

Education Bureau Circular Memorandum No. 74/2017

From: Permanent Secretary for Education To: Supervisors/Heads of all aided,
government and caput secondary
Ref.: EDB(CD/C&S)/F&A/65/1/1(11) schools, secondary schools under the
Direct Subsidy Scheme and special
Date: 1 June 2017 schools with senior secondary classes

Diversity Learning Grant for the Ninth Cohort of Senior Secondary Students – Other Languages and Other Programmes (from the 2017/18 to 2019/20 school years)

SUMMARY

This circular memorandum (CM) invites schools offering programmes on Other Languages (OL) and Other Programmes (OP) to the ninth cohort of senior secondary (SS) students to apply for the Diversity Learning Grant (DLG) from the 2017/18 to 2019/20 school years, and to attend a briefing session on the new arrangements for the DLG-OP with effect from the 2017/18 school year. Eligible schools should submit their application for the DLG from 5 to 30 June 2017.

DETAILS

Background

2. As stipulated in the report *New Academic Structure for Senior Secondary Education and Higher Education – Action Plan for Investing in the Future of Hong Kong* published by the Education Bureau (EDB) in 2005, the DLG has been provided to schools since the 2009/10 school year upon application to support schools in offering a diversified SS curriculum and to meet students' different needs. This CM should be read in conjunction with the EDBCM No. 146/2008 on Funding Arrangement of Diversity Learning Grant (DLG). Please refer to **Annex I** for details of the ambit for DLG-OL and OP.

Subsidy Rates

3. The DLG supports schools to offer programmes for Applied Learning (ApL), Other Languages (OL) and Other Programmes (OP) (including programmes on SS gifted education (GE) and network programmes (NP) of SS subjects). For the funding arrangement for ApL, please refer to the EDBCM No. 146/2016 on Senior Secondary Applied Learning Courses (2017-19 Cohort). The current subsidy rates for OL and OP are as follows:

DLG category	Subsidy rate
Other Languages (OL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$3,900 per SS student per year
Other Programmes (OP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic subsidy rate: \$7,000 per SS class per year for all applications from schools • Incentive funding: Additional incentive funding of \$800 per SS class per year for schools with a utilisation rate of DLG-OP of 80% or above, based on the schools' annual accounts of the most recent year¹ (i.e. a total of \$7,800 per SS class per year)

New Arrangements for DLG-OP

4. To ensure that the DLG-OP could be more optimally utilised to cater for diversity in student learning and to avoid the claw-back of unused grants, schools are advised to make a more realistic estimation for the coming school year (the estimation is capped by the maximum subsidy each school is entitled to). Schools should first submit their online application for DLG-OP in June and initially set the number of classes, and then confirm or amend the number of classes through the online survey in November to finalise the total amount in the schools' application for DLG-OP in the specific school year. For details, please refer to an example given in **Annex II**. A **briefing session** to introduce the new arrangements for the DLG-OP will be organised for schools on **7 June 2017 (Wednesday)** (*please refer to the EDB Training Calendar Course number: CDI020171094 for details*).

5. Schools could use the DLG-OP to offer school-based pull-out or off-site support programmes on GE, and/or collaborate with other schools to offer NP of SS subjects. A set of guidelines on the use of DLG-OP for GE programmes is in **Annex III**. For NP of SS subjects with School-based Assessment (SBA), schools should ensure that the SBA is conducted by qualified teachers (the assessors should generally be the subject teachers of the students), and the marks awarded will be counted towards the students' public assessment results in the 2020 Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination. Schools should inform the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA) of the arrangement for the relevant NP.

Modes of Delivery

6. Schools could deliver programmes for OL or OP in two modes, i.e. either deploying teachers of the schools or obtaining services from other organisations to teach the subjects. Under any circumstances, schools should ensure that the courses are taught by qualified teachers. For schools offering SS subjects through NP, teachers deployed to teach in other network schools should be registered teachers. Schools should exercise their professional judgement in choosing suitable teachers/organisations to teach the various courses, and make reference to **Annex IV** for details related to hiring external services and appointment of teaching staff. **Schools should not charge students any fee for taking OL and NP.**

¹ For aided, caput and special schools and schools under the Direct Subsidy Scheme, the annual accounts are mostly compiled on the basis of school year and the accounts of the most recent year submitted by schools are those of the 2015/16 school year. As for government schools, their accounts are compiled on the basis of financial year which are the accounts of the 2016-17 financial year. Utilisation rate is calculated on the basis of the total expenses and the entitled total provision of the year, i.e. Utilisation rate = Expenditure / (Allocation of the year + Surplus c/f from the preceding year) x 100%.

7. For schools planning to invite organisations registered under the Education Ordinance (Cap. 279) to teach Other Languages on school campuses, applications from these organisations for extending their premises are required. Schools may contact the EDB for enquiries and refer to paragraph 14 of this CM for the contact telephone numbers.

Application

8. Eligible schools are invited to apply online for the DLG for offering programmes on OL and/or OP for the ninth cohort of SS students (from the 2017/18 to 2019/20 school years). Schools should apply via the EDB online platform (<https://cd.edb.gov.hk/dlg2017/application/>) during the period from 5 to 30 June 2017. Schools will be informed of the application results by post on or before 29 September 2017. The application procedures, together with the login identity and password to facilitate online application, will be mailed to schools.

9. Schools applying for the DLG should draw up a 3-year plan (from the 2017/18 to 2019/20 school years) on how to deploy the grant. The plan should be endorsed by the Incorporated Management Committee (IMC)/School Management Committee (SMC). Please upload the plan as an annex to the school's annual plan to the school's homepage on or before 30 November each year. Schools may refer to **Annex V** for a sample of the 3-year plan. Moreover, if schools plan to offer gifted education programmes, they have to upload two documents in addition to the 3-year plan, including **an Annual Programme Proposal** at the start of the school year together with the 3-year plan and **a Programme Evaluation Report** at the end of the school year. These two documents should also be endorsed by the IMC/SMC. Please refer to **Annexes VI and VII** for samples of annual proposals and evaluation reports for gifted education programmes.

Payment and Accounting Arrangements

10. For **aided, caput and DSS secondary schools and special schools with senior secondary classes**, 50% of the yearly provisional DLG will be disbursed in August of 2017, 2018 and 2019 according to the information submitted by schools, the approved SS class structure and the number of students enrolled on OL courses. The remaining adjusted provision of DLG-OL and DLG-OP, together with the incentive funding, will be disbursed in January of 2018, 2019 and 2020 respectively according to the information submitted through the online survey and the expenditure reflected from schools' annual accounts of the most recent year. Any deficit for each category of DLG should be covered by the schools' own funds and/or other appropriate grants from the EDB. For example, aided schools could deploy the general domain of the Operating Expenses Block Grant / Expanded Operating Expenses Block Grant; DSS schools could deploy the DSS Subsidy; caput schools could deploy the Fee Subsidy to cover the deficit.

11. For **government secondary schools**, DLG-OL and DLG-OP will be provided by the EDB to schools in the form of budget allocations in August and April of each school year. That is, a provisional DLG for 7 months will be disbursed in August of 2017, 2018 and 2019 and the remaining adjusted provision will be disbursed in April of 2018, 2019 and 2020 respectively according to the information submitted by schools, the approved SS class structure, the number of students enrolled on OL programmes and the expenditure of DLG-OP reflected from schools' annual accounts of the most recent year. Government schools may deploy the surplus of the Expanded Subject and Curriculum Block Grant to cover the deficit of any category of DLG, as necessary.

12. To allow more flexibility for schools, DLG-OL and DLG-OP may be used to support the diverse learning needs of different cohorts of SS students, instead of restricted to a specific cohort. However, the funding of DLG is not transferable among different categories. Schools are required to keep a separate ledger account for different categories of DLG and record all their allocation and expenditure respectively.

13. For aided, caput and DSS secondary schools and special schools with senior secondary classes, the surplus of each ledger account can be carried forward to the following school year but is capped by the total provision of the respective category of DLG disbursed in the current school year (“capped amount”). **Any unspent balance of each category of DLG above the “capped amount” in the ledger account as at 31 August each year will be clawed back.** As unspent balance of the allocation for government schools will lapse by the end of each financial year, separate allocation for the unspent balance brought forward capped by the total allocation of the preceding financial year will be provided to government schools in the years between.

ENQUIRIES

14. **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)** and PowerPoint slides of the relevant briefing sessions in the past are available at the designated webpages of DLG at the New Academic Structure Web Bulletin (<http://334.edb.hkedcity.net/EN/DLG.php>). For further enquiries, please contact the following EDB officers:

A. General enquiries	Ms Cello LAM	(Tel. no. 2892 6403)
B. Other Languages	Ms Cello LAM	(Tel. no. 2892 6403)
C. Other Programmes		
• Network Programmes	Ms Cello LAM	(Tel. no. 2892 6403)
• Gifted Education Programmes	Ms Brenda CHOY Yee-man	(Tel. no. 3698 4066)

Sheridan LEE
for Permanent Secretary for Education

c.c. Heads of Section – for information

Ambit of Diversity Learning Grant – Other Languages and Other Programmes

DLG Category	Programme Description	Level of Grant	Remarks	Usage
Other Languages	Any of the six languages , namely French, German, Japanese, Spanish, Hindi and Urdu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$3,900 per SS student per year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This includes the study of any of the additional languages as specified in the programme description. These languages should be offered as electives for S4-6 students. These languages must follow a curriculum leading to the examinations pitched at the Advanced Subsidiary (AS) level offered by the Cambridge International Examinations (CIE) Students should register to take the respective examination administered by the HKEAA. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For the procurement of services or employment of teachers for running the programmes For the purchase of consumables, learning and teaching materials and educational software packages For organising extra-curricular activities for the effective learning of the language subject offered
Other Programmes	<p>Gifted Education Programmes for gifted students in schools under the SS curriculum</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gifted students will be selected through a school-based selection mechanism which may include a combination of the use of academic achievement test (internal examination scores), task-based performance test, pupil work scrutiny, behavioural checklist, interview, results in competitions, information from parents and/or peers, etc. <p>Network Programmes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Basic rate: \$7,000 per SS class per year as a basic rate Incentive funding: Additional incentive funding of \$800 per SS class per year for schools with a utilisation rate of DLG-OP of 80% or above (In sum, \$7,800 per SS class per year) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programmes for gifted students are further structured learning opportunities provided through school-based pull-out programmes and/or off-site support programmes that challenge the abilities of gifted students; or Learning opportunities including credit-bearing courses specially designed and offered by tertiary institutions, enhancement programmes (both enrichment, i.e. breadth and extension and/or depth and pace) offered by academic associations or professional bodies targeted for senior secondary students. They should be programmes on the SS subjects (e.g. Ethics and Religious Studies, Visual Arts, Music and Physical Education) jointly organised by schools to enhance the subject choices of students. All network schools will be entitled to the DLG-OP. Schools should arrange the expenses by themselves. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For the procurement of services or employment of teachers for running the programmes For the purchase of consumables, learning and teaching materials and educational software packages For employment of teachers/teaching assistant to share out the additional teaching load arising from offering these programmes directly or indirectly Schools are free to allot the funding for OP to provide both gifted education programmes and network programmes or just one of the programmes to their senior secondary students

**Example of making adjustments on the amount of
the Diversity Learning Grant (DLG) - Other Programmes (OP)
(with effect from 2017/18)**

Points to note:

- (1) Schools are accountable for ensuring an effective use of resources. An appropriate budget, which is the school plan in monetary terms, provides useful information that facilitates a more effective cost benefit analysis and allows the IMC/SMC/School Head to have better control over the school expenditure.
- (2) In consideration of the previous expenditure and surplus of DLG-OP, please complete the following table to indicate the amount of DLG for OP needed.

Example:

This is an example of a school which has a large amount of surplus of DLG-OP to be clawed back. The school will adjust the applied amount of DLG-OP according to the budget of the programmes. In this example, this school has 12 SS classes and the school plans to apply for DLG-OP for 8 classes.

Step 1

Add “✓” in appropriate box(es) in **column 1** to indicate the level(s) that your school would offer OP in 2017/18.

It is not necessary to fill in **columns 2 and 3**. Relevant figures will appear automatically.

Step 2

Indicate the actual total number of SS classes that your school would like to apply for DLG-OP for 2017/18 in **column 4**. After filling in this number, the amount of DLG-OP to be received by the school will appear in **column 5** automatically.

Example	12 (assuming 4 classes for each SS level)	If incentive funding is not applicable: = \$7,000 x 12 = \$84,000	The number of classes that the school plans to apply for DLG-OP is 8.	If incentive funding is not applicable, the amount of subsidy to be received is: = \$7,000 x 8 = \$56,000
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(Column 1)	(Column 2)	(Column 3)	(Column 4)	(Column 5)
Level (Please add “✓” at the selected class level.)	No. of classes in 2017/18	School's entitlement for DLG-OP for 2017/18	No. of classes to apply for DLG-OP for 2017/18	Amount of DLG-OP to apply for 2017/18
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> S4	<input type="text" value="4"/>	<input type="text" value="× \$ 7,000"/>	<input type="text" value="8"/>	<input type="text" value="× \$ 7,000"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> S5	<input type="text" value="4"/>	<input type="text" value="× \$ 7,000"/>		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> S6	<input type="text" value="4"/>	<input type="text" value="× \$ 7,000"/>		
Total	<input type="text" value="12"/>	<input type="text" value="\$84,000"/>	Total	<input type="text" value="\$56,000"/>

Remarks:

- (i) For the above example, the school will receive \$28,000 in August as the first instalment and the second instalment of \$28,000 will be disbursed to the school in the following January together with other adjustments, e.g. incentive funding, if any.
- (ii) If the incentive funding is applicable for the school, the unit rate of DLG-OP for the school will be \$7,800 per class per school year. Therefore, the second instalment of \$34,400 (= \$28,000+\$800×8 (classes)) will be disbursed to the school in the following January.
- (iii) When a school completes the online survey in November, the school can further adjust the number of classes applying for DLG-OP with reference to the budgets of the programmes approved by the IMC/SMC. However, the adjustment should not exceed the limit of the school's entitlement.

Guidelines for the Use of DLG for Gifted Education Programmes

Programmes eligible for consideration:

Gifted education programmes under DLG context should include:

- all enhancement programmes specially designed and offered by tertiary institutions/ non-profit making non-governmental organisations/academic associations/professional bodies targeted at senior secondary students; and
- all school-based pull-out programmes offered by individual schools at the senior secondary level.

Characteristics/criteria of “gifted programmes”:

Gifted education programmes should be designed with the following characteristics:

- with gifted education elements, i.e. creativity, higher order thinking skills, personal and social competence and can be readily categorised into either enrichment (breadth), extension (depth) or acceleration (pace);
- with a clearly stated selection mechanism that matches the students with the programmes; and
- with student products that demonstrate the intended learning outcomes of the programmes.

Ambit of the grant:

- for payment of programme subscription/registration fee
- for procurement of services from external course providers
- for employment of instructors to run the programmes
- for the purchase of consumables, learning and teaching materials and educational software packages
- for administrative and local transportation costs incurred by schools

Examples of suggested use of DLG:

- to subsidise a group of students who enrol in a fee-charging credit-bearing course in computer programming offered by a local tertiary institution
- to partially subsidise a group of students who enrol in a study tour to the Mainland for the purpose of developing their gifted potential
- to procure service from an external course provider or an individual for organising on-site pull-out gifted development programmes
- to purchase reference books, journals and magazines related to gifted education
- to purchase equipment or consumables that are used for delivering the school-based pull-out gifted development programmes
- to pay for printing costs of teaching materials in relation to the gifted development programmes offered
- to pay for transportation costs incurred by schools for local excursions in relation to pull-out gifted development programmes
- to subsidise registration fee for overseas learning/exchange programmes
- to hire personal tutor(s) to give extra-tuition to students gifted in sports, for example, to make up for the lessons missed because their heavy involvement in training activities
- to enrol gifted students on related web-based courses offered by local or overseas programme providers

Examples of INAPPROPRIATE use of DLG

- to procure services from external service providers for offering examination-oriented cramming classes in relation to the SS subjects
- to pay for food and beverages
- to purchase musical instruments to form an orchestra for the school, rather than for the selected talented SS students
- to subsidise air passage/accommodation for students to take part in overseas training programmes

Hiring Outside Services, Purchases and Staff Appointment

1. For hiring outside services and purchases, aided schools, including special schools, should observe the rules and guidelines specified in the EDB Circular No. 4/2013 “Procurement Procedures in Aided Schools”. DSS and caput schools are also advised to refer to the above-mentioned circular as well as the relevant guidelines issued by the EDB from time to time in their procurement procedures. DSS schools should read the above-mentioned circular in conjunction with the Circular Letter on Financial Management in Direct Subsidy Scheme Schools dated 21 November 2007 and the EDB Circular No. 17/2012 on Use of Government and Non-government Funds in Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS) Schools.
2. When offering appointment to teachers and other staff, schools should pay special attention to the Points to Note in Handling Appointment Matters for schools on the EDB webpage. For appointments funded by the DLG, schools are not required to submit appointment forms to the EDB. All expenditure related to salaries, leave entitlement and related benefits such as Mandatory Provident Fund and any other statutory benefits conferred by the Employment Ordinance of the staff appointed within the approved ambit should be paid out of DLG. Schools will not be provided or reimbursed with other funding to cover such expenditure.
3. Government schools should comply with the relevant rules and regulations relating to hire of services and appointment of non-civil service contract (NCSC) staff, and follow the procedures set out in the EDB Internal Circular No. 6/2010 on NCSC staff appointment so as to ensure that the principles of openness and fairness are upheld. In addition, they should note the statutory duties of the EDB as an employer under the Mandatory Provident Fund Schemes Ordinance (Cap 485), and should follow the EDB’s procedures for enrolment of relevant employees into a Mandatory Provident Fund Scheme. On parity with the arrangement for aided schools, no top-up allocation would be released for payments of employment related expenses which should be absorbed by DLG.

Three-year plan – Measures to broaden students’ choices of elective subjects and provision of gifted education programmes for the ninth cohort of SS students (from the 2017/18 to 2019/20 school years)
[Sample]

The following programmes are adopted with the support of the EDB’s Diversity Learning Grant (DLG):

DLG funded Programme	Strategies & benefits anticipated (e.g. in what way students’ diverse learning needs are catered for)	Name of programme/ course and provider	Duration of the programme /course	Target students	Estimated no. of students involved in each school year			Evaluation of student learning/success indicators	Teacher-in-charge
					the 17/18 s.y.	the 18/19 s.y.	the 19/20 s.y.		
Other Languages	- To enhance students’ competitiveness in the 21st century and increase their chances for tertiary education	- French (in-house course)	3 years	Students who have taken French in junior forms	17	17	17	- Students will take the AS-level examination offered by the Cambridge International Examinations and administered by the HKEAA	French teacher
Other Programmes	(Network Programme) - In view of the small number of students opting for PE, this Network Programme with XXX Sec. School can help to cater for students’ diverse needs	- Physical Education (Network Programme)	3 years	S4 - S6 students	4	4	4	- Students will take the HKDSE Examination	Jointly organised with XXX Sec. School
	(Gifted Education Programme) - To enhance students’ debating skills and public speaking skills	- Intensive training course for aspiring debaters	4 weeks	S4 - S5 elite students in the debating team	5-10	5-10	---	- Students will improve their skills in debating and public speaking	Tutor from other organisations

Remarks: This is an example for the reference of schools only. Schools are encouraged to develop their own 3-year plans by including other strategies/tasks as appropriate to cater for the learning needs of their students and align with their vision and mission.

**Annual Programme Proposal for
DLG – Other Programmes: Gifted Education for the 2017/18 school year
[Sample]**

Domain	Programme	Objective(s)	Targets (No./level/selection)	Duration/Start Date	Deliverables	Teacher i/c	Budget
Mathematics	Statistics in Finance and investment	To broaden students' perspective in the application of mathematics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ 15 students ♦ S4 students ♦ nominated by the Mathematics Department with specific criteria 	12 lessons in three months from February 2012 (one lesson per week)	One assignment (either reading or writing) for each lesson	Mr ST YAU	HKD2,000 (reference books and handouts printing)
Chinese Language	Chinese poetry and culture	To enrich students' repertoire in Chinese poetry and in relation to Chinese culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ 15 students ♦ S4 and S5 students ♦ nominated by the Chinese Language Department with specific criteria 	15 lessons in 4 months	A final anthology of students poems and reflection	Commissioned to 中華文化社	HKD18,000 (course fee)
Cross-KLA	Tutorial for the sports elites	To tailor-make language courses to enhance the learning effectiveness of students in the school team in both languages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Two students representing school/HK to take part in international sports competitions 	2 x 40 lessons in 10 months	One assignment (either reading or writing) for each lesson	Commissioned to Alumni with Ms YY CHAN as the co-ordinator	HKD40,000

**Programme Evaluation Report for
DLG – Other Programme: Gifted Education for the 2017/18 school year
[Sample]**

Programme title	Objective	Target (No./level/selection)	Duration / Start Date	Deliverable	Evaluation	Expenditure
Statistics in Finance and investment	To broaden students' perspective in the application of mathematics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ 15 students ♦ S.4 students ♦ nominated by the Mathematics Department with highest scores in the first term examination 	12 lessons in three months from February 2012 (one lesson per week)	One assignment (either reading or writing) for each lesson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The attendance of students was high (95%) and their performance was rated 4.2 on a 5-point scale - Students could analyse the assigned article with the skills learnt and provided the relevant explanation - Some outstanding analyses could be posted on the school website as exemplary work 	Reference book: HKD820 Handouts: HKD320 Folder for student work: HKD300 Total: HKD1,440
Chinese poetry and culture	To enrich students' repertoire in Chinese poetry and in relation to Chinese culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ 15 students ♦ S.4 and S5 students ♦ nominated by the Chinese Language Department with highest scores in the first term examination and a pass in the submitted application article 	15 lessons in 4 months	A final anthology of students poems and reflection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The tutor from the commissioned 中華文化社 was professional and the programme design was good - The tutor provided timely advice and feedback to students - The attendance of students was high and their performance was rated 4 on a five-point scale - The quality of the anthology compiled was high and worth disseminating to all students in the school 	HKD18,000
Tutorial for the sports elites	To tailor-make language course to enhance the learning effectiveness of students in the school team in both languages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Two students representing school/HK to take part in international sports competitions 	2 x 40 lessons in 10 months	One assignment for each lesson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The programme was commissioned to the Alumni with Ms YY CHAN as the co-ordinator - The attendance of the two students was high (100%) - The two students could complete all the assignments given by the tutor - The two students could achieve grade B or above in the relevant tests 	HKD40,000