

**Student Activities Support Grant
Frequently Asked Questions**

Subsidy rate, target beneficiary and ambit of the Student Activities Support Grant (SAS Grant)	
Q1:	What is the purpose of disbursing the SAS Grant?
A1:	The SAS Grant is provided to support primary and secondary school students with financial needs to participate in out-of-classroom life-wide learning activities organised or recognised by schools enabling students to benefit from experiential learning.
Q2:	How should schools apply for the SAS Grant?
A2:	Schools are required to, on a school year basis, submit their applications to the EDB according to the procedures set out in EDB Circular No. 17/2019 , which provides details of the SAS Grant.
Q3:	On what basis is the amount of the SAS Grant calculated for each participating school?
A3:	<p>The amount of the SAS Grant to be disbursed to each participating school is calculated based on the number of students of the school in receipt of the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) or the full-grant under the School Textbook Assistance Scheme (STAS full-grant).</p> <p>On a regular basis, the Social Welfare Department and the Student Finance Office under the Working Family and Student Financial Assistance Agency respectively provide the EDB with the number of students in receipt of the CSSA and the STAS full-grant in each school. In calculating the amount of the SAS Grant for a school year, the EDB will first work out the provisional amount based on the number of students in receipt of the CSSA or the STAS full-grant in April of the preceding school year. The actual amount will be worked out based on the number of students in receipt of the CSSA or the STAS full-grant in December of the respective school year; and adjustment will be made if necessary.</p> <p>The grant rate for each eligible student (i.e. those in receipt of the CSSA or the STAS full-grant) for secondary school is \$650 and that for each primary school student is \$350. While the grant rate for each student is adopted for calculating the amount of the SASG for a school, it should not be regarded as the subsidised amount for each student beneficiary. Schools are advised to deploy the SAS Grant in an open, fair and reasonable manner having regard to their contexts.</p>
Q4:	What criteria should be met by beneficiaries of the SAS Grant?

A4:	Beneficiaries of the SAS Grant are primary and secondary school students in receipt of either the CSSA or the STAS full-grant. In view that some families may lack the means to support their children to participate in life-wide learning activities but for various reasons are not in receipt of the CSSA or STAS full-grant, schools may formulate their own school-based criteria for identifying such students so that they could also benefit from the SAS Grant. However, the subsidy for supporting such students should be capped at 25% of the total provision of the SAS Grant for the school year.
Q5:	What school-based criteria should be adopted for identifying financially needy students? Is the SAS Grant also applicable to students receiving the STAS half-grant?
A5:	Given students' diverse family backgrounds, schools may formulate their own criteria for identifying financially needy students and deploy up to 25% of the total amount of SASG received for the school year to provide support. The beneficiaries may include students who receive the STAS half-grant, who come from low-income families or who have special needs owing to their family's financial situation.
Q6:	How can schools identify CSSA or STAS full-grant recipients?
A6:	As a general practice, the Student Finance Office under the Working Family and Student Financial Assistance Agency regularly provides schools with information on students in receipt of the STAS full-grant. In respect of students receiving the CSSA, schools need to gather pertinent information from parents. In this regard, school-based mechanisms could be formulated in light of school context and culture. To aptly support students in need, schools may, among others, issue a notice inviting parents to provide information on a voluntary basis, or identify the CSSA recipients through teachers or school social workers.
Q7:	As for students who are considered financially needy under the school-based criteria, schools have the discretion to deploy 25% of the total amount of the SASG received for the school year to support their participation in life-wide learning activities. Are schools allowed to, in light of their contexts, seek the EDB's approval for raising the cap so as to support more students in need?
A7:	The SAS Grant serves to support students with financial needs. Whether students are in receipt of the CSSA or STAS full-grant is a rather objective criterion for defining beneficiaries of the SAS Grant. As some families may need support but for various reasons do not apply for the CSSA or STAS full-grant, schools are given flexibility in deploying 25% of the total amount of the SASG for the school year to support students considered needy under the school-based criteria. If there is a genuine need to allocate provision exceeding the cap, schools may approach the respective Senior School Development Officers in or before January of the respective school year. Consideration will be given on a case-by-case basis.

Q8:	What is the ambit of the SAS Grant?
A8:	<p>Schools may deploy the Grant to subsidise students with financial needs to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • participate in life-wide learning activities covering different KLAs and curriculum areas; foster students’ whole-person development, nurture their lifelong learning capabilities, positive values and attitudes; • participate in diversified learning activities with a view to enriching the five essential learning experiences (including intellectual development, moral and civic education, community service, physical and aesthetic development, and career-related experiences) for students. For details, please refer to Secondary Education Curriculum Guide Booklet 7: Life-wide Learning and Experiential Learning; and • deploy a portion of the Grant to purchase basic and essential learning materials and equipment for participating in life-wide learning activities. <p>Expenses for activities that are not in line with the objectives of life-wide learning, such as expenditures on remedial classes and examination fees, should not be covered by the SAS Grant.</p>
Q9:	Should every eligible student receive the same amount of subsidy under the SAS Grant within a school year?
A9:	<p>As the type and number of life-wide learning activities undertaken by eligible students differ and the amount of subsidy under the SAS Grant varies among the activities, not every eligible student would receive the same amount of SAS Grant within a school year. Schools should lay down fair, impartial and reasonable principles to ensure proper allocation of the grant.</p>
Q10:	Is there a cap on the amount of subsidy under the SAS Grant or the number of subsidised activities for each eligible student within a school year?
A10:	<p>Schools have the discretion to determine the number of life-wide learning activities to be subsidised and the amount of subsidy for each eligible student. Adhering to the principle of fairness, impartiality and reasonableness, schools should strive to fully utilise the SAS Grant to benefit as many financially needy students as possible. It should be noted that the EDB’s provision of financial support for needy students does not imply forbidding schools to collect activity fees from parents. Schools may, in light of their contexts and students’ diverse needs, reasonably define the scope of support and fee-charging criteria, and inform parents and students accordingly.</p>
Q11:	Could the SAS Grant be deployed to subsidise eligible students’ participation

	in life-wide learning activities organised by external organisations?
A11:	The SAS Grant could be deployed to subsidise eligible students' participation in activities organised by external organisations (e.g. post-secondary institutions, sports associations, programmes / activities / competitions organised by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department), on the condition that the school is confident that the activities are in line with the learning objectives of life-wide learning. That said, schools should avoid confining the use of resources to a small number of students.
Q12:	Could the SAS Grant be deployed to cover food and beverage expenses for life-wide learning activities?
A12:	Social events or celebrations without specific learning goals are not considered life-wide learning activities, and the expenditures arising from them should not be met by the SAS Grant. However, food and beverage expenses included in the activity expenditures (i.e. food and beverage expenses included in the expenditures on educational camps, training camps and non-local exchange activities) could be covered by the SAS Grant.
Q13:	Could the SAS Grant be used for conducting ceremonies or purchasing gifts or souvenirs for activities?
A13:	The SAS Grant should not be used for conducting promotional and publicity activities, social events or celebrations (e.g. graduation dinners and parties), meeting banquet- or courtesy-related expenses (e.g. flower baskets and trophies for guests), or purchasing gifts, souvenirs and prizes for life-wide learning activities or competitions.
Q14:	What should be noted by schools in deploying the SAS Grant to subsidise financially needy students' purchase of basic and essential learning materials and equipment for life-wide learning activities?
A14:	<p>The SAS Grant could be deployed to purchase basic and essential learning materials and equipment (e.g. musical instruments and sports equipment) for financially needy students to facilitate their participation in life-wide learning activities. As the materials and equipment purchased are school assets, a fair mechanism should be set up to ensure that the items are available for needy students to borrow and clear circulation records are maintained.</p> <p>Schools should make effective use of the SAS Grant to ensure that all materials and equipment purchased are basic and essential for students' participation in life-wide learning activities. Also, schools should avoid extravagance and exercise fiscal prudence.</p>
Q15:	Could the SAS Grant be deployed to cover expenses incurred by teachers in leading learning activities?

Q15:	With supporting financially needy students' participation in life-wide learning activities as the goal, the SAS Grant should be used to directly benefit disadvantaged students. Schools could make use of other grants available (e.g. Life-wide Learning Grant (LWL Grant) and Expanded Operating Expenses Block Grant) to cover expenses incurred by teachers in leading learning activities.
Q16:	For a single learning activity, is it possible for schools to utilise the LWL Grant for non-needy students while deploying the SAS Grant to support needy students?
A16:	<p>The LWL Grant aims to provide financial support to schools for organising more out-of-classroom experiential learning activities in different curriculum areas. Schools should, having regard to their development and students' overall needs, make proper use of the LWL Grant to benefit as many students as possible. As for the SAS Grant, on the other hand, is an additional source of support on top of the LWL Grant for subsidising only financially needy students to participate in life-wide learning activities. The two grants complement each other to create favourable conditions for schools to further promote life-wide learning.</p> <p>While schools could utilise the LWL Grant to organise activities, students / parents may still need to bear part of the costs. In such a circumstance, schools may deploy the SAS Grant to further support financially needy students who could not afford the costs.</p>
Operation of the SAS Grant	
Q17:	How is the SAS Grant disbursed to schools?
A17:	Schools are required to submit their applications in or before mid-July, and the SAS Grant will be disbursed in two installments in September and March of each school year.
Q18:	Could any unspent balance of the SAS Grant for a school year be carried forward to the next school year?
A18:	Schools should fully utilise the SAS Grant provided every school year to benefit students with financial needs within the same school year. Any unspent balance should be returned to the EDB / Student Activities Support Fund at the end of the school year, and no unspent balance should be carried forward to the following school year. Transfer of funds and / or unspent balance under the SAS Grant to other accounts is not allowed.
Q19:	Could a deficit under the SAS Grant be made up by other school funds?
A19:	Schools should exercise fiscal prudence. Any deficit incurred under the SAS Grant should be met by the schools' own funds. For government schools, relevant expenditure should be charged to the designated user code / deposit account under

	the prevailing financial guidelines and the spending in a school year should not exceed the allocated amount of the SAS Grant.
Q20:	Are schools required to submit reports to the EDB on the use of SAS Grant?
A20:	<p>Schools should observe the EDB’s relevant guidelines when using the SAS Grant and be accountable for its proper use. School-based criteria should be formulated to ensure appropriate allocation of the funds. Under the principle of school-based management, schools should evaluate the utilisation of SAS Grant on a regular basis, and include the Report on the Use of the SAS Grant in the School Report of the respective school year for endorsement by their School Management Committees (SMCs)/ Incorporated Management Committees (IMCs) and uploading such report onto the school website.</p> <p>Schools should adopt the latest EDB template of the Report on the Use of SAS Grant to provide the required information to keep stakeholders informed of how the resource is utilised to support primary and secondary school students with financial needs to participate in life-wide learning activities.</p>
A21:	As far as the deployment of SAS Grant is concerned, how should schools manage finances and how does the EDB monitor schools?
Q21:	<p>On the use of government funds, schools have always been required to establish effective procedures for financial management to ensure that resources are allocated in a cost-effective manner and expenses are properly incurred to serve educational purposes.</p> <p>Aided, caput and DSS schools are required to keep a separate ledger account to record all incomes and expenditures under the SAS Grant for scrutiny by their SMCs/IMCs. Under the principle of school-based management, schools should follow guidelines in using the SAS Grant to facilitate students’ learning, and submit their annual audited accounts to ensure proper use of public funds. For government schools, relevant expenditure should be charged to the designated user code / deposit account under the prevailing financial guidelines, and the spending in a school year should not exceed the allocated amount of the SAS Grant.</p> <p>In addition, the EDB has drawn up the guidelines on the use of SAS Grant for schools’ reference. When necessary, the EDB will conduct school visits to understand how the SAS Grant is deployed and provide advice to schools as appropriate.</p>

Life-wide Learning Section
Curriculum Development Institute
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