

## Education Bureau Circular Memorandum No. 48/2021

From: Permanent Secretary for Education                      To: Supervisors/Heads of all government, aided (including special schools with senior secondary classes), caput, and Direct Subsidy Scheme secondary schools

Ref.: EDB(CD/C&S)/F&A/65/1/1(14)

Date: 31 May 2021

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### **Diversity Learning Grant for the Thirteenth Cohort of Senior Secondary Students – Other Languages and Other Programmes (from the 2021/22 to 2023/24 school years)**

#### **SUMMARY**

This circular memorandum (CM) invites schools offering programmes on Other Languages (OL) and Other Programmes (OP) to the thirteenth cohort of senior secondary (SS) students to apply for the Diversity Learning Grant (DLG) from the 2021/22 to 2023/24 school years. Eligible schools should submit their application for the DLG from 4 June to 2 July 2021.

#### **DETAILS**

##### **Diversity Learning Grant**

##### **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)/ Adapted Applied Learning Courses for Students with Intellectual Disabilities (adapted ApL), OL and OP (including programmes on SS gifted education (GE) and network programmes (NP) of SS subjects). For the funding arrangement for ApL/ adapted ApL, please refer to the EDBCM No. 69/2020 on Senior Secondary Applied Learning Courses (2021-23 Cohort)/ EDBCM No. 32/2021 on Senior Secondary Adapted Applied Learning Courses for Students with Intellectual Disabilities (2021-23 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"> <li>• \$3,900 per SS student per year</li> </ul>
Other Programmes (OP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic subsidy rate: \$7,000 per SS class per year</li> <li>• Incentive funding: <b>Additional incentive funding of \$800 per SS class per year for schools with a utilisation rate of DLG-OP of 80% or above</b>, based on the schools' annual accounts of the most recent year<sup>1</sup> (i.e. a total of \$7,800 per SS class per year)</li> </ul>

### Application and Use of DLG-OP

4. Schools are advised to make a realistic estimation for the coming school year (the estimation is capped by the maximum subsidy each school is entitled to), so as 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 intending to apply for the grant 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**.

5. Schools could use the DLG-OP to offer school-based pull-out or off-school support programmes on GE, and/or collaborate with other schools to offer NP of individual 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 2024 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.

### Enhancement Arrangement

6. With a view to streamlining the administrative work arising from the disbursement of the DLG, the 3-year plans for DLG-OL and DLG-OP are not required with effect from the 2019/20 school year. Instead, schools are required to incorporate relevant programmes into their annual plans and reports.

### Modes of Delivery

7. 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

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<sup>1</sup> For aided (including special schools), caput, and Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS) schools, 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 2019/20 school year. As for government schools, their accounts are compiled on the basis of financial year which are the accounts of the 2020-21 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%.

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.**

8. For schools planning to invite organisations registered under the Education Ordinance (Cap. 279) to teach OL 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. For staff who are to be deployed by the service contractors to teach OL on school campuses, schools can ask the service contractors to request their staff to undergo Sexual Conviction Record Check (SCRC) and to allow schools to have access to the checking results. For details of the implementation of SCRC scheme, schools may browse the website (<https://www.police.gov.hk/scrc>).



### **Application Procedure**

9. Eligible schools are invited to apply online for the DLG for offering programmes on OL and/ or OP for the thirteenth cohort of SS students (from the 2021/22 to 2023/24 school years). Schools should apply via the EDB online platform (<https://cd.edb.gov.hk/dlg2021/application/>) during the period from 4 June to 2 July 2021. Schools will be informed of the application results by post on or before 30 September 2021. The application procedures, together with the login identity and password to facilitate online application, will be mailed to schools on or before 4 June 2021.



### **Payment and Accounting Arrangements**

10. For **aided (including special schools with senior secondary classes), caput, and DSS secondary schools**, 50% of the yearly provisional DLG will be disbursed in August of 2021, 2022 and 2023 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 2022, 2023 and 2024 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 2021, 2022 and 2023 and the remaining adjusted provision will be disbursed in April of 2022, 2023 and 2024 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 (including special schools with senior secondary classes), caput, and DSS secondary schools, 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 relevant information are available at the designated webpages of DLG at the New Academic Structure Web Bulletin (<https://334.edb.hkedcity.net/new/en/dlg.php>). For enquiries, please contact the following EDB officers:



A. General enquiries	Ms Cello LAM	Tel. no. 2892 6327
B. Other Languages	-ditto-	-ditto-
C. Other Programmes		
● Network Programmes	-ditto-	-ditto-
● Gifted Education Programmes	Mr Roger CHONG	Tel. no. 3698 3430

Ms Grace LAW  
for Permanent Secretary for Education

c.c. Heads of Sections – for information

**Ambit of Diversity Learning Grant – Other Languages and Other Programmes**

<b>DLG Category</b>	<b>Programme Description</b>	<b>Level of Grant</b>	<b>Remarks</b>	<b>Usage</b>
<b>Other Languages</b>	Any of the <b>six languages</b> , namely French, German, Japanese, Spanish, Hindi and Urdu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$3,900 per SS student per year</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This includes the study of any of the additional languages as specified in the programme description.</li> <li>• These languages should be offered as electives for S4-6 students.</li> <li>• These languages must follow a curriculum leading to the examinations pitched at the Advanced Subsidiary (AS) level offered by the Cambridge Assessment International Education (Cambridge International).</li> <li>• Students should register to take the respective examination administered by the HKEAA. Results obtained by students in Other Languages will be reported in their HKDSE certificates.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For the procurement of services or employment of teachers for running the programmes.</li> <li>• For the purchase of consumables, learning and teaching materials and educational software packages.</li> <li>• For organising extra-curricular activities for the effective learning of the language subject offered.</li> </ul>
<b>Other Programmes</b>	<p><b>Gifted Education Programmes</b> for gifted students in schools under the SS curriculum</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> </ul> <p><b>Network Programmes</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic rate: \$7,000 per SS class per year as a basic rate</li> <li>• 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)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Programmes for gifted students are further structured learning opportunities provided through school-based pull-out programmes and/or off-school support programmes that challenge the abilities of gifted students; or</li> <li>• Learning opportunities including credit-bearing courses specially designed and offered by tertiary education 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.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• All network schools will be entitled to the DLG-OP.</li> <li>• Schools should arrange the expenses by themselves.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For the procurement of services or employment of teachers for running the programmes.</li> <li>• For the purchase of consumables, learning and teaching materials and educational software packages.</li> <li>• For employment of teachers/ teaching assistant to share out the additional teaching load arising from offering these programmes directly or indirectly.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>

**Example of making adjustments on the amount of  
the Diversity Learning Grant (DLG) - Other Programmes (OP)**

**Points to note:**

- (1) The information shown at **columns 2 and 3** for S5 & S6 was drawn from school's online survey in November 2020. School only needs to provide relevant information for S4.
- (2) 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.
- (3) 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 organises both Gifted Education and Network programmes for S4-S6 students. The school 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 the appropriate box in **columns 1-3** to indicate your school would offer OP for S4 students in the 2021/22 school year. It is not necessary to fill in **columns 4 and 5**. 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 the 2021/22 school year in **column 6**. After filling in this number, the amount of DLG-OP to be received by the school will appear in **column 7** automatically.

Example	Offer Gifted Education Programme(s)	Offer Network Programme(s)	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)	Column (6)	Column (7)
Level	Gifted Education Programme(s)	Network Programme(s)	No. of classes approved in the 2021/22 school year	School's entitlement for DLG-OP for the 2021/22 school year	No. of SS classes applied for DLG-OP for the 2021/22 school year	Amount of DLG-OP applied for the 2021/22 school year
S4	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	4	× \$ 7,000	<b>8</b>	× \$ 7,000
S5	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	4	× \$ 7,000		
S6	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	4	× \$ 7,000		
		Total	<b>12</b>	\$84,000	Total	<b>\$56,000</b>

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 education 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 education 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 of 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 on 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.