

# Professional Development Incentive Grant Scheme for Language Teachers

## Notes to Applicants (Revised on 1 June 2021)

### A. Objective

The “Professional Development Incentive Grant Scheme for Language Teachers” (the Scheme) aims to encourage serving teachers of the Chinese and English Language subjects who joined the teaching profession before the 2004/05 school year to enhance their subject knowledge and pedagogy in the language that they teach.

### B. Allocation of Grant

Each applicant may receive 50% of the tuition fee<sup>1</sup> of the recognised programme of study, up to a maximum of \$84,000<sup>2</sup>, upon his/her successful completion.

### C. Eligibility Criteria

1. Applicants should fulfill the following requirements-

- (i) Hong Kong resident with the right of abode, or the right to land or to remain in Hong Kong without restriction, i.e. an “A”, “R”, “U” or “\*\*\*” code should appear on the Hong Kong Identity Card; and
- (ii) joined the teaching profession and taught at the primary or secondary level before the 2004/05 school year; and
- (iii) teaches Chinese or English Language subject(s)<sup>3</sup> in local government, aided, Caput, Direct Subsidy Scheme or private / Private Independent School Scheme day school offering formal local curriculum at secondary and primary levels at the time of application; and
- (iv) has no break in service<sup>4</sup> between the commencement of 2004/05 school year and the time of application.

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<sup>1</sup> “Tuition fee” excludes any administration charges, cost of textbooks and examination fees, etc.

<sup>2</sup> The Standing Committee on Language Education and Research (SCOLAR) decided in December 2020 on the upward adjustment of the maximum subsidy of the Scheme from \$62,500 to \$84,000 per eligible teacher with effect from **1 September 2021**. Please note that the reimbursement conditions remain unchanged. Retrospective arrangements will only be **applicable to** those applicants completing the relevant programmes of studies from **January to August 2021**. Arrangements will **NOT** be made to top up the subsidy for the programmes of studies completed **on or before 31 December 2020**.

<sup>3</sup> Any teacher (including regular or temporary post; full-time or part-time teacher) teaching language subjects during normal school hours or after school may apply. Teachers teaching only the Putonghua, Chinese Literature or English Literature are not eligible to apply.

<sup>4</sup> “Break in service” refers to leaving the teaching post at a primary or secondary school in Hong Kong for more than 45 days. It has further been extended to one year from the 2006/07 school year onwards.

2. Two special groups of full-time students may also apply-
  - (i) Teachers with non-relevant degree being admitted to local full-time Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) / Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PCEd) programmes and majored in relevant language subject in 2003/04 academic year.
  - (ii) Local full-time Bachelor of Education (BEd) students who were in the third or fourth year of study and minored in Chinese or English Language in 2003/04 academic year.
3. The following teachers are NOT eligible to apply-
  - (i) New language teachers who join the teaching profession in or after the 2004/05 school year, except the two special groups of students.
  - (ii) Daily-paid supply teachers.
  - (iii) Teachers engaged under the Native-speaking English Teacher (NET) Scheme in primary and secondary schools.
  - (iv) Teachers of English Schools Foundation or international schools.
  - (v) Teachers teaching non-local curriculum in Private Independent Schools.
4. Teachers who have received grants from “The Incentive Grant Scheme for English Teachers” (the IGS) are also eligible to apply, subject to all the requirements of the Scheme. The aggregate total of the grants received under the two schemes should not exceed \$84,000 per applicant.
5. Teachers may apply to the Secretariat of the Standing Committee on Language Education and Research (SCOLAR) (the Secretariat) for pursuing more than one programme of study, subject to the requirements of the Scheme. The aggregate total of grants received should not exceed \$84,000 per applicant.

#### **D. Recognised Programmes of Study**

1. Applicants should pursue any full-time or part-time undergraduate or postgraduate study programme on subject knowledge and/or pedagogy with respect to the language subject taught.
2. “Programmes Accepted for Grants under the Professional Development Incentive Grant Scheme for Language Teachers” (Appendix I) is a list of local programmes that are eligible under the Scheme. The list is for reference only and will be updated regularly. Please refer to the Standing Committee on Language Education and Research (SCOLAR) website (<https://scolar.gov.hk>) for the latest information.
3. Eligibility of programmes outside the list of accepted programmes will be considered on a case by case basis by a Vetting Committee after applicants’ successful completion. Applicants may refer to the suggested core areas of study listed at Appendix II before applying for these programmes. **Please note that the information is for reference only.**

4. Applicants who pursue a non-local programme should obtain an assessment report from the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic & Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ) on its equivalence to a local programme before submitting the required documents to the Vetting Committee for consideration.
5. Training recommended by SCOLAR in respect to the qualifications held:

	Qualifications Held		Training recommended by SCOLAR
	Degree (first or higher)	Teacher Training	
(a)	Relevant Major	Relevant Major	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No additional training required</li> </ul>
(b)	Relevant Major	Non-relevant Major	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Postgraduate Diploma / Certificate in Education (PGDE / PCed) in relevant language subject</li> </ul>
(c)	Relevant Major	No	
(d)	Non-relevant Major	Relevant Major	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Postgraduate programme in subject knowledge (PGSK) or</li> <li>• Relevant language major degree</li> </ul>
(e)	Non-relevant Major	Non-relevant Major	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PGSK or relevant language major degree; and</li> <li>• PGDE / PCed in relevant language subject</li> </ul>
(f)	Non-relevant Major	No	
(g)	No	Relevant Major	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bachelor of Education (BEd) in relevant language subject; or</li> <li>• Relevant language major degree</li> </ul>
(h)	No	Non-relevant Major	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BEd in the relevant language subject; or</li> <li>• Relevant language major degree and PGDE / PCed in relevant language subject</li> </ul>
(i)	No	No	

- (i) Applicants could refer to the “Programmes Accepted for Grants under the Professional Development Incentive Grant Scheme for Language Teachers” to determine if his/her degree is recognised as language major programme.
- (ii) As for teacher training qualifications, all BEd, PGDE and PCed programmes in relevant language subject offered by local tertiary institutions are recognised as language major teacher training programmes.
- (iii) Applicants may seek advice from the Professional Development and Training Division of the EDB if in doubt. (Tel: 2892 5783 Fax: 2123 1229).

#### **E. Application for the Earmarking of Grant**

1. Applications will be processed on a first-come-first-served basis.

2. Under normal circumstances, the Secretariat will notify the applicants of the progress within 30 working days after receiving the application. During the peak season (July to October), the time taken will be about 2 months.
3. Applicants should forward the application **within 6 months from the commencement of the programme, no matter whether the programmes pursued are / are not on the accepted list.** Late applications will not be processed.
4. Programmes not on the accepted list-
  - (i) The Secretariat will record the applications but earmarking of grant will NOT be approved until the programme is recognised as meeting SCOLAR requirements by the Vetting Committee and funds are available at that time.
  - (ii) If the programme is included in the accepted list while the applicant is pursuing it, he/she has to apply for the earmarking of grant, which is subject to the availability of funds at that time.

#### **F. Application for the Release of Grant**

1. Grant will be released to an applicant upon his/her successful completion of the approved programme of study.
2. Under normal circumstances, the Secretariat will notify the applicants of the progress / result within 30 working days after receiving the required documents. During the peak season (July to October), the time taken will be about 2 months.
3. Programmes on the accepted list-
  - (i) Applicants should forward the following documents **within 6 months from the programme completion date:**
    - **Original official transcript\*** / certified true copy (with original institution's official chop) indicating the successful completion of the approved programme (with the relevant major / specialised area of study, if applicable), school years and semesters, etc.; and
    - **Original official receipts for tuition fees paid\*** / certified true copy (with original institution's official chop) with detailed breakdown.

\* The documents will be returned after processing.
4. Programmes not on the accepted list-
  - (i) Applicants should apply in writing to the Professional Development and Training (PDT) Division of the EDB for an assessment after the successful completion of the programme. The Vetting Committee will consider whether the programme is equivalent to a language major programme. The assessment will normally be conducted in March, July and November each year.

- (ii) If the programme pursued is a non-local one, applicants should obtain an assessment report from the HKCAAVQ on its equivalence to a local programme before submitting the required documents to the Vetting Committee for consideration.
- (iii) Applications for the earmarking and release of grants will be vetted, subject to the recognition of the programme as equivalent to a language major programme and availability of funds at that time.
- (iv) Applicants should forward the following documents **within 6 months from the programme completion date**:
  - **Original official transcript\*** / certified true copy (with original institution's official chop) indicating the successful completion of the approved programme of study (with the relevant major / specialised area of study, if applicable), school years and semesters, etc.;
  - **Original official receipts for tuition fees paid\*** / certified true copy (with original institution's official chop) with detailed breakdown; and
  - **Original written confirmation\*** from the EDB stating that the programme pursued is recognised as meeting the SCOLAR requirements.

\* The documents will be returned after processing.

5. Grants will be released in Hong Kong dollars. Where a non-local programme of study is involved, the amount of grant released will depend on the exchange rate at the time of reimbursement.

## **G. Matters for Attention**

1. Applicants should inform the Language Education and SCOLAR Section of the EDB in writing of any change of information provided in the application form.
2. If an applicant needs to alter the programme, he/she should submit a fresh application. The processing of the new application will be subject to the requirements of the Scheme and the availability of funds at that time.

## **H. Application Form**

Application forms can be downloaded from: <https://scolar.gov.hk>. The completed application form should be sent by post or by hand to the **Language Education and SCOLAR Section, Education Bureau** (Address: Room 1702, Skyline Tower, 39 Wang Kwong Road, Kowloon Bay, Kowloon).

## **I. Enquiries**

Language Education and SCOLAR Section, Education Bureau

Tel. no.: 3165 1193

Fax no.: 3150 8018

Email: eafs2@edb.gov.hk

Professional Development and Training Division, Education Bureau

Tel no.: 2892 5783

Fax no.: 2123 1229

Email: ltq@edb.gov.hk

Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic & Vocational Qualifications

Tel. no.: 3658 0000

Fax no.: 2845 9910

Email: info@hkcaavq.edu.hk

## **J. Personal Data Statements**

1. Any personal data supplied in the application form and other supplementary information will be used by the Secretariat or its authorised agents for activities related to -
  - (i) the processing and authentication of applications under the Scheme;
  - (ii) the processing of payment of grant; and/or
  - (iii) statistics and research.
2. The Secretariat will disclose the personal data of an applicant to relevant parties for the purpose of the above-mentioned activities, where all the parties have given their consent to such disclosure, and where such disclosure is authorised or required by law.

## **K. Matters Related to Deduction for Expenses of Self-Education**

If the conditions prescribed under Section 12(6) of the Inland Revenue Ordinance are fulfilled, applicants may claim for the deduction of the tuition fees paid as self-education expenses, subject to the maximum deductible amount of \$100,000 from the year of assessment 2017/18 onwards. If applicants have claimed the self-education expenses for the programme, they should inform Inland Revenue Department upon receipt of the amount of grant to adjust the amount of self-education expenses previously granted. For details, please visit the website of GovHK:

<https://www.gov.hk/en/residents/taxes/salaries/allowances/deductions/selfeducation.htm>