

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

### **General**

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

- *As stipulated in the report *New Academic Structure for Senior Secondary Education and Higher Education – Action Plan for Investing in the Future of Hong Kong* published by the Education Bureau (EDB) in 2005, starting from 2009/10 s.y., the DLG is provided upon application to support schools in offering a diversified senior secondary (SS) curriculum to meet students' different needs. Schools may use the subsidy to provide different programme choices for SS students taking local curriculum, which include Applied Learning (ApL) courses, adapted ApL courses<sup>1</sup>, Other Programmes (OP) (including network programmes for SS subjects and gifted education programmes) and Other Languages (OL) as elective subjects.*
- *Details of application for the DLG are set out in the following circular memorandums (CM):-*
  - *Applied Learning courses – EDBCM No. 118/2021, EDBCM No.73/2022 and EDBCM No.23/2023*
  - *Adapted Applied Learning courses – EDBCM No. 10/2022 and EDBCM No. 13/2023*
  - *Other Languages and Other Programmes – EDBCM No. 172/2023, EDBCM No. 69/2023 and EDBCM No. 79/2022*

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

- *For ApL / adapted ApL courses: the DLG is disbursed/ allocated by the EDB to aided, government, schools under the Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS), caput and special schools operating senior secondary classes offering local curriculum. The grant is used for covering course fees of ApL / adapted ApL. The amount of the DLG disbursed/ allocated to schools is calculated based on the course fees of ApL / adapted ApL courses taken by students. Generally, each eligible student is entitled to funding for a maximum of two ApL courses/ adapted ApL courses throughout his/her studies at the SS level (excluding Applied Learning Chinese (for non-Chinese speaking students) (ApL(C)<sup>2</sup>)). Starting from the 2020/21 school year, students taking ApL 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 2022/23 school year, the subsidy rate of the DLG-*

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

<sup>2</sup> 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 Applied Learning Chinese (for non-Chinese speaking students) (Student Grant). For details on Student Grant, please refer to Annex 7 of EDBCM No. 73/2022 and Annex 8 of EDBCM No. 23/2023.

*OL has been revised to \$4,300 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 the DLG-OP has been revised 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 will be disbursed to eligible schools with a utilisation rate of the DLG-OP of 80% or above, based on the schools’ annual accounts of the most recent year (In sum, \$7,800 per SS class per year).*
  - *An arrangement has been introduced with effect from the 2017/18 school year to encourage schools to optimally utilise the DLG-OP to cater for diversity in student learning and to avoid the claw-back of any unspent subsidies. Schools are advised to make a realistic estimation for the coming year (capped by each school’s entitlement). Schools applying for the DLG-OP should initially set the number of classes intended for the subsidy through the online submission in June, and subsequently confirm the number or make adjustment through the online survey in November to finalise the total amount of the DLG-OP to be applied for the year.*

3. Do special schools benefit from the DLG?

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

4. Can schools transfer the funding among different categories of the DLG?

- *No. Different categories of the DLG should be kept in separate ledger accounts for recording all incomes and expenditures.*

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

- *For Other Languages/Other Programmes: For aided (including special schools with SS 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 the DLG disbursed in the current school year. For government schools, any unspent balance of the allocation will lapse by the end of each financial year and separate allocation for the unspent balance brought forward capped by the total allocation of the preceding financial year will be provided in the years between.*
- *For ApL Courses/Adapted ApL Courses: The allocation of the DLG is cohort-specific, i.e. the amount provided for a specific cohort of students cannot be used to subsidise students of other cohorts. For aided secondary schools, secondary schools under the DSS, caput schools*

*and special schools operating SS classes, the surplus in the ledger account can be carried forward to the next school year until the relevant cohort completes. Transfer of funds and/ or its unspent balance out of this grant is not allowed. 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, starting from the 2022-24 cohort, separate allocation for the unspent balance of the preceding financial year (if any) will be provided at the beginning of the next financial year, any unspent balance of the grant will lapse after the relevant cohort completes. Transfer of funds and/ or its unspent balance out of this grant is not allowed. 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 fees for taking the DLG-subsidised programmes?
- *Schools eligible for the DLG are not allowed to charge students any fees 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 the DLG?
- *With a view to streamlining the administrative work arising from the disbursement of the DLG, schools are no longer required to prepare the 3-year plans for the DLG-OL and the DLG-OP from the 2019/20 school year. However, schools are required to incorporate relevant programmes into their annual plan and report.*
  - *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 on how 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 the DLG, in the support for ApL / adapted ApL courses?

- *Under the full subsidy arrangement, schools will be disbursed/ allocated with an amount of the DLG equal to the total course fees of ApL / adapted ApL courses enrolled by eligible students. If necessary and under special circumstances, schools can deploy the following resources to top up the deficit:*

<i>School Type</i>	<i>Resources to be Deployed by Schools</i>
<i>Aided secondary schools, Special schools operating 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 / Teacher Relief Grant (TRG)</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> </ul>
<i>Caput Schools</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>CEG</i></li> <li>• <i>Fee Subsidy</i></li> <li>• <i>Schools' own funds</i></li> </ul>
<i>DSS 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. 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 their practical difficulties. 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?

- *The DLG is disbursed/ allocated by EDB to aided, government and secondary schools under the DSS, caput schools and special schools operating SS classes, with full subsidy provided for students to take ApL / adapted ApL courses. Generally, each eligible student is entitled to funding for a maximum of two ApL courses / adapted ApL courses throughout his/her studies at the SS level (excluding ApL(C)). Starting from the 2020/21 school year, students taking ApL 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.*

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 SS 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. Generally, each eligible student is entitled to funding for a maximum of two ApL courses / adapted ApL courses throughout his/her studies at the senior secondary level (excluding ApL(C)).*

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?

- *The DLG is calculated based on the actual number of enrolments in ApL/adapted ApL courses in September/October 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 year level, (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 places are available) with the agreement of the school principal and course provider.*

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

14. What Other Languages are subsidised by the DLG? Are there any conditions for subsidy?

- *Starting from 2025, the Cambridge Assessment International Education Advanced Subsidiary level question papers will no longer be used for the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination Category C OL subjects. Under the new arrangements, schools can offer the following OL subjects as SS elective(s) to respective level of students in the 2023/24 school year:*

<b>Level of students</b>	<b>No. of OL subject choices</b>	<b>OL subjects</b>
S4	6	French, German, Japanese, Korean, Spanish and Urdu
S5	5	French, German, Japanese, Korean, and Spanish
S6	6	French, German, Hindi, Japanese, Spanish and Urdu

- *The curriculum design of these language courses must follow the syllabi of the respective language examinations recommended by the HKEAA as published in the HKDSE Examination Regulations for Category C subjects and the subject information provided on the HKEAA website.*
- *Students should enroll themselves in the designated language examinations administered by the official cultural organisations (as the providers of the language examinations). Should students obtain the specified level or above in the language examinations, their results attained will be reported in their HKDSE certificates. (please refer to the HKDSE Examination Regulations for details)*

15. If students did not register for the designated language examinations, would the EDB claw back the subsidy?

- *For effective use of public funds, schools should seek to understand whether the students concerned have the basic knowledge of the language before nominating them to study the OL courses and remind them to enroll themselves in the designated language examination. This will help reduce the dropouts of students. If eventually students do not register for the relevant examinations, schools should inform the EDB as soon as possible. The EDB would follow up with individual schools about the funding arrangements.*

16. Apart from the languages mentioned in Question 14, can schools offer language courses other than that?

- *If schools offer OL other than those specified, they will not be subsidised by the DLG-OL.*

17. Can schools offer more than one other language?
- *There is no limit 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.*
18. Would students taking OL as their 4<sup>th</sup> elective subject be subsidised by the DLG-OL?
- *Students who take a 4th elective subject and register for the examination under the HKDSE will be subsidised by the DLG-OL if they can satisfy the conditions stated in Question 14.*
19. How and when will the DLG-OL be calculated and disbursed to schools?
- *The subsidy will be calculated and disbursed in 2 instalments according to the number of students enrolled in OL courses as reported by schools via the online submission in June and the online survey in November.*
  - *For details of the timeline for disbursement of the subsidy, please refer to EDBCM No. 69/2023.*
20. Can schools use the DLG-OL to pay for students' examination fees of the stipulated official language examination(s)?
- *No. The DLG-OL is used to subsidise the course fees but not to pay for the examination fees.*
21. Can the DLG-OL be used for alteration works/minor adjustment/expansion of school facilities?
- *The DLG-OL is a subsidy for encouraging schools to offer a diversified curriculum for students. It cannot be used for alteration works/minor adjustment/expansion of school facilities.*
22. Can schools apply for the DLG-OL in the 2nd or 3rd year of students' SS schooling (S5 or S6)?
- *Yes. In that case, the EDB will only provide the subsidy for the 2nd and/or 3rd year upon successful application.*
23. Can schools use the subsidy to employ a teaching assistant to be responsible for co-ordinating the DLG-OL subsidised programmes?
- *Yes. The duties of the teaching assistant arising from the DLG-OL subsidised programmes must be clearly stated to justify the recruitment of the teaching assistant (or a portion of this post).*
24. Can schools allow students to choose and enroll in OL courses provided by an external course provider and reimburse students for the tuition fees?
- *No. Schools should not reimburse the tuition fees to students who enroll in OL courses outside*

*the school.*

- *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 on choosing suitable organisations/individuals to teach the OL courses.*

25. Can schools offer OL in cooperation with other organisations using the DLG?

- *Schools can decide on the mode of operation for OL on their own.*

26. When procuring services from external course providers, what procurement procedures schools should follow?

- *Schools should follow the general service procurement procedures and observe the rules and guidelines specified in the EDB Circular No. 4/2013 on Procurement Procedures in Aided Schools.*

27. Can schools use the DLG to pay their own teachers as instructors/facilitators for the DLG Programmes?

- *No. The teacher receiving extra pay will be regarded as “double-dipping”.*

### **C. Other Programmes (OP) (Enquiry: 2892 6327)**

28. How and when will the DLG for Other Programmes be calculated and disbursed to schools?

- *The subsidy will be calculated and disbursed in 2 instalments according to the information provided by schools via the online submission in June and the online survey in November, 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. 69/2023.*

29. What is “incentive funding”? How can schools get this additional incentive funding of the DLG-OP?

- *“Incentive funding” is the additional support to schools which is provided on top of the basic subsidy rate of the DLG-OP. Based on the schools' annual accounts of the most recent year, additional incentive funding of \$800 per SS class per year will be given to schools with a utilisation rate of the DLG-OP of 80% or above. (In sum, the subsidy rate will be \$7,800 per SS class per year).*

30. Can schools get the DLG-OP if they only offer network programmes but no programme for gifted students?

- *Schools can offer network programmes and/or education programmes for gifted students according to their needs, 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, is \$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).*

31. Can the DLG-OP be used for alteration works/minor adjustment/expansion of school facilities?

- *The DLG is a subsidy for encouraging schools to offer a diversified curriculum for students. It cannot be used for alteration works/minor adjustment/expansion of school facilities.*

32. Can schools apply for the DLG-OP in the 2nd or 3rd year of students' SS schooling (S5 or S6)?

- *Yes. In that case, the EDB will only provide the subsidy for the 2nd and/or 3rd year upon successful application.*

33. Can a school use the subsidy to employ a teaching assistant to be responsible for co-ordinating the DLG-OP subsidised programmes?

- *Yes. The duties of the teaching assistant arising from the DLG-OP subsidised programmes must be clearly stated to justify the recruitment of the teaching assistant (or a portion of this post).*

34. If schools are unable to confirm with the EDB the number of classes at the time applying for the subsidy in June, can schools amend, increase or decrease the relevant number of classes after the new school year has started?

- *Yes. When completing the online survey in November, if schools foresee that the allocated the DLG-OP cannot be fully utilized by end of the school year, they can reduce the number of classes applying for the DLG-OP. On the contrary, if schools can use more than the allocated the DLG-OP, schools can amend the number of classes applying for the DLG-OP for more funding but is capped by the school's entitlement.*

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

35. 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.*

36. 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. 69/2023 for details.*

37. 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 Curriculum Support Division, 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.*

38. Can a school use the DLG-OP on a need basis to employ external tutors mainly for enhancing students' skills relevant to the off-school competitions in which they would participate?
- *Firstly, the school has to ensure that the training programmes should include one or more of the gifted education elements i.e. creativity, higher-order thinking and personal and social skills. By participating in off-school competitions, gifted students would get their relevant skills facilitated and showcase their achievement.*
  - *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.*
39. Do students need to pay for the gifted education programmes sponsored by the DLG-OP?
- *Depending on the needs and arrangement 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.*
40. Can a school focus on individual talented student and use the DLG-OP to sponsor the student to enroll in programme of his interest?
- *We encourage the school to use the subsidy effectively as to benefit more students and should avoid as far as possible using the subsidy for individual students.*
41. Can a school use the DLG-OP in programmes for junior forms with an aim to prepare students for studying the SS curriculum?
- *No. The subsidy must be used for the learning of students in SS classes.*
42. Can a school use the subsidy to buy tickets for students if the programme is on language arts activities like drama?
- *Yes. Ticket fare can be regarded as programme cost.*
43. When procuring services from external course providers, what procurement procedure should be followed?
- *The school should follow the general service procurement procedure.*
44. 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.*
45. Is there any restriction on using the DLG-OP for one particular course or can the subsidy be shared

out among different programmes under the same category?

- *Schools can flexibly allocate the subsidy among different programmes under the same category.*

46. Can a school use the DLG-OP 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.*

47. Can the DLG-OP 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.*

48. Can schools use the DLG-OP 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 involve “transfer of interest” and “conflict of interest” if the relevant teachers are paid.*

49. Can schools use the DLG-OP to pay for students’ examination fees (e.g. examination fees for students learning musical instruments)?

- *No. The DLG-OP is used to subsidise the course fees but not to pay for the examination fees.*

50. 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.*

51. Is there a time frame within which the DLG-OP must be used / spent?

- *Yes. When the account balance brought forward from previous years is beyond the amount of DLG-OP received by the school in that year, the excess balance would be clawed back at the end of the year.*

52. Can the DLG-OP 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 programme to be run for two or three years.*

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

53. Are the network programmes under the DLG-OP limited to subjects such as Visual Arts, Music and Physical Education?

- *No. The DLG-OP will subsidise all SS subjects jointly offered by schools. However, there should be more than one school joining each of the network programme for SS subjects.*

**Programme Evaluation Report for  
DLG – Other Programme: Gifted Education for the 2023/24 school year  
[Sample]**

<b>Programme Title</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Target (No./level/selection criteria )</b>	<b>Duration / Start Date</b>	<b>Deliverable</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>	<b>Expenditure</b>
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 2023 (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)