sources of China’s foreign policy**
 - o Path of peaceful development
 - o Popular nationalism
 - sovereignty and territorial issues
 - o Role of the People’s Liberation Army
- **China as a global power**
 - o Involvement in international and multilateral institutions
 - o Soft power
- **Sino-US relations**
 - o Cooperation and competition in Asia-Pacific
 - trade and investments
 - national security
- **Sino-Japan relations**
 - o Bilateral trade
 - o Historical controversies

Key Concepts

- Sovereignty
- Power
- Diplomacy

Connecting the Dimensions

To understand China’s foreign policymaking process, it is necessary to take into account not only the external circumstances but also the domestic developments. This is because in many ways, China’s behaviour on the global stage is increasingly influenced by its political developments and domestic public opinion. Often, the suspicion of Chinese behaviour in its interaction with other countries stems from a lack of understanding of China’s local conditions. Hence, without careful consideration of the domestic linkages to China’s international relations, countries may swing from peaceful cooperation to containing China’s rise.

4. ASSESSMENT IN H2 CHINA STUDIES IN ENGLISH

4.1 FORMATIVE AND SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT

Assessment is a broad term that refers to the process of obtaining information for making decisions about students, curricula, programmes, schools and educational policies, based on the degree to which students have achieved the aims of the syllabus. Assessment is broadly classified into two types: formative and summative.

Formative Assessment (or Assessment for Learning), refers to the manner in which feedback from assessment is used to improve teaching and learning, and can be a very powerful tool for enhancing learning. In formative assessment, teachers and students set learning targets, assess present levels of understanding and work strategically to narrow the distance between the two. All these take place during instruction, and are undertaken with the goal of improving the students' achievement of intended learning outcomes.

The 'A' Level examination is an example of **Summative Assessment** (or Assessment of Learning). This is more concerned with summarising the learning that students have achieved at particular points in time. It is designed to determine the extent to which instructional goals have been achieved, and is used to make decisions such as placement to the next level of study and admission to the next stage of education.

In alignment with general principles of assessment, the techniques used in meaningful summative assessment are determined by curriculum and instructional goals. This contributes to the validity of summative assessment data in reflecting the students' achievement of intended learning outcomes. The Assessment Objectives below highlight what students are required to demonstrate at the summative assessment level examinations and would also be referenced by teachers over the course of designing formative assessment opportunities.

4.2 ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES (AOs)

Candidates are expected to:

AO1: Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrate knowledge of issues in contemporary China and their relevant dimensions.
AO2: Analysis and Evaluation of Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Critically examine issues and developments.• Analyse and evaluate different perspectives.• Construct coherent and substantiated arguments.• Make judgements and reach conclusions based on reasoned consideration of issues.
AO3: Interpretation and Evaluation of Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interpret, analyse and evaluate information from a range of sources.• Postulate outcomes and developments based on information.• Justify opinions and recommendations.• Make judgements and reach conclusions based on reasoned consideration of information.

4.3 ASSESSMENT SPECIFICATION GRID

The assessment comprises three papers. Paper 1 (Case Study) and Paper 2 (Essay Questions) are written examination papers. Paper 3 (Independent Study) involves in-depth research on a specific area. Candidates are required to offer all three papers.

PAPER	DESCRIPTION	ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVE	MARKS	OVERALL WEIGHTING	SECTION
1 (Case Study)	Candidates answer the compulsory case study comprising three sub-questions.	AO1+AO2+AO3	30 marks	20%	1 hour 30 minutes
2 (Essay Questions)	<p>Candidates answer three questions.</p> <p><u>Section A</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Candidates answer 1 compulsory question on any of the four Key Issues in the syllabus. <p><u>Section B</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Candidates answer 2 questions. 3 questions will be set on any of the four Key Issues in the syllabus. 	AO1+AO2	75 marks	50%	2 hours 15 minutes
3 (Independent Study)	Candidates submit a 2,000 to 2,500 words research essay based on a research area related to any of the four Key Issues on China's transformation and its future.	AO1+AO2+AO3	45 marks	30%	6 months

Note: AO1 forms part of the testing of AO2 and AO3.

4.4 DESCRIPTION OF ASSESSMENT COMPONENTS

Paper 1 (Case Study)

The Case Study will consist of a collection of material, containing four to five sources and no more than four A4 pages in length, on any one of the four key issues in the syllabus content. The given material will provide different perspectives and opinions. It will include both textual and non-textual sources (e.g., maps, pictures, photos and statistics) but the interpretation of these sources will not require specialised knowledge of a particular discipline. The Case Study will require students to interpret, analyse and evaluate the given material, and make postulations on outcomes and developments based on the given information.

The Case Study questions will be assessed using the Levels of Response Mark Scheme (LORMS). LORMS involves qualitative judgements and awards marks according to the level of skill or understanding shown in the answer. The marking scheme will be specific to the target objective of the question set. There will be different levels of skill or understanding in relation to the target objective, as demonstrated by the students in their answers. The marking scheme will thus be question-specific.

Paper 2 (Essay Questions)

Students are required to show a depth of understanding of issues and evidence of reading in their answers. The answers should demonstrate critical thinking skills such as the ability to interpret and evaluate relevant dimensions that inform the issues, and to present thoughtful and analytical arguments. Students are required to answer the essay questions in continuous prose.

The essay questions will be assessed using holistic level descriptors. The assessment involves qualitative rather than quantitative evaluation. Judgements on the appropriate band of each essay assessed will be based on the principle of 'best fit' determined by the descriptions within each band which has several assessment criteria.

Paper 3 (Independent Study)

The Independent Study gives students the opportunity to select and research an area related to any of the four key issues on China's transformation and its future.

The selected research area must be focused and suitable for an in-depth study of six months' duration. Students must have their proposals submitted to the Principal Examiner for approval before they begin their research.

At the end of six months, students will submit an essay of 2,000 to 2,500 words for assessment. Headings, footnotes, charts, tables and appendices will not count towards the word limit. If the essay exceeds the word limit, the excess work will not be marked.

The Independent Study must be typed, double-spaced, on A4 size paper in Arial 12-point font. A complete bibliography of all resources used/referred to must be attached to the essay.

The Independent Study will be assessed using analytic level descriptors. Judgements on the appropriate level of each essay assessed will be based on the principle of 'best fit' determined by the descriptions within each level for each assessment criterion.