

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 cater for the diverse learning needs of their students. Schools may use the grant to provide different programme choices for students taking local curriculum, i.e. Applied Learning (ApL) courses, adapted ApL courses¹, 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. 174/2019 and EDBCM No.69/2020*
 - *Adapted Applied Learning courses – EDBCM No. 3/2020 and EDBCM No. 32/2021*
 - *Other Languages and Other Programmes – EDBCM No. 67/2020 and EDBCM No. 48/2021*

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

- *For ApL / adapted ApL courses: DLG is disbursed by the EDB to aided, government and secondary schools under the Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS), caput schools and special schools operating senior secondary classes following the local curriculum. The grant is used for covering course fees of ApL / adapted ApL. The amount of DLG disbursed to schools is calculated based on the course fees of ApL / adapted ApL courses taken by students. Each eligible student is entitled to subsidy for a maximum of TWO ApL / adapted ApL courses. Starting from the 2020/21 school year, students taking an ApL / adapted ApL course as the 4th elective subject will also be subsidised by the DLG so as to encourage students to take ApL to broaden their learning experiences.*
- *For Other Languages, starting from the 2016/17 school year, the subsidy rate of DLG-OL has been revised to \$3,900 per SS student per year.*
- *For Other Programmes (i.e. network programmes for SS subjects and education programmes for gifted students):*
 - *From the 2016/17 school year onwards, the subsidy rate of DLG-OP has been revised as follows: the basic subsidy rate for all school applicants is \$7,000 per*

¹ Adapted Applied Learning Courses for Students with Intellectual Disabilities

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 every year and then confirm or 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. Do special schools benefit from DLG?

- *Yes. Special schools offering the local senior secondary curriculum 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 recording all incomes and expenditures.*

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 secondary schools under the DSS, 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: The allocation of DLG is cohort-specific, i.e. the amount provided for a specific cohort of students cannot be used for subsidising students of other cohorts. For aided secondary schools, secondary schools under the DSS, caput schools and special schools operating senior secondary classes, the surplus in the ledger account can be carried forward to the next school year until the relevant cohort completes. 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 any fee 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?

- *With a view to streamlining the administrative work, the 3-year plans for DLG-OL and DLG-OP are not required starting from the 2019/20 school year. Instead, schools are required to incorporate relevant programmes into their annual plans and reports.*
- *For ApL courses/adapted ApL courses, starting from the 2019/20 school year, schools are no longer required to draw up a three-year plan to broaden subject choices for a particular cohort of students.*

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?

- *Under the full subsidy arrangement, schools will be allocated with an amount of DLG equal to the total course fee of ApL / adapted ApL courses enrolled by eligible students. If necessary and under special circumstances, schools can 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 operating SS classes)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Capacity Enhancement Grant (CEG)</i> • <i>General Domain of Operating Expenses Block Grant (OEBG) / Expanded OEBG</i> • <i>Substitute Teacher Grant (STG) / Teacher Relief Grant (TRG)</i> • <i>Senior Secondary Curriculum Support Grant (SSCSG)</i> • <i>Schools' own funds</i>
<i>Government Secondary Schools</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Expanded Subject and Curriculum Block Grant</i> • <i>TRG</i> • <i>SSCSG</i>
<i>Caput Schools</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>CEG</i> • <i>SSCSG</i> • <i>Fee Subsidy</i> • <i>Schools' own funds</i>
<i>Secondary Schools under the DSS</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>CEG</i> • <i>DSS Subsidy</i> • <i>Schools' own funds</i>

9. Will the EDB provide support if schools still have financial difficulties in offering ApL / adapted ApL courses after deploying other resources?

- *If schools still have financial difficulties in offering ApL / adapted ApL courses after deploying other resources, schools may approach the EDB to explain the practical difficulties they faced. The EDB will consider providing appropriate support taking into account the specific situation of individual schools.*

10. Do schools need to share part of ApL / adapted ApL course fees?

- *DLG is disbursed by the EDB to aided, government and secondary schools under the DSS, caput schools and special schools operating senior secondary classes, with full subsidy provided for students to take ApL / adapted ApL courses. Each eligible student is entitled to subsidy for a maximum of TWO ApL / adapted ApL courses (excluding ApL(C))². Starting from the 2020/21 school year, students will also be subsidised by the DLG to take ApL as the 4th elective subject to encourage them to take ApL to broaden their learning experiences.*

² In case a student takes both the ApL course and adapted ApL course, each course will be counted as an ApL / adapted ApL course in the funding arrangement. If a student takes ApL(C), relevant course will be fully subsidised by the Student Grant for ApL(C).

11. Do students need to pay the course fees for ApL / adapted ApL courses?

- *All students in aided, government and secondary schools under the DSS, caput schools and special schools with senior secondary classes following the local curriculum will be fully subsidised by the EDB to take ApL / adapted ApL courses. Students do not need to pay the course fees. Each student may take a maximum of two ApL / adapted ApL courses³ as elective subjects in senior secondary.*

12. Will the subsidy be adjusted if the students withdraw from the ApL / adapted ApL courses in the second year or after a few months of study?

- *DLG is calculated based on the actual number of enrolments in ApL / adapted ApL courses in September of each school year. There will not be further adjustments afterwards.*

13. If students repeat in schools after completing Year 1 of an ApL / adapted ApL course, can they continue Year 2 of the ApL / adapted ApL course?

- *If a student has completed Year 1 of an ApL / adapted ApL course but repeats a grade, (or approved for Extension of Years of Study for Students of Aided Special Schools), the student may continue to study Year 2 or choose to repeat Year 1 of the course (if the course is still provided and available) with the agreement of the school principal and course provider.*

³ Excluding ApL(C).

B. Other Languages (OL) (Enquiry: 2892 6327)

14. 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 OL courses submitted through online application and survey.*
 - *For details of the timeline for disbursement of the grant, please refer to EDBCM No. 48/2021.*
15. Can DLG-OL be used for the procurement of alteration works / minor adjustment / expansion of school facilities?
- *DLG-OL 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.*
16. Can schools apply for DLG-OL in the 2nd or 3rd year of students' SS 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.*
17. Can a school use the grant to employ a Teaching Assistant to be responsible for co-ordinating DLG-OL subsidised programmes?
- *Yes. The duties of the Teaching Assistant arising from DLG-OL subsidised programmes must be clearly stated to justify the recruitment of the Teaching Assistant (or a portion of this post).*
18. Can a school allow students to choose an external course provider for enrolling in OL courses and school reimburses students for the tuition fees?
- *No. Schools should not allow students to enroll in external OL courses on their own, and/or reimburse students for the tuition fees.*
 - *Schools should observe the relevant guidelines related to hiring 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 OL courses.*
19. 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 OL will be reported in their Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) certificates.*

20. 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.*
21. Can schools offer OL which are not one of the above six languages?
- *If schools offer OL which are not one of the above six languages, they will not be subsidised by DLG-OL.*
22. Can schools offer more than one other language?
- *There is no limitation on the number of OL that a school can offer. Schools should offer OL to suit the abilities and interests of their students while ensuring the provision of a broad and balanced curriculum.*
23. Would students taking OL as their 4th elective subject be subsidised by DLG-OL?
- *Students who take a 4th elective subject and register for the examination under the HKDSE will be subsidised by DLG-OL to study OL courses if they satisfy the conditions stated in Question 19.*
24. Can schools offer OL in cooperation with other organisations using DLG?
- *Schools can decide on the mode of operation for OL on their own.*
25. When procuring service from external course providers, what procurement procedure should be followed?
- *Schools 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.*
26. 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 6327)

27. 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 of the respective OP reflected from schools' annual accounts of the most recent year.*
- *For details of the timeline for disbursement of the grant, please refer to EDBCM No. 48/2021.*

28. 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, for 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 gifted education and network programmes.*

29. 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 education programmes for gifted students according to the needs of the schools, i.e. network programmes only, education 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).*

30. 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.*

31. 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.*

32. 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).*

33. If schools are unable to confirm with 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 has 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 (OP) - Gifted Education Programmes (Enquiry: 3698 3430)

34. Do schools need to submit a separate evaluation report for gifted education programmes?

- *Schools only need to incorporate an evaluation report of gifted education programmes into the annual school report. No separate report is required. Schools may refer to **Annex** for a sample of the evaluation report.*

35. 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. 82/2019, EDBCM No. 67/2020 and EDBCM No. 48/2021 for details.*

36. 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?

- *Currently, local and international trends adopt a broad definition of giftedness using multiple criteria. Therefore, gifted children are best identified using multiple methods. IQ test is only one of these methods.*
- *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.*

37. 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.*
38. Do students need to pay for the gifted education programmes sponsored by the Diversity Learning Grant?
- *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). Depending on the needs of the schools and the programmes, students participating in gifted education programmes sponsored by the DLG may need to pay part of the programme fees.*
39. 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.*
40. 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.*
41. 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.*
42. When procuring services from external course providers, what procurement procedure should be followed?
- *The school should follow the general service procurement procedure.*
43. 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.*

44. 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.*
45. 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.*
46. 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 education programmes must be clearly stated.*
47. Can schools use DLG to pay their own teachers as instructors or facilitators of pull-out gifted education 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”.*
48. 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.*
49. 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.*
50. 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.*
51. 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 education programmes to be run for two or three years.*

C2. Other Programmes (OP) - Network Programmes (Enquiry: 2892 6327)

52. 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.*

**Programme Evaluation Report for
DLG – Other Programme: Gifted Education for the 2021/22 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"> ♦ 15 students from S4 ♦ Nominated by the Mathematics Department with highest scores in the Mathematics examination 	12 lessons in three months from October 2021 (one lesson per week)	One assignment	<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: 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"> ♦ 15 students from S4 and S5 ♦ Nominated by the Chinese Language Department with highest scores in the Chinese Language 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 course provider 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 5- point scale - The anthology compiled was worth disseminating to all students in the school 	HK\$18,000 (course fee)