

**Enhancement Measures for
the Native-speaking English Teacher (NET) Scheme
Frequently Asked Questions and Answers**

About the NET Grant

Q1: What is the ambit of the NET Grant?

A1: The ambit of the NET Grant would align with the objectives of the NET Scheme. These include employing NETs and native-speaking English Teaching Assistants (NTAs) who are native-speakers of English to make innovative approaches in creating an English-rich environment, so as to enhance student motivation and engagement in English learning; offering students a variety of innovative learning activities in authentic English-speaking environment; connecting students' learning of English with other subjects and real life using a language-across-the-curriculum (LAC) approach in learning and teaching and promoting English learning through co-curricular activities; providing them with a well-rounded and diversified learning experience.

Q2: What is the amount of funds of the NET Grant?

A2: The amount of the Grant is referenced from the mid-point salary of APSM in primary schools and GM in secondary schools, \$0.9m and \$1m will be provided for an eligible primary and secondary school respectively for each school year. Schools may top up the NET Grant with other government funding of appropriate ambit or schools' own fund to employ NETs or NTAs, or engage English learning support services that suit school-based circumstances to enhance the English learning of students.

Q3: Are schools allowed to employ a person aged 60 or above as a NET under the NET Grant?

A3: Teachers employed by the NET Grant are contract teachers who are not subject to the restriction on retirement age as set out in the Codes of Aid. Schools may use the NET Grant to employ a person aged 60 or above as a NET if appropriate.

Q4: Will schools receive the NET Grant every year? Will there be annual adjustment to the amount of the Grant?

A4: The NET Grant is a purpose-specific grant disbursed to schools every year. EDB will closely monitor the implementation of the enhancement measures and views from the Sector, review their effectiveness and consider if annual adjustment to the amount of Grant is needed in a timely manner.

Q5: Can schools change the options? Can schools terminate the contracts of NETs before the expiry dates so that schools can opt for receiving the NET Grant as soon as possible?

A5: No. Schools are not allowed to switch the options within the school year. Schools are required to adopt a holistic approach based on their specific needs to make prudent decisions when opting for retaining a NET post or receiving the NET Grant. The stability of English teaching service is very important. Eligible schools are allowed to choose one from the two options when the contracts with NETs or service providers are completed at the end of respective school years.

Q6: What are the entry requirements of NET under the NET Grant?

A6: The NETs employed under the NET Grant should possess the following qualifications:

- (i) a Bachelor's degree in any subject from a Hong Kong university, or equivalent; AND
- (ii) a PGDE or a TEFL / TESL qualification at least at certificate level, or equivalent; AND
- (iii) valid IELTS results (overall band score of 7.5 or above, and "Speaking" band score of 7.5 or above).

Q7: Under the NET Grant, schools should employ at least one full-time NET. Can schools employ two 0.5 NETs instead?

A7: The NET employed under the NET Grant should be a full-time equivalent. With reference to school-based circumstances and needs, schools may employ two 0.5 NETs if considered appropriate.

Q8: What are the qualification requirements of the NTAs under the NET Grant?

A8: Both the NETs and NTAs employed under the NET Grant should be native-speakers of English. NTAs are not bound by the qualification requirements as stated for NETs. Schools should determine the required qualifications when employing NTAs or engaging NTA services that would best meet the needs of schools and students in enhancing learning and teaching of English.

Q9: If a school employs one NET and one NTA/procures English learning service, but the NET resigns during the school year, can the school continue to use the NET Grant for other English learning support services?

A9: Schools receiving the NET Grant should employ at least one NET. The school should find a replacement of the NET as soon as possible or engage a service provider to assist in the recruitment of the NET. Schools are encouraged to plan holistically the use of the NET Grant to enhance the English learning of students. As regards employment of NTA and/or procurement of service, the school has to comply with the Employment Ordinance/contract signed with service providers, and other relevant legislations as well as guidelines issued by EDB from time to time.

Q10: Could schools use the remaining funds after employing a NET to employ teaching assistants to support other subjects?

A10: No. Schools should utilise the NET Grant adhering to its ambit. After employing a full-time NET, schools may use the remaining fund of the NET Grant, if any, to engage NTAs to support schools' arrangement of English learning programmes, or engage service providers to organise and provide English learning programmes or other support services that best meet school-based circumstances and needs.

Q11: Are NETs employed under the NET Grant required to pass the Basic Law and National Security Law Test (BLNST)?

A11: According to EDB Circular No. 13/2022, the BLNST requirement is not applicable to, among others, teachers employed under the NET Scheme in public sector schools, or NETs appointed on terms comparable to the NET

Scheme for performing the same kind of duties in other types of schools as specified in the said circular.

Q12: How would schools determine the remuneration package for the NETs employed under the NET Grant, should it include the housing allowance or fringe benefits?

A12: The NET Grant is referenced to the mid-point salary of APSM and GM in primary and secondary schools respectively. \$0.9m and \$1m will be provided for an eligible primary and secondary school respectively for each school year. When determining the remuneration package of NETs, schools should make reference to the salary scale of APSM (MPS Pt. 15 - 29) and GM (MPS Pt. 15 - 33), taking into account the NETs' qualifications, teaching experiences and background, level of responsibilities, etc. as comparable to teachers taking up similar duties employed by schools. Regarding the provision of additional fringe benefits, such as housing allowances, schools should make decisions based on their own policies and principles of resource allocation. EDB would continue to provide professional support to schools on administration matters.

Q13: Can schools retain the surplus of the NET Grant?

A13: Schools should maximise the use of the NET Grant disbursed each school year in a timely manner to support the English learning of students in that school year. Therefore, in principle, schools should not accumulate an excessive surplus of the Grant. Based on schools' annual audited accounts, if schools have accumulated a surplus in excess of 30% of the 12 months' provision of the NET Grant, the surplus above this amount at the end of the school year will be clawed back.

Q14: Can schools switching from the NET Grant option to the NET post in a certain year retain the surplus of the Grant?

A14: Schools should only switch their option when the contracts with their current serving NETs have ended (including both employed for the NET Posts or by the NET Grant). For schools switching from the NET Grant to the NET post in a certain school year, based on schools' annual audited accounts, if there is an unspent balance of not more than 30% of the 12 months' provision of the Grant accumulated from previous school year(s), they may continue to deploy the balance up to 31 August of that school year. For example, a school opts to

receive the NET Grant for the 2025/26 school year, that it switches to retain the NET post for the 2026/27 school year, the school may use the unspent balance of the NET Grant, if any, in the 2026/27 school year (i.e. up to 31 August 2027). After that date, any unspent balance should be clawed back.

Q15: Are schools required to submit reports to EDB on the use of the NET Grant?

A15: Schools are required to adopt a holistic approach based on their specific needs to make prudent decisions when opting for retaining a NET post or receiving the NET Grant. For schools receiving the NET Grant, schools should submit an annual School Plan and School Report on the deployment of the Grant for endorsement by their Incorporated Management Committees / School Management Committees each school year, summarising the implementation and evaluating the effectiveness of relevant measures in supporting English learning, and upload them onto the school homepage for public scrutiny by the end of November. A template for the School Plan and School Report has been uploaded on the EDB website for schools' reference.

Q16: For NETs employed under the NET Grant, are they required to fulfill relevant CPD requirements? Can they join the training programmes organised by EDB?

A16: NETs employed as full-time teachers need to adhere to the training requirements set out in the CPD policy, ensuring that they are equipped with latest teaching strategies and development in education policy. All teachers who are e-Services Portal teacher account users can join the training programmes offered by EDB including the NET Section. NETs should refer to the designated EDB webpage for training requirements for teachers.

Q17: What kind of support is provided by the NET Section to primary schools having less than six classes?

A17: The NET Section provides peripatetic support for schools with less than six classes. The Advisory Teacher (AT) of the NET Section, in discussion with the school, will work out the support focus depending on the needs of each school. The support services offered are diverse in nature, scope and intensity – they may include conducting co-planning meetings and classroom teaching; supporting the implementation of the English Language curriculum in the school; providing learning and teaching resources developed by the NET

Section; conducting school-based professional development workshops, and assisting the school in organising English activities for students.

Q18: If a school opts for receiving the NET Grant, will the school continue to receive the existing support from the NET Section?

A18: The NET Section, being the professional arm of the NET Scheme, has been providing professional support for all public-sector primary and secondary schools to maximise the benefits of the NET Scheme on English language learning and teaching, as well as organising professional development programmes to support schools and English teachers, including NETs, in implementing curriculum initiatives and innovating learning and teaching strategies. The tripartite partnerships between the local English teachers, the NETs and the support officers of NET Section remain the same under the enhancement measures. NETs are expected to bring into the language classrooms of local schools their professional experience, different teaching styles and ideas, and cultural literacies that can help enrich students' literacy experiences and the language learning environment. In this connection, the NET Section will continue to support the implementation of the NET Scheme and foster focused and purposeful collaboration between NETs and the local English teachers to enhance the strategies for curriculum development as well as to enrich students' literacy experiences.

About the NET Post

Q19: If a school opts to retain the current NET post, is the NET required to attain the uplifting qualifications?

A19: The uplifted qualifications apply to all newly-joined NETs who join the NET Scheme in or after the 2025/26 school year and those NETs with a break in service of more than one year. Regarding serving NETs without a break in service under the NET Scheme, the existing qualification requirements remain unchanged. Nevertheless, serving NETs are encouraged to pursue relevant qualifications to enhance their professional capacity.

Q20: What are the uplifted qualification requirements for newly-joined NETs?

A20: Newly-joined NETs in the NET post are required to possess the following qualifications:

- (i)(a) a relevant Bachelor's degree majoring in the study of English¹ from a Hong Kong university, or equivalent; **or**
- (i)(b) a Bachelor's degree in any subjects, and a higher degree majoring in the study of English¹ or related subject from a Hong Kong university, or equivalent; **and**
- (ii) a Post-graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) majoring in English Language², or equivalent; **and**
- (iii) a Teaching English as a Foreign / Second Language (TEFL / TESL) qualification at least at certificate level, or equivalent.

Q21: Can schools employ newly-joined NETs who do not possess the required qualifications, specifically teacher training when they enter the teaching post?

A21: Schools should employ newly-joined NETs with qualifications stated in Q20. However, if the newly-joined NETs have not yet attained a recognised teacher training qualification upon appointment, similar to the current arrangements for all other teachers within the establishment, schools may employ them but their salary would be barred at MPS Pt. 20. The bar would be uplifted upon fulfilling the training requirements. Besides, if the newly-joined NETs could not obtain a PGDE majoring in English or equivalent within the first four years of service, schools are not allowed to continue the employment with them under the NET Scheme. Therefore, schools should encourage them to acquire a proper teacher training as soon as possible and closely monitor their training progress.

Q22: Are NETs employed under the NET Grant for more than one year be regarded as newly-joined NETs if they work in the NET post again?

¹ A relevant Bachelor's degree/higher degree includes:

- degrees specifically in the study of the English language (including English studies, English literature, and linguistics);
- degrees in education with specialism in English;
- degrees in the communicative use of English; and
- degrees in translation with English as one of the principal languages studied.

² Relevant teacher training means recognised teacher training with specialism in English and supervised practicum in English teaching.

A22: These NETs will be regarded as newly-joined NETs as they have a break in service for more than one year. They are required to possess the uplifted qualification requirements as stated in Q20 if they are employed in the NET post within the teaching establishment in the future.

Q23: If a NET employed under the NET Grant chooses to work in a NET post in the future, will their previous service under the Grant be counted towards their remuneration?

A23: If the employees have worked as a NET under the NET Grant, provided that they have **obtained relevant qualifications for the NET Post**, the number of years served (full-time equivalent) will be taken into account during the calculation of increments, provided that documents of proof (including certificates of service issued by former employers with clear description of their rank, year(s) of service, source of funding, percentage of full-time duties/part-time to full-time job ratio, no-pay leave taken) are submitted when they switch to NET posts under the Scheme within the approved establishment of aided schools. Salary increments may be awarded for recognized relevant post-degree teaching experience on the production of relevant Certificates/Statements of Service. All claims of teaching experience must be supported by official record/certificate of service.

Q24: If a school has opted for retaining the serving NET, while the NET resigns in the middle of the school year, can the school then change to receive the NET Grant?

A24: No. Schools are not allowed to switch within the school year. If the NET suddenly leaves the post within the school year, the school should find a replacement to fill the vacancy, or apply for recruiting a temporary NET following current arrangements under the NET Scheme.

Q25: Will EDB continue to recruit NETs from overseas? Will EDB refer CVs of NETs for schools to choose from?

A25: EDB will continue to recruit expatriates to fill NET positions through the annual recruitment exercise, and refer the CVs of NETs who are in the central candidate pool to schools opting for maintaining the NET post only.