

Frequently Asked Questions on Special Schools under the New Senior Secondary (NSS) Academic Structure

Q.1: Can the NSS curriculum (ID) cater for the learning and future living needs of ID students?

A: ➤ Under the principle of “one curriculum framework for all”, the adapted curriculum (including the core subjects and elective subjects) for senior secondary ID students with different abilities and Other Learning Experiences (OLE) inside and outside classes to be complemented by individualised education programmes (IEP) enable students to have a balanced and comprehensive development. With junior secondary education as the foundation, students can continue to enhance their language proficiency and numeracy skills, consolidate and intensify their learning as well as broaden their horizon. Besides, through various learning activities, they can also stretch their potential and develop their abilities and interests in life-long learning as well as enhance their independence and living skills so as to become well-adapted and contributing members of the community ultimately.

Q.2: Does the EDB allow special schools greater flexibility to implement the NSS curriculum?

A: ➤ Special schools adopting the ordinary secondary curriculum offer Chinese Language, English Language, Mathematics and Liberal Studies as the core subjects, whereas the core subjects of special schools admitting ID students will include Chinese Language, Mathematics and Liberal Studies/Independent Living. Schools offer elective subject in accordance with their particular situations, students’ abilities and interests so that students can benefit from the NSS curriculum.

➤ In view of the various learning needs of SEN students, we have suggested schools allow greater flexibility in developing the school-based curriculum, in particular the curriculum for ID students, such as the allocation of lesson time for the core subjects, elective subjects and OLE, the number of periods and the time for learning, as well as the lesson time for individual subjects and the weighting of various contents within a subject, etc. Below are some suggestions for developing the NSS (ID) curriculum:

- The time allocated to the core subjects, elective subjects and OLE

should be 35-50%, 20-30% and 20-45% respectively;

- The suggested “lesson time” should be no less than 18 hours per week so as to allow schools to provide appropriate support to cater for students’ special needs;
- Schools may consider whether to offer elective parts/elective modules for certain core/elective subjects according to their students’ actual abilities; and
- The weighting of contents of certain elective subjects can be adjusted according to students’ abilities.

Q.3: Does the EDB offer adequate elective subjects and ApL courses for ID students in special schools under the new academic structure?

- A:
- Up to the 2010/11 school year, the EDB has completed the adapted curriculum of Physical Education, Visual Arts, Information and Communication Technology as well as Technology and Living. The adaptation of the curriculum on Music, Design and Applied Technology and Ethics and Religious Studies is in progress.
 - The ApL course (ID) provides 11 different courses from 2 areas of studies.

Q.4: Under NSS, how will schools assess the learning progress and performance of ID students, as well as their learning achievement after the 6-year secondary education?

- A:
- Under NSS, special schools will continue to adopt school-based assessment to assess the learning performance of ID students.
 - Schools may go further to formulate indicators of expected learning outcomes for students in accordance with the Learning Progression Framework (LPF) of the three core subjects (Chinese Language, Mathematics and Liberal Studies/Independent Living) in order to have a better understanding of their learning progress and performance at the senior secondary level.
 - LPF has been validated and revised through the Seed Projects since the 2009/10 school year. The final version is expected to be ready by 2012 for use by schools as reference of students’ specific learning performance in the three core subjects.
 - EDB encourages schools to record students’ experiences and

achievements in the Student Learning Profiles (SLP) to reflect their whole-person development.

Q.5: Will ID students undergo the same qualification accreditation as the students in ordinary schools?

- A:
- It is our long-term goal to develop a system to record and recognize the academic performance and efforts of students with intellectual disabilities.
 - IEP and SLP are used currently as important references to confirm the various achievements of ID students.

Q.6: How does the EDB support special schools admitting students with intellectual disabilities through professional training programmes in implementing the NSS education?

- A:
- Special schools can continue to make use of the Teacher Professional Preparation Grant (TPPG) until 31 August 2012 to create space for their staff so that they can seize various professional development opportunities to enhance their professional capability to support the implementation of the NSS curriculum.
 - We also provide principals, teachers and other professionals of ID schools with professional training programmes of various levels and categories including those on the planning of NSS curriculum, curriculum interpretation of the core and elective subjects, teaching strategies, assessment and LPF, sharing of experience on curriculum tryout, implementation of OLE, etc. Information of training activities has been posted on the Training Calendar System of the EDB Webpage.

Q.7: What measures will the Government and relevant organisations take to help special school leavers to make a smooth transition to meaningful jobs and training?

- Skills centres and training institutes offering further education and training to special school graduates are now exploring new options and/or offering courses to articulate with mainstream training such as courses provided by the Youth College, Institute of Vocational Education, etc. to enhance choices of exit pathways for students with intellectual disabilities.

Q.8: How will resources be allocated under the NSS academic structure? Will

special schools be given additional resources to implement the NSS academic structure? How will the EDB enhance the flexibility of resource allocation?

- A:
- With effect from the 2009/10 school year, the teacher-to-class ratios in special schools will be revised to 1.7 teachers per primary and junior secondary class and 1.9 teachers per senior secondary class. As for special schools offering ordinary curriculum of ordinary schools, they will, like ordinary schools, be provided with 2 teachers per class after the 2011/12 school year.
 - Special schools may also apply for Diversity Learning Grant to offer a diversified curriculum including ApL courses and network programmes.
 - Special schools can continue to make use of the Teacher Professional Preparation Grant (TPPG) and the New Senior Secondary Curriculum Migration Grant (NSSCMG) for the implementation of NSS curriculum until 31 August 2012.
 - Special schools are also given Senior Secondary Curriculum Support Grant which is a cash grant. During the transitional period of the four years subsequent to the 2008/09 school year, the amount of grant given to special schools per annum will be increased to at least the equivalent of the mid-point salary of a Graduate Master teacher to help them make full preparation for the implementation of the NSS academic structure.
 - Special schools are also provided with the Liberal Studies Curriculum Support Grant (LSCSG) until 31 August 2012 to create favourable conditions for the introduction of LS in the early stage of the new academic structure and to lay a sound foundation for its further development.