

26 March 2019

Education Bureau Circular No. 11/2019
An All-Graduate Teaching Force in Aided Schools

[Note: This circular should be read by –

- (a) Supervisors/heads of all aided schools (including special schools) and caput schools – for action; and
- (b) Heads of all government schools and schools under the Direct Subsidy Scheme, and heads of all sections – for information.]

Summary

This circular announces the details on implementing the all-graduate teaching force policy in aided schools (including special schools) and caput schools. It supersedes Education Bureau (EDB) Circulars No. 5/2015 “Enhancing the Ratio of Graduate Teacher Posts in Aided Primary Schools” and No. 4/2008 “Enhancement of Graduate Teacher Ratio in Aided Secondary Schools”.

Background

2. The EDB set up the Task Force on Professional Development of Teachers (the Task Force) in November 2017 to review and further promote teachers’ professional development, which includes the drawing up of a timetable for establishing an all-graduate teaching force. The Task Force has also proposed directional recommendations for the purpose of extensive consultation on relevant issues. In the course of consultation, stakeholders unanimously called for the early and full implementation of the all-graduate teaching force policy to further raise the professional status of teachers, retain and attract talents into the teaching profession. The Task Force has adopted the advice of the stakeholders and considered that the policy should be implemented as early as possible. Though deliberation on other issues was still in progress then, the Task Force submitted the relevant recommendations to the Government first in September 2018 for consideration.

3. The Government accepted the recommendations of the Task Force and the Chief Executive announced in the 2018 Policy Address that the all-graduate teaching force policy would be implemented in public sector primary and secondary schools in one go in the 2019/20 school year. Schools may, taking into account their school-based circumstances, achieve full implementation by the 2020/21 school year.

Details

Responsibilities of graduate teachers

4. To enable teachers to realise their professional capacity, apart from classroom teaching and their existing duties, all graduate teachers are required to support school development and cater for students' needs by shouldering more diversified professional duties, such as coordinating tasks in the areas of student support, learning and teaching, curriculum development or teacher professional development, etc. With the implementation of the all-graduate teaching force policy, professional duties apart from classroom teaching should be shouldered by the whole teaching force. Schools should make use of the opportunity of the implementation of the all-graduate teaching force policy to review and adjust their school-based deployment of manpower and distribution of duties with a view to enhancing the professional capacity of their teaching force as a whole. If there are serving teachers not holding a local bachelor's degree (or equivalent), schools should encourage them to attain the recognised qualification as early as possible, so that they may be regraded as graduate teachers for better career and promotion prospect. The roles and functions for different ranks of the graduate grade in the Codes of Aid will be updated accordingly for schools' reference. Meanwhile, schools may refer to the relevant information on the EDB webpage listed in paragraph 18 below.

Establishment-related arrangements

5. Under the all-graduate teaching force policy, the ratio of graduate teacher posts in public sector schools will be increased in one go to 100% in the 2019/20 school year, so that the ratio of graduate teacher posts in public sector primary schools will be increased from the current 65% to 100%, and the ratio of graduate teacher posts in public sector secondary schools will be increased from the current 85% to 100%. In other words, from the 2019/20 school year onwards, all teacher posts on the approved establishment of public sector schools will be graduate teacher posts, while the total number of posts and the number of promotion posts on the teaching staff establishment

of aided primary and secondary schools will be determined by the relevant principles set out in the prevailing Codes of Aid and relevant EDB circulars/circular memoranda. The EDB will keep policies related to staff establishment under review, and from time to time, update the content of the Codes of Aid relating to the approved teaching staff establishment of aided schools arising from the implementation of new initiatives. Schools may refer to the latest recommended teaching staff establishment on EDB webpage via the links provided in paragraph 18 below.

6. Since teaching posts on the approved establishment of aided schools will all become graduate teacher posts starting from the 2019/20 school year, the non-graduate teacher posts that the EDB provided for schools under various measures will be turned into graduate teacher posts in the 2019/20 school year. These include:

Aided primary schools –

- (i) Teachers for Specialised Teaching;
- (ii) Teacher-librarians;
- (iii) Student Guidance Teachers; and
- (iv) Additional Senior Teacher Posts of English.

Aided secondary schools –

- (i) Additional teachers of English for schools adopting Chinese as the medium of instruction for subjects other than language subjects

Special Schools¹ –

- (i) Additional Senior Teacher Posts of English;
- (ii) Mobility Instructors;
- (iii) Low-vision Training Teachers;
- (iv) Teachers Assisting in Speech Therapy;
- (v) Resource Teachers for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders;
- (vi) Resource Teachers for Children with Visual Impairment; and
- (vii) Resource Teachers for Enhanced Support Service for Students with Hearing Impairment.

In addition, the existing arrangement of providing flexibility to aided primary schools for determining an alternative grade structure and that of allowing aided secondary schools to create a higher number of non-graduate teacher posts than the standard manning scale would no longer apply.

¹ Under the all-graduate teaching force policy, non-graduate teacher posts provided to the Hospital Schools for the Home-bound Teaching Programme will also be turned into graduate teacher posts.

7. To cater for different school circumstances and needs, and to allow sufficient time for schools to arrange duties and hence ensuring a smooth transition, aided schools may, in light of their own circumstances, fully implement the all-graduate teaching force policy in one go or in stages by the 2020/21 school year.

Appointment of new recruits

8. Newly-joined teachers appointed in aided schools within the approved establishment (regular teachers)² from the 2019/20 school year onwards should possess a local bachelor's degree (or equivalent) and satisfy all the entry requirements and standing conditions set out for graduate teachers in the Codes of Aid.

Regrading arrangements for serving non-graduate regular teachers

9. Under the all-graduate teaching force policy, all non-graduate regular teachers³ currently appointed in aided schools holding a local bachelor's degree (or equivalent) may be regraded as graduate teachers in the corresponding rank. The rank of a teacher after regrading is in Appendix 1. To take forward the full implementation of the all-graduate teaching force policy by the 2020/21 school year, schools should establish a school-based mechanism to allow all serving non-graduate teachers holding a local bachelor's degree (or equivalent) to express their intention for regrading upon their full understanding of the roles and functions of graduate teachers. Schools may make reference to the "Sample Letter for Expression of Intention of Regrading to the Graduate Grade" in Appendix 2 when formulating the relevant procedures. In addition, if schools decide to implement the policy by stages, they are required to formulate objective, fair and transparent school-based policies with reference to the prevailing procedures for regrading of teachers and in full consultation with all teachers. These policies, together with relevant principles, should be endorsed by the School Management Committee (SMC)/Incorporated Management Committee (IMC) and

² Teachers who were previously appointed as contract teachers outside the approved establishment (including contract teachers paid by cash grants/ school's own fund) and then re-appointed as regular teachers within the approved establishment will also be classified as newly-joined regular teachers.

³ Teachers appointed as regular teachers with defined contract period in schools are also classified as serving regular teachers within the approved establishment. As regards surplus non-graduate teachers for whom aided secondary schools are allowed to extend the retention period because of a reduction in the number of Secondary One classes from the 2013/14 school year and surplus non-graduate teachers that schools are allowed to retain under the Voluntary Optimisation of Class Structure Scheme, provided that these teachers possess a local bachelor's degree (or equivalent), they may be regraded as graduate teachers in their serving schools by the 2020/21 school year. However, such redundant/surplus teachers may only be accommodated in the basic rank.

made known to all teachers. Moreover, schools should ensure that the principles and rules set out in this circular are observed when formulating their school-based policies.

10. If serving non-graduate teachers choose not to be regraded as graduate teachers of their own accord, or their qualifications cannot meet the requirement for regrading, they may stay in their serving aided schools as non-graduate teachers. Schools not fully utilising the provision of graduate teacher posts because of the above situations are required to offset the equivalent number of graduate teacher posts⁴ in the corresponding rank so that serving non-graduate teachers can be accommodated in their current posts until they leave service because of natural wastage or obtain the required qualifications and choose to be regraded as graduate teachers.

11. In principle, with the exception of the two types of teachers specified in paragraph 10 above, all teachers within the approved establishment should have been regraded as graduate teachers in the 2020/21 school year. Aided schools should maintain a record for the two types of teachers (including proof of academic qualifications or their choice of not being regraded as graduate teachers) for the inspection of EDB officers, when necessary. After the 2020/21 school year, if serving non-graduate regular teachers with a recognised degree wish to be regraded as graduate teachers, they should inform their schools by 31 May in the respective year of their intention to be regraded as graduate teachers in the next school year, so that the schools could make appropriate arrangements. Schools concerned could make reference to the “Sample Letter for Expression of Intention of Regrading to the Graduate Grade” in [Appendix 2](#) and devise an appropriate form for their teachers to fill out.

12. Aided schools are required to complete all necessary procedures (which include obtaining the approval of SMC/IMC) before the regrading takes effect. Under normal circumstances, the effective date of regrading is not retrospective. At the same time, schools should complete the relevant forms “Regrading to Graduate Teachers in Primary Schools” (applicable to aided primary schools, special primary schools and primary sections in special schools) or “Regrading to Graduate Teachers in Secondary Schools” (applicable to aided secondary schools and secondary sections in special schools), which are available on the EDB webpage (Home > Teachers Related > Appointment & Related Matters > [Appointment Matters](#)), to inform the EDB’s Funds Section of their decision to facilitate the updating of teachers’ salary data and the

⁴ Schools cannot freeze the graduate posts to obtain cash grants, if the posts are offset for accommodating the non-graduate teachers.

verification of teachers' salary levels. In parallel, a copy of the completed forms should be sent to the relevant School Development Section.

Transferring arrangement for serving non-graduate regular teachers

13. To address exceptional school-based needs, the SMC/IMC could consider employing serving regular teachers⁵ in aided schools who do not possess a recognised degree to fill the vacant graduate posts in aided schools to provide the required services. Under such circumstances, schools may accommodate these non-graduate teachers as Certificated Masters/Mistresses by offsetting the equivalent number of graduate teacher posts⁶ in the corresponding rank until the non-graduate teachers leave the service because of natural wastage or obtain the required qualifications and choose to be regraded as graduate teachers⁷.

Acting up, promotion and direct entry to teacher posts at promotion rank

14. Schools should, from now on, orderly work out promotion-related arrangements for teachers currently acting in the non-graduate grade in accordance with their school-based mechanism. With the implementation of the all-graduate teaching force policy from the 2019/20 school year, the promotion mechanism for the non-graduate grade will cease to operate. In other words, non-graduate teachers should first be regraded as graduate teachers before they could be considered for promotion to or acting up promotion posts in the graduate grade on the premise that all requirements on academic qualification, condition and teaching experience as stated in the Codes of Aid have been met.

15. In principle, starting from the 2019/20 school year, schools are not allowed to directly appoint a teacher to fill a non-graduate post at the promotion rank. However, school sponsoring bodies operating more than one school may exercise the discretion to redeploy a non-graduate teacher at the promotion rank from one school to

⁵ Including aided school regular teachers with a break of service not exceeding one year.

⁶ See note 4.

⁷ However, if the break of service exceeds one year, with the exception of redundant/surplus teachers, these teachers may not join another aided school as teachers on the approved establishment. For serving teachers without teacher training for primary education, provided that the break of service does not exceed one year, a serving Assistant Primary School Master/Mistress or Primary School Master/Mistress may continue to be appointed as Assistant Primary School Master/Mistress or Primary School Master/Mistress. For those serving as Certificated Master/Mistress, provided that the break of service does not exceed one year, they may continue to be appointed as Certificated Master/Mistress. However, if the break of service exceeds one year, with the exception of redundant teachers, these teachers may not join another aided primary school as teachers on the approved establishment.

another, on condition that an equivalent number of graduate teacher posts⁸ in the corresponding rank would be offset in the school concerned.

16. Measures and arrangements pertaining to the implementation of the all-graduate teaching force policy are subject to the passage of the Appropriation Bill 2019 by the Legislative Council. Schools may, at the earliest, start taking forward the policy of increasing the ratio of graduate teachers on 1 September 2019 to enable serving non-graduate teachers holding the specified qualifications to be regraded as graduate teachers.

Caput schools

17. Caput schools should make necessary arrangements in accordance with the details set out in paragraphs 4 to 16 above to achieve full implementation of the all-graduate teaching force policy by the 2020/21 school year. The EDB will take such expenses into account when calculating the Fee Subsidy for schools.

Amendments to the Codes of Aid

18. Relevant provisions in the Codes of Aid will be updated accordingly. The roles and functions of teachers in different ranks of the graduate grade, the recommended teaching staff establishment, and some frequently asked questions are now available on the EDB webpage for schools' reference:

Aided primary schools

(Home > School Administration and Management > Administration > About School Staff > [Graduate Teacher Posts in Aided Primary Schools](#))

Aided secondary schools

(Home > School Administration and Management > Administration > About School Staff > [Graduate Teacher Posts in Aided Secondary Schools](#))

Teacher Relief Grant

19. In view that the teaching posts on the approved teaching staff establishment will all be graduate teacher posts, the Teacher Relief Grant will be adjusted accordingly.

⁸ See note 4.

Enquiry

20. Aided schools should make known the arrangements as set out in this circular to all their teaching staff. For enquiries, please contact the respective Senior School Development Officers.

Ms Y Y SO
for Permanent Secretary for Education

**Corresponding rank of non-graduate teacher after
regrading as graduate teacher**

Aided Primary Schools (Including Primary Section in Special Schools) :

Rank in non-graduate grade	Rank after regrading to graduate grade
Certificated Master/Mistress	Assistant Primary School Master/Mistress
Assistant Master/Mistress	Primary School Master/Mistress

Aided Secondary Schools (Including Secondary Section in Special Schools) :

Rank in non-graduate grade	Rank after regrading to graduate grade
Certificated Master/Mistress	Graduate Master/Mistress
Assistant Master/Mistress	
Senior Assistant Master/Mistress	
Principal Assistant Master/Mistress	Senior Graduate Master/Mistress

Points to note for adopting the “Sample Letter for Expression of Intention of Regrading to the Graduate Grade” (Letter for Expression of Intention):

1. Serving non-graduate teachers who wish to be regraded as graduate teachers should inform their schools of their intention by submission of the Letter for Expression of Intention to their schools according to the school-based procedures. After the 2020/21 school year, submission to schools should be made **on or before 31 May** to express their intention of regrading which will take effect in the respective next school year.
2. This letter for expression of intention is only a sample for reference of teachers/schools.

[Sample]

(Date)

To: Supervisor, _____ School/College

Letter for Expression of Intention of Regrading to the Graduate Grade

I, _____, as a regular teacher holding a/an (rank) post, obtained a local bachelor’s degree (or equivalent) on (date) and am eligible to be regraded as a graduate teacher in accordance with the requirements as stipulated in the Codes of Aid and Education Bureau Circular No. 11/2019. I fully understand the roles and functions of graduate teachers. In this regard, I would like to express my intention to the School Management Committee/ Incorporated Management Committee (please delete as appropriate) be regraded as a/an (the appropriate graduate teacher post) in the next school year. Attached please find the documentary proof of my academic qualifications for reference of the School Management Committee/ Incorporated Management Committee.

Regards,
(Name of teacher)