

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers
concerning the
Top-up Student Guidance Service Grant

I. Use of the Top-up Student Guidance Service Grant

1. Q: Should schools use the Top-up Student Guidance Service Grant (Top-up Grant) to appoint Student Guidance Personnel (SGP) or hire additional student guidance service (SGS)?

A: Both are acceptable. Schools should utilise the Top-up Grant effectively to complement and supplement their existing services according to students' needs and school-based circumstances so that stepped up efforts are taken to prevent and handle student problems that may arise. Schools may pool together other school resources to appoint SGP or hire additional student guidance services from non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Examples include organising additional guidance programmes and group services; parent groups, talks on parenting skills, parent networks; thematic staff development programmes to enhance teachers' guidance/ counselling skills; and/or additional stationing service days of the SGP. For details, please refer to paragraph 3.3 of the Guide on Comprehensive Student Guidance Service (CSGS).

2. Q: Can schools appoint registered teachers with the Top-up Grant to take over the original teaching duties of existing teachers to free up their time to discharge the roles and functions of the SGP?

A: Yes. When redeploying the duties of the staff as mentioned above, schools have to ensure that teachers serving as the SGP are confirmed to have qualifications and experiences in guidance so as to implement the CSGS effectively.

3. Q: Can schools employ Teaching Assistants and / or Programme Assistants and / or Learning Support Assistants with the the Top-up Grant?

A: No. To appoint the SGP with the Top-up Grant, schools should comply with the related principles and procedures as mentioned in paragraph 3.2 of the Guide on the CSGS. Schools should appoint the following professionals as the supernumerary SGP:

- Registered teachers with experiences in guidance and / or teaching;
- Registered social workers; or
- Professionals in guidance with equivalent qualifications.

II. Deployment of the Top-up Grant on the Understanding Adolescent Project

4. Q: Can schools use the Top-up Grant to complement / increase the Intensive Programme (IP) activities in each grade under the Understanding Adolescent Project (UAP)?

A: Yes. In deploying the above guidance resources, schools should first review their respective school-based circumstances, including the needs of students, parents and teachers, etc. in participating in UAP and the guidance services required, that guidance resources are used properly to support different stakeholders and complement those school-based programmes that require further enhancement.

5. Q: In hiring services for additional guidance projects from NGOs for the UAP and / or school-based programmes, can schools call tenders for both the CSGS and the UAP together?

A: Yes. When calling tenders under the above two grants together, if schools opt for contracts exceeding one year, they should make reference to the requirements of conducting the procedure “through competitive quotations / tender exercises at regular intervals, preferably at least once every three years”. Hence, a UAP contract awarded for a maximum period of 3 years should be capped at one term of Primary 4-6 Intensive Programmes / Guidance Services, instead of three consecutive terms of services for Primary 4-6 (i.e. a 5-year contract period), or else the above procedures and principles in respect of the tendering exercise will be violated.

6. Q: Can schools use the Top-up Grant to hire additional SGP who are specifically responsible for implementing various activities under the UAP in each grade?

A: Yes. However, when deploying the above guidance resources, schools should first review their respective school-based circumstances. The designated SGP should effectively provide students, parents and teachers, etc. with the necessary services as planned so as to achieve the objectives of the UAP. At the same time, the enhancement or improvement progress in other CSGS areas in schools should not be affected.

III. Administrative and Financial Arrangements of the Top-up Grant

7. Q: Will schools receive the Top-up Grant every year? Will there be adjustment to the rates annually?

A: The Top-up Grant will be disbursed every school year, and the rates are subject to annual adjustment in accordance with the change of the Composite Consumer Price Index. Schools should refer to the EDB documents issued in September each year regarding the rate adjustment.

8. Q: Can schools keep the unused Top-up Grant? Or, can they accumulate the amount of related grants received over the years for organising large scale guidance activities in the future?

A: The Top-up Grant are disbursed every school year to cater for the developmental, preventive and remedial needs of students, parents and teachers in a particular school year. Schools should plan related guidance services properly according to their respective school-based circumstances in the year, and deploy the resources appropriately to fulfill different needs of the stakeholders of the schools in that particular school year. For consultation over the implementation of guidance services, schools can contact the Senior School Development Officers / School Development Officers of the Guidance and Discipline Section responsible for their districts. As for financial arrangements and consultation over the policy on education allowances, schools can contact the Senior School Development Officers of the Regional Education Office of their respective districts.

9. Q: Is it necessary for schools to include the use of the Top-up Grant in the CSGS Plan and submit it to the EDB for inspection?

A: Yes. Schools should formulate their CSGS Plan according to students' needs and school-based circumstances, listing out their work targets and measures as well as the use of student guidance resources (including the Top-up Grant). Schools need not submit the Plan or the Report on the CSGS to the EDB, but they have to seek the approval from the School Management Board / School Management Committee/ Incorporated Management Committee (IMC). Schools are also required to file the Plan and the Report on the CSGS properly for inspection by the EDB during advisory school visits.

10. Q: The approved number of operating classes may be adjusted after the commencement of the school term in September. Will there be any corresponding adjustment to the manpower allocated under the SGS and the amount of the Top-up Grant?

A: Upon confirmation of the number of classes operated by schools in mid-September, if there are any changes in the approved number of operating classes, the SGS resources (i.e. the student guidance teacher) and the amount of the Top-up Grant will be adjusted accordingly **within the school year**. However, the following arrangements will be made under special circumstances to ensure smooth operation of the SGS within the school year:

Scenario 1:

	No of classes	Corresponding Manpower	Corresponding Top-up Grant
Approved number of operating classes informed in March	18	1 person	Top-up Grant rate for 18 classes
Approved number of operating classes confirmed in mid-September	17	Remain at 1 person	Maintain the Top-up Grant rate for 18 classes

Scenario 2:

	No of classes	Corresponding Manpower	Corresponding Top-up Grant
Approved number of operating classes informed in March	17	0.5 person	Top-up Grant rate for 17 classes
Approved number of operating classes confirmed in mid-September	18	Increase to 1 person	Top-up Grant rate for 18 classes

Scenario 3:

	No of classes	Corresponding Manpower	Corresponding Top-up Grant
Approved number of operating classes informed in March	5	0.5 person	Top-up Grant rate for 5 classes
Approved number of operating classes confirmed in mid-September	4	Remain at 0.5 person	Not eligible

11. Q: When will the Top-up Grant be disbursed?

A: The above grants will be disbursed to schools by the EDB in accordance with their mode of operation and approved number of operating classes:

Mode of Operation	Disbursement of Grant
Subsidised primary schools with IMC	Top-up Grant will be disbursed to schools on a quarterly basis (in September, November, February and May).
Subsidised primary schools without IMC	Top-up Grant will be disbursed to schools in two batches (in August and April).

In case of any changes in the approved number of operating classes of the schools, we will make adjustments according to the Top-up Grant rates scale in December and / or within the appropriate period of disbursement each year.

IV. Appointment Arrangement of Student Guidance Teacher and Resource Allocation

12. Q: What are the qualification requirements for the SGT post in primary schools?

A: An applicant who wishes to apply for the post should possess teacher training qualification in primary education and has no less than 5 years' experience serving in government/aided primary schools, with a minimum of 2 years being an SGT and has completed all the necessary training. For details of the teacher training and work experiences, please refer to the Codes of Aid. The necessary training includes Pre-service Training Course conducted by the former Education Department or former Education and Manpower Bureau (EMB), Certificate Course on Student Guidance for Teachers of Primary School conducted by local tertiary institutions commissioned by the former EMB or Education Bureau or its equivalent. At present, teachers may enroll in programmes on social work or counselling organised by various tertiary institutions to attain the recognised qualification. Programmes enrolled should include 6 areas, i.e. counselling skills and practice, case management, personal growth education, catering for individual differences, CSGS and group work.

13. Q: What are the arrangement for the Top-up Grant for schools that employ SGTs?

A: Starting from the 2018/19 school year, each school employing SGT will be provided with additional 6 units of Top-up Grant on top of those under the old arrangement. (i.e. a Top-up Grant for each class starting from the 5th class or 18th class).

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