

Frequently Asked Questions on Special Schools under the New Academic Structure (NAS)

Q.1 Can the senior secondary (SS) curriculum (Intellectual Disability) (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) and Other Learning Experiences (OLE) beyond classroom, to be complemented by individualised education programmes (IEP), enables every senior secondary ID student to have a balanced and comprehensive development. Besides, with Basic Education as the foundation, the SS curriculum can help students continue to enhance their language proficiency and numeracy skills. Through various learning activities, they can also stretch their potential, widen their horizon and enhance their independence and living skills, thereby cultivating their practice in self-directed and life-long learning and facilitating their whole-person development.

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

A:

- Special schools adopting the ordinary secondary curriculum offer Chinese Language, English Language, Mathematics and Citizenship and Social Development as the core subjects, whereas the core subjects of special schools admitting ID students will include Chinese Language, Mathematics and Citizenship and Social Development. Schools offer elective subject in accordance with their particular situations, students’ abilities and interests so that students can benefit from the SS curriculum.
- In view of the learner diversity of students with special educational needs (SEN), special schools should flexibly allocate the number of periods and learning time for the core subjects, elective subjects and OLE in developing the school-based curriculum. Below are some suggestions for developing the SS (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 adapted according to students’ abilities.

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

A:

- The EDB has completed curriculum adaptation for elective subjects of Physical Education, Visual Arts, Information and Communication Technology, Technology and Living, Music, Design and Applied Technology, Ethics and Religious Studies as well as Health Management and Social Care.

- Students can also choose the adapted ApL courses for students with intellectual disability as their elective subject(s). Starting from the 2020/21 school year, if individual students take an adapted ApL course as the fourth elective subject, their schools will also be subsidised by the DLG to encourage students to take adapted ApL to broaden their learning experiences.

Q.4 Under NAS, 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 NAS, 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 Frameworks (LPFs) of the core subjects in order to have a better understanding of their learning progress and performance at the SS level.
 - EDB encourages schools to record students' learning 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 the EDB's long-term goal to develop a system to record and recognize the achievements of ID students.
 - IEP and SLP are used currently as important references to record and understand 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 SS curriculum?

- A:
- The EDB provides school personnel and other professionals of ID schools with professional training programmes of various levels and categories including those on the planning of SS curriculum, curriculum interpretation of the core and elective subjects, teaching strategies, Using LPFs for practicing Assessment for Learning, 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?

- A:
- Institutes and Integrated Vocational Training centres offering training and vocational education to special school graduates are now exploring new options and/or offering courses to enhance the choices of exit pathways for students with intellectual disabilities.