

## **Diversity Learning Grant (DLG)** **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

### **General**

#### 1. What are the aim and ambit of DLG?

- *The aim of DLG is to encourage schools to offer a diversified curriculum to their students. Schools may use the grant to cater for the diverse needs of their students by offering DLG-supported programmes, i.e. Applied Learning (ApL) courses, adapted ApL courses<sup>1</sup>, Other Programmes (OP) (including network programmes for Senior Secondary (SS) subjects and education programmes for gifted students) and Other Languages (OL) as their elective subjects.*
- *Details of the ambit of DLG can be found in the Education Bureau (EDB) Circular Memorandum (CM) No.146/2008.*
- *Details of application for DLG can be found as follows:-*
  - *Applied Learning courses – EDBCM No. 153/2018 and EDBCM No.174/2019*
  - *Adapted Applied Learning courses – EDBCM No. 4/2019 and EDBCM No. 3/2020*
  - *Other Languages and Other Programmes – EDBCM No. 82/2019 and EDBCM No. 67/2020*

#### 2. What are the grant rates of the different categories of DLG?

- *For ApL courses: Full subsidy has been provided for students to take ApL courses in the 2016/17 school year (i.e. Secondary 6 of the 2015-17 cohort and Secondary 5 of the 2016-18 cohort) and beyond. Each eligible student is entitled to funding for a maximum of TWO ApL courses. For students taking FOUR elective subjects with an ApL course as one of them, the ApL course will be regarded as the fourth elective subject and will NOT be subsidised by DLG.*
- *For adapted ApL courses: Same as ApL courses, full subsidy has been provided for students to take adapted ApL courses starting from the 2016/17 school year. Each eligible student is entitled to funding for a maximum of TWO adapted ApL courses. For students taking FOUR elective subjects with an adapted ApL course as one of them, the adapted ApL course will be regarded as the fourth elective subject and will NOT be subsidised by DLG.*
- *For Other Languages, starting from the 2016/17 school year, the subsidy rate of DLG-OL has been revised to \$3,900 per student per year.*
- *For Other Programmes (i.e. network programmes for SS subjects and education programmes for gifted students):*

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted Applied Learning Courses for Students with Intellectual Disabilities

- *From the 2016/17 school year onwards, the subsidy rate of DLG-OP has been as follows: the basic subsidy rate for all school applicants is \$7,000 per SS class per year; an 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 year, will be disbursed to eligible schools (In sum, \$7,800 per SS class per year).*
- *An arrangement has been introduced with effect from the 2017/18 school year. The aims are to encourage schools to realistically estimate the amount of DLG-OP to be used in the coming year (capped by each school's entitlement) as to optimally utilise DLG-OP for students and to avoid the claw-back of unused grants. Schools should initially set the number of classes applying for DLG-OP through online application in June and then confirm/amend the number of classes through an online survey in November to finalise the total amount of DLG-OP applicable for the school year.*

3. Will special schools benefit from DLG?

- *Yes. Special schools can apply for DLG for ApL, adapted ApL, Other Programmes and Other Languages according to the needs of the schools.*

4. Are the different categories of DLG transferable?

- *No. Different categories of DLG should be kept in separate ledger accounts.*

5. Can schools carry forward the surplus of different categories of DLG to the following school year?

- *For Other Languages/Other Programmes: 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. 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.*
- *For ApL Courses/Adapted ApL Courses: For aided secondary schools, DSS secondary schools, caput schools and special schools, the surplus in the ledger account can be carried forward to the next school year until the end of that cohort. Any deficit in the ledger account should be made up by schools’ deployment of other resources at the end of each school year. For government secondary schools, unspent balance of the allocations as at the end of each financial year cannot be carried forward to the subsequent financial year and will lapse. Any deficit should be covered by schools’ deployment of other resources at the end of each financial year (please refer to Question 8 for details).*

6. Can schools charge students fees for taking DLG-supported programmes?
- *Schools eligible for DLG are not allowed to charge students any fee for taking ApL courses, adapted ApL courses, Other Languages and Other Programmes (network programmes for SS subjects).*
  - *Fees may be charged for some Other Programmes (gifted education programmes), including those fee-charging credit-bearing programmes / web-based courses offered by local and overseas tertiary education institutes.*
7. Do schools need to submit a 3-year plan when they apply for DLG?
- *From the 2019/20 school year onwards, the 3-year plans for DLG-OL and DLG-OP are not required. Instead, schools are required to incorporate relevant programmes into their annual plans and reports.*
  - *For ApL courses/adapted ApL courses, schools are no longer required to draw up a three-year plan to broaden subject choices for a particular cohort of students, starting from the 2019/20 school year.*

**A. Applied Learning (ApL) (Enquiry: 3698 3186) and Adapted ApL Courses (Enquiry: 2892 6493)**

8. How to top up the deficit in DLG, in the support for ApL / adapted ApL courses (e.g. schools need to pay the course fees for students taking FOUR elective subjects with an ApL / adapted ApL course as one of them)?
- *Schools may deploy the following resources for the payment of ApL / adapted ApL course fees:*

<i>School Type</i>	<i>Resources to be Deployed by Schools</i>
<i>Aided Schools (including special schools with senior secondary classes)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Capacity Enhancement Grant (CEG)</i></li> <li>• <i>Surplus in the General Domain of Operating Expenses Block Grant (OEBG) / Expanded OEBG</i></li> <li>• <i>Substitute Teacher Grant (STG) / Teacher Relief Grant (TRG)</i></li> <li>• <i>Senior Secondary Curriculum Support Grant (SSCSG)</i></li> <li>• <i>Schools' own funds</i></li> </ul>
<i>Government Secondary Schools</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Expanded Subject and Curriculum Block Grant</i></li> <li>• <i>TRG</i></li> <li>• <i>SSCSG</i></li> </ul>
<i>Caput Schools</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>CEG</i></li> <li>• <i>SSCSG</i></li> <li>• <i>Fee Subsidy</i></li> <li>• <i>Schools' own funds</i></li> </ul>
<i>Direct Subsidy Scheme Secondary Schools</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>CEG</i></li> <li>• <i>DSS Subsidy</i></li> <li>• <i>Schools' own funds</i></li> </ul>

9. Are there any remedial measures for schools in need of financial support for ApL / adapted ApL courses?
- *A 'safety net' has been put in place to assist needy schools. Under special circumstances in which schools have genuine financial difficulties in offering ApL / adapted ApL courses, schools may make applications to the EDB for extra funding. Schools' applications will be considered on a case-by-case basis.*
10. If students take four elective subjects including an ApL / adapted ApL course, will they be subsidised?
- *No. For a broad and balanced senior secondary curriculum, each eligible student is entitled to funding for a maximum of TWO ApL / adapted ApL courses. For students taking FOUR elective subjects with an ApL / adapted ApL course as one of them, the ApL / adapted ApL course will be regarded as the fourth elective subject and will NOT be subsidised by the DLG*
11. Can parents pay for the course fee if students take ApL / adapted ApL as the fourth elective?
- *Schools eligible for DLG are not allowed to charge students or their parents any fee for taking ApL / adapted ApL courses even if they are taken as the fourth elective.*
12. How many ApL / adapted ApL courses can a student take? Will all the courses be subsidised?
- *Every student can take a maximum of two ApL / adapted ApL courses as their elective subjects and they will be subsidised by DLG. However, for students taking four elective subjects with an ApL / adapted ApL course as one of them, the ApL / adapted ApL course will be regarded as the fourth elective subject and will NOT be subsidised by DLG.*
13. Will the subsidy to the students be clawed back if they withdraw from the ApL / adapted ApL courses in the second year or after a few months of study?
- *The DLG for a particular school year will be calculated based on the actual number of enrolments in ApL/adapted ApL courses as at September. There will not be further adjustment or claw back of DLG for that particular school year afterwards. However, any unspent DLG by the end of that cohort will be clawed back by the EDB.*
14. If students repeat S5 after taking ApL/adapted ApL courses for one year, can they continue the second year study of ApL / adapted ApL courses? Will they be subsidised by DLG?
- *For students who repeat S5 at schools but have successfully completed their first year study of ApL / adapted ApL courses, they may continue their second year study of ApL / adapted ApL courses with the support of the schools and course providers.*
  - *Students repeating S5 who wish to continue with the second year study of ApL / adapted ApL courses will be subsidised by DLG provided that the total number of electives (including ApL / adapted ApL courses) taken by the students is not greater than three.*

15. For students with intellectual disability studying in special schools, will they be subsidised by DLG if they are approved to extend their years of study according to the objective criteria jointly set by the EDB, the special education sector and parents after they have completed the first year of adapted ApL courses?
- *Students who are approved to extend their years of study and wish to continue with the second year of study of adapted ApL courses will be subsidised by DLG provided that the total number of electives (including adapted ApL courses) taken by the students is not greater than three.*

**B. Other Languages (OL) (Enquiry: 2892 6403)**

16. How and when will DLG for Other Languages be calculated and disbursed to schools?
- *The grant will be disbursed in 2 instalments according to the actual number of students enrolled in Other Languages courses submitted through online application and survey.*
  - *For details of the timeline for payment, please refer to EDBCM No. 67/2020.*
17. Can DLG be used for the procurement of alteration works / minor adjustment / expansion of school facilities?
- *DLG is a subsidy for encouraging schools to offer a diversified curriculum for students. It must not be used for alteration works / minor adjustment / expansion of school facilities.*
18. Can schools apply for DLG in the 2nd or 3rd year of students' senior secondary schooling (S5 or S6)?
- *Yes. In that case, the EDB will only disburse the grant for the 2nd and/or 3rd year upon successful application.*
19. Can a school use the grant to employ a Teaching Assistant to be responsible for co-ordinating DLG programmes?
- *Yes. The duties of the Teaching Assistant arising from DLG programmes must be clearly stated to justify the recruitment of the Teaching Assistant (or a portion of this post).*
20. Can a school allow students to choose an external course provider for enrolling in other language courses and school reimburses students for the tuition fees?
- *No. Schools should not allow students to enroll in external other language courses on their own, and/or reimburse students for the tuition fees.*
  - *Schools should observe the relevant guidelines related to hire outside services issued by the EDB from time to time and comply with the procurement procedures. Schools should exercise their professional judgment to choose suitable organisations to teach the other language courses.*

21. What Other Languages are supported by DLG? Are there any conditions for subsidy?
- *The six Other Languages supported by DLG are French, German, Hindi, Japanese, Spanish and Urdu. The programmes of study of these languages should follow the curriculum and examinations pitched at the Advanced Supplementary (AS) Level offered by the Cambridge Assessment International Education (Cambridge International) and administered by the HKEAA. Students will only be subsidised if they register for the said exam of the relevant language. Results obtained by students in Other Languages will be reported in their HKDSE certificates.*
22. Would claw back be arranged if students eventually do not register for the OL AS Level exam under the Cambridge International?
- *For effective use of public money, schools should ensure that students have the basic knowledge for pursuing the relevant AS Level OL curriculum and alert them that they are expected to take the relevant exam, before nominating their students to study OL courses. This will help reduce the dropouts of students. If eventually students do not register for the OL exam under the Cambridge International, schools should inform the EDB at the earliest instance. The EDB would discuss the funding arrangements with schools on a case by case basis.*
23. Can schools offer other languages which are not one of the above six?
- *Schools should note that other languages which are not one of the above six are not subjects recommended by the Curriculum Development Council. They will not be subsidised by DLG.*
24. Can schools offer more than one other language?
- *There is no limitation on the number of other languages that a school can offer. Schools should offer other languages to suit the abilities and interests of their students while ensuring the provision of a broad and balanced curriculum.*
25. Would students taking OL as their 4th elective subject be subsidised by DLG-OL?
- *Under the SS curriculum, students are encouraged to take 2 or 3 elective subjects. The SS student programme should fully occupy the learning time of the great majority of students. It is difficult for schools to arrange lesson time for the 4th elective subject without compromising students' learning time. Only under very special circumstances that a small number of students with greater capacity and diverse interest may take a 4th elective subject and register for the examination under the HKDSE. While students are not recommended to take 4 elective subjects, they will be subsidised to study OL courses if they satisfy the conditions stated in Q.21.*

26. Can schools offer Other Languages in cooperation with other organisations using DLG?
- *Schools can decide on the mode of operation for Other Languages on their own.*
27. When procuring service from external course providers, what procurement procedure should be followed?
- *The school should follow the general service procurement procedure and observe the rules and guidelines specified in the EDB Circular No. 4/2013 on Procurement Procedures in Aided Schools.*
28. Will there be a minimum or maximum number of students in a class?
- *No specific limitation for OL. Schools are encouraged to make the best use of the grant for the benefit of their students as far as possible.*
29. Can schools use DLG to pay their own teachers as instructors / facilitators of DLG Programmes?
- *No. The teacher receiving extra pay will be perceived as “double-dipping”.*

### **C. Other Programmes (OP) (Enquiry: 2892 6403)**

30. How and when will DLG for Other Programmes be calculated and disbursed to schools?
- *The grant will be disbursed in 2 instalments according to the information submitted through online application and survey, the approved SS class structure and the expenditure reflected from schools’ annual accounts of the most recent year.*
  - *For details of the timeline for payment, please refer to EDBCM No. 67/2020.*
31. What is “incentive funding”? Which schools can be disbursed this additional incentive funding of DLG-OP?
- *“Incentive funding” is provided on top of the basic subsidy rate of DLG-OP to strengthen the support for particular schools in need. Based on the schools’ annual accounts of the most recent year, if schools with a utilisation rate of DLG-OP of 80% or above, we will additionally disburse \$800 per SS class per year (In sum the subsidy rate will be \$7,800 per SS class per year) to encourage and support these schools in offering GE and NP.*
32. Will schools be supported with DLG-OP if they offer only network programmes and no programme for gifted students?
- *Schools can offer network programmes and/or programmes for gifted students according to the needs of the schools, i.e. network programmes only, programmes for gifted students only, or both. The subsidy, irrespective of the type of programme(s) offered and the number of such programmes, remains \$7,000 per SS class per year for the basic subsidy rate and additional incentive funding of \$800 per SS class per year for eligible schools (In sum, \$7,800 per SS class per year).*

33. Can DLG-OP be used for the procurement of alteration works / minor adjustment / expansion of school facilities?
- *DLG is a subsidy for encouraging schools to offer a diversified curriculum for students. It must not be used for alteration works / minor adjustment / expansion of school facilities.*
34. Can schools apply for DLG-OP in the 2nd or 3rd year of students' senior secondary schooling (S5 or S6)?
- *Yes. In that case, the EDB will only disburse the grant for the 2nd and/or 3rd year upon application.*
35. Can a school use the grant to employ a Teaching Assistant to be responsible for co-ordinating DLG programmes?
- *Yes. The duties of the Teaching Assistant arising from DLG programmes must be clearly stated to justify the recruitment of the Teaching Assistant (or a portion of this post).*
36. If schools are unable to confirm the EDB the number of classes at the time of applying for the subsidy in June, can a school amend, increase or decrease the relevant number of classes after the new school year started?
- *Yes. When a school completes the online survey in November, if the school estimates that it still cannot use up the allocated DLG-OP by end of the school year, they can further reduce the number of classes applying for DLG-OP. On the other hand, if the school can use more than the allocated DLG-OP, the school can amend the number of classes applying for DLG-OP for more funding to be received without exceeding the school's entitlement.*

### **C1. Other Programmes-Gifted Education Programmes (Enquiry: 3698 3430)**

37. Do schools need to submit a separate evaluation report for gifted education programmes?
- *Schools only need to incorporate an evaluation report of gifted programmes into the annual school report. No separate report is required. Schools may refer to Annex 1 for a sample of the evaluation report.*
38. What are the programmes for gifted students?
- *They are further structured learning opportunities provided through school-based pull-out programmes and/or off-school support for gifted students.*
  - *These learning opportunities include enhancement programmes offered by schools/academic associations/professional bodies; credit-bearing courses specially designed and offered by tertiary education institutes targeted for talented/gifted students at senior secondary level; and all programmes provided by the Hong Kong Academy for Gifted Education.*
  - *Schools may refer to EDBCM No.146/2008, EDBCM No. 69/2016, EDBCM No. 74/2017 and EDBCM No. 58/2018 for details.*

39. When students join the pull-out gifted education programmes in schools, do they need to be assessed by professional psychologists to prove that they are really gifted?
- *There are many ways and tools to identify if a student is gifted. IQ test is one of them and this has to be done by professionals.*
  - *Teachers, parents and peers will also be able to evaluate if someone is gifted through the student's academic achievement, performance in classes and in social life.*
  - *Teachers can make reference to information regarding the tools, such as behavioural checklists, procedures for identifying gifted students from the website of the Gifted Education Section of the CDI, and attend professional development workshops organised by the Gifted Education Section or the Hong Kong Academy for Gifted Education to get hold of the latest information.*
40. Can a school use DLG on a need basis to employ external tutors mainly for enhancing students' skills in choral speaking or debating so that they can join the Hong Kong Schools Speech Festival?
- *Firstly, the school has to ensure that the training programme should include one or more of the gifted education elements i.e. creativity, higher-order thinking and personal and social skills.*
  - *There should be a clear selection mechanism for screening students for the programmes.*
  - *There should be a clear objective that the programme is to develop or enhance students' skills, and students' achievement will reflect the expected learning outcome for the programme.*
41. Do students need to pay for the gifted education programmes?
- *Maybe, depending on the needs of the schools and the programmes.*
42. Can a school use DLG to sponsor individual talented student to enroll in programme of his interest?
- *We encourage the school to use the grant effectively as to benefit more students and should avoid as far as possible using the grant for individual students.*
43. Can a school use DLG in SBG programmes in junior forms with an aim to prepare students for studying the SS curriculum?
- *No. The grant must be used for the learning of students in SS classes.*
44. Is there a list of NGOs / academic associations / professional bodies that are qualified as service providers?
- *We cannot exhaust such a list and the school should exercise professional judgment to engage quality service providers.*

45. Can a school use the grant to buy tickets for students if the programme is on language arts activities like drama?
- *Yes. Ticket fare can be regarded as programme cost.*
46. When procuring services from external course providers, what procurement procedure should be followed?
- *The school should follow the general service procurement procedure.*
47. Are there any special requirements on the qualifications of the service provider, e.g. training in gifted education?
- *No. The school should exercise professional judgment on the necessary qualifications of the service providers.*
48. Will there be a minimum or maximum number of student beneficiaries?
- *No. Schools are encouraged to make the best use of the grant for the benefits of as many students as possible.*
49. Is there any restriction on using the grant for one particular course or can the grant be shared out among different programmes under the same category?
- *Schools can flexibly allocate the grant among different programmes under the same category.*
50. Can a school use the grant to employ a Teaching Assistant to be responsible for co-ordinating pull-out gifted education programmes?
- *Yes. The duty of the Teaching Assistant, the nature, objectives, targets and deliverables/expected learning outcomes of the programmes must be clearly stated. We would suggest the teachers of that school to be responsible for conducting or co-ordinating the gifted education programmes and the Teaching Assistant to take up some of duties from the particular teachers concerned.*
51. Can DLG be spent on a pro-rata basis to cover the cost of a teaching assistant whose responsibilities include co-ordinating the gifted education programmes at school?
- *Yes. The percentage of time devoted to gifted programmes must be clearly stated.*
52. Can schools use DLG to pay their own teachers as instructors or facilitators of pull-out gifted programmes as these are extra work?
- *No. Teachers of that school should contribute to the School-based pull-out programmes if they have the expertise. It might place the school in an embarrassing situation if the relevant teachers are paid as this may involve 'transfer of interest' and 'conflict of interest'.*

53. Can schools use DLG to pay for students' examination fee (e.g. examination fee for students learning musical instruments)?
- *No. DLG is to support the course fee but not to pay for the examination fee.*
54. Can parents or past students be hired as tutors then?
- *Yes. However scrupulous care must be taken in assessing their experience, expertise/qualifications and suitability. Schools should comply with relevant procedures when employing tutors and avoid conflict of interest.*
55. Is there a time frame within which the grant must be used / spent?
- *Yes. When the account balance brought forward from previous years is beyond the amount of grant received by the school in that year, the excess balance would be clawed back at the end of the year.*
56. Can DLG be spent on one programme for one group of gifted students (say on Mathematics) in the first year, and then on another programme for another group of students (say drama) in the second year, but of the same year cohort?
- *Yes. As long as the funding is spent on the SS students, there is no rule binding a gifted programme to be run for two or three years.*

## **C2. Other Programmes-Network Programmes (Enquiry: 2892 6403)**

57. Are the network programmes under DLG limited to Visual Arts, Music and Physical Education?
- *No. DLG will subsidise all SS subjects jointly offered by schools. Students participating in each of the jointly offered Network Programmes must be from 2 or more schools.*
58. Is there a minimum / maximum class size for network programmes?
- *No. Schools are encouraged to make the best use of the grant for the benefit of their students as far as possible.*

**Programme Evaluation Report for  
DLG – Other Programme: Gifted Education for the 2020/21 school  
year [Sample]**

Programme Title	Objective	Target (No./level/selection criteria )	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"> <li>♦ 15 students from S4</li> <li>♦ Nominated by the Mathematics Department with highest scores in the Mathematics examination</li> </ul>	12 lessons in three months from October 2020 (one lesson per week)	One assignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The attendance of students was high (95%) and their performance was rated 4.2 on a 5-point scale</li> <li>- Students could analyse the assigned article with the skills learnt and provided the relevant explanation</li> <li>- Some outstanding analyses could be posted on the school website as exemplary work</li> </ul>	Reference book: HK\$820 Handouts: HK\$320 Folder for student work: HK\$300 Total: HK\$1,440
Chinese poetry and culture	To enrich students' repertoire in Chinese poetry and in relation to Chinese culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ 15 students from S4 and S5</li> <li>♦ Nominated by the Chinese Language Department with highest scores in the Chinese Language examination and a pass in the submitted application article</li> </ul>	15 lessons in 4 months	A final anthology of students poems and reflection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The tutor from the commissioned course provider was professional and the programme design was good</li> <li>- The tutor provided timely advice and feedback to students</li> <li>- The attendance of students was high and their performance was rated 4 on a 5- point scale</li> <li>- The anthology compiled was worth disseminating to all students in the school</li> </ul>	HK\$18,000 (course fee)