

Vocational English Programme (VEP) Grant

Points Covered at the Q&A Session of the Briefing to Schools on 9 & 18 April 2018

Selection of Schools for the VEP Grant

- Interested schools shall submit an application form (at Annex 2 of Education Bureau Circular Memorandum No. EDBCM 32/2018) to the English Language Education Section by **4 May 2018** (Friday), and provide information on the learning needs of students, their proficiency level and the measures to ensure the smooth implementation of the VEP (e.g. incentive for students to participate fully in the programme, liaison with parents), all of which will be considered in determining the applicants' suitability for the VEP Grant. There is no need for schools to attach a list of participating students to the application form.
- Should there be more than 50 schools interested in applying for the VEP Grant, unsuccessful applicants will be put on a waiting list, in case some schools withdraw from the programme later.

Submission of Application to Course Providers

- The VEP targets S4 and S5 students of the 2018/19 cohort who struggle for Level 2 in the HKDSE Examination for English Language and are interested in pursuing vocational and professional education and training or prepared to work upon graduation from secondary school. Schools shall select at least 20 participating students who are willing to commit themselves to the vocational English courses, fulfil the prerequisites for enrolment, and have parents' consent to their attending the courses. Schools which are allotted the VEP Grant but fail to recruit at least 20 students by the time of course enrolment (i.e. with fewer than 20 students gaining admission to one of the courses) shall be **ineligible** for the programme and return the VEP Grant to the EDB at their earliest convenience.
- Students from the same school are advised to register for classes run by the same course provider.
- Schools need not provide justification for their choices of course providers.
- Schools allotted the VEP Grant are encouraged to contact the course providers before submitting an application to work out implementation details (e.g. schedule of classes, support for students) and arrange for placement tests to be taken by participating students, if applicable.

Course Implementation

- The three designated post-secondary institutions might be commissioned to run the vocational English courses at school, subject to the provision of individual course providers. All modules shall be delivered outside school hours or during students' free lessons. The participating students will be placed in the same class regardless of their year levels.
- The vocational English courses, whether organised at school or at venues provided by the course providers, shall not be taken as replacements for the school-based senior secondary English Language curricula.
- The EDB requires that students attain at least 50% overall attendance for modules at QF Level 2 so as to be eligible to take modules at QF Level 3. Each course provider may also have their own requirements (e.g. students' attendance and learning performance) for enrolment on particular

modules. Schools may refer to the course providers' websites or contact them for further information.

- The number of students in a class, if falling below 20 in any case following the commencement of the first module, could have a bearing on the course implementation. These students are still **eligible** for the VEP Grant but schools may need to negotiate with the course providers about the appropriate arrangements for the courses to continue (e.g. merging classes). To avoid the inconvenience of effecting changes halfway through the courses, schools are advised to select more of their students to participate in the programme.

Use of Grant

- The VEP Grant is meant to provide subsidies for schools to enrol students on the vocational English courses delivered by the following three designated tertiary institutions:
 - Caritas Bianchi College of Careers
 - HKU Space Community College
 - Vocational Training Council
- The VEP Grant shall be used to solely cover the course fees. Schools shall settle the payment by module. Other fees such as re-assessment fees and transport fees shall not be covered by the VEP Grant.
- Should the VEP Grant not suffice to cover the course fees for all participating students, schools might draw on other sources of funding to top up the allocation or request parents to pay part of the fees.
- It is up to schools to decide how much subsidy is granted to individual students.
- Should students discontinue their courses, the remainder of the VEP Grant can be used to cover the modules taken by other student participants.
- Unspent balance shall be returned to the EDB upon the completion of the courses.

Administrative Work

- Before enrolling students on the vocational English courses, schools shall obtain their parents' consent in writing and keep a formal record. The name list of students successfully enrolled on the courses (template to be available at www.edb.gov.hk/vepgrant in due course) shall be sent to the English Language Education Section of the EDB by 28 September 2018. Under no circumstances can schools bring in new participants after then.
- Should students wish to drop out of the courses, schools shall inform the respective course provider(s) immediately.
- The number of students who can progress through the modules is subject to their performance in assessment and attendance. Schools shall check if the number of eligible students stated on the invoice for each module is correct and make appropriate payment accordingly.
- No extra funding or manpower will be provided by the EDB for schools to handle the administrative work involved in the programme.

Articulation

- The qualification obtained from the vocational English courses, though not equivalent to Level 2 in the HKDSE Examination for English Language, might be taken into account by the respective course providers in selecting candidates for admission to Higher Diploma and Associate Degree programmes through the special admission quota for non-standard entry. It should be noted that the course providers have complete discretion as to what selection principles should be adopted and whether a participating student should be considered for admission.

English Language Education Section

Curriculum Development Institute

April 2018