

Education Bureau Circular Memorandum No. 112/2019

From : Secretary for Education
Ref : (3) in EDB/LTQ/PRO/19/7/3
Date : 6 June 2019

To : Heads of All Primary and Secondary
Schools (except ESF schools and
international schools)
- for necessary action

Language Proficiency Requirement (LPR) for Teachers of English/Putonghua

(Note: This circular memorandum should be read by supervisors/
heads and teachers of all primary and secondary schools)

Summary

The purpose of this circular memorandum is to remind schools to make appropriate deployment of teachers to teach the English and Putonghua subjects in accordance with the Language Proficiency Requirement (LPR) policy.

Details

2. The LPR policy has been implemented since 2000. The purpose of the policy is to enhance the quality of education by ensuring that all language teachers possess at least basic language proficiency. It is applicable to all teachers of English/Putonghua holding a permanent post in government, aided and caput schools, as well as teachers of English/Putonghua in Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS) schools and private primary/secondary day schools offering a full curriculum who are comparable to teachers holding a permanent post in government, aided and caput schools. The LPR policy is not applicable to those teachers employed under the Native-speaking English Teacher (NET) Scheme and those in ESF schools and international schools.

3. According to the LPR policy, all the teachers of English/Putonghua as mentioned in Paragraph 2 should have met the LPR. They can meet the LPR through exemption or assessment:

(a) Exemption from the LPR

English teachers with relevant degrees and relevant professional training will be fully exempted from the LPR while Putonghua teachers with appropriate qualifications will be partially exempted.

- (i) In the case of English, a teacher who holds a relevant degree and has received relevant teacher training will be deemed to have attained Level 3 proficiency and satisfied the basic requirement.
- (ii) In the case of Putonghua, teachers with a pass in the Test of Advanced Proficiency in Putonghua conducted by the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA) will be exempted from the

proficiency requirements in Listening and Recognition, Pinyin, and Speaking; and teachers who have obtained Grade B, Level 2 or above in the Test of Proficiency in Putonghua conducted by the State Commission on Language Work will be exempted from the proficiency requirement in Speaking. Please note that no Putonghua teachers will be exempted from the proficiency requirement in Classroom Language Assessment (CLA).

For details about exemption, please visit the website of Education Bureau (EDB) at: www.edb.gov.hk/exemption.

(b) Language Proficiency Assessment for Teachers (LPAT)

HKEAA and EDB jointly conduct the LPAT annually. In general, the assessment for the speaking and written papers is conducted in the period from January to March and CLA from November to April. Details relating to the arrangement of the LPAT will be announced in due course.

For details about the LPAT, please visit the EDB website at: www.edb.gov.hk/lpat.

Reviewing the LPR attainment progress of new / newly deployed teachers of English/Putonghua

4. For new / newly deployed teachers of English/Putonghua holding a permanent post, they should at least have met the LPR in all the core language skills¹ before taking up teaching the respective language subject. They have to meet the LPR in CLA within the first year of their taking up these duties.

5. After the release of results of the LPAT on 23 May 2019, schools are reminded to review the LPR attainment progress of their new / newly deployed teachers of English/Putonghua, and make appropriate deployment as needed. New / Newly deployed teachers of English/Putonghua holding a permanent post who fail to meet the LPR in CLA in this school year of their teaching will not be allowed to continue to teach the language subjects in the following school year.

Teachers of English/Putonghua NOT holding a permanent post

6. The LPR policy is not applicable to teachers of English/Putonghua NOT holding a permanent post; that is, teachers whose employment is temporary in nature. These teachers are employed as temporary replacements of teachers holding a permanent post taking leave temporarily or employed to take up a post not within the approved staff establishment. They normally constitute a small proportion of the teaching staff of a school. To ensure that all the teachers of English/Putonghua

¹ For English, core language skills refer to the Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking papers in the LPAT (English Language). For Putonghua, core language skills refer to Listening and Recognition, Pinyin and Speaking papers in the LPAT (Putonghua).

assigned to teach the relevant subject in your school possess basic language proficiency for delivering quality teaching, these temporary teachers of English/Putonghua are also encouraged to attain the LPR.

Teachers employed under the NET Scheme

7. The LPR and all its related arrangements are not applicable to teachers employed under the NET Scheme in government, aided and caput schools. These teachers serve as a resource person for the English subject in schools. They mainly support and collaborate with the local English teachers in facilitating the implementation of the curriculum and the development of the subject. Eligible government, aided and caput schools are normally allocated one teaching post under the NET Scheme. In this regard, the number of teachers employed under a scheme comparable to the NET Scheme in DSS schools and private schools should also be limited. As for teachers who are native speakers of English not employed under the NET Scheme, they are considered comparable to teachers of English holding a permanent post in government, aided and caput schools and are required to meet the LPR.

Deployment of teachers of English/Putonghua in the following school year

8. To ensure that all the teachers of English/Putonghua assigned to teach the relevant subject in your school possess basic language proficiency for delivering quality teaching, schools are advised to take proper note of the LPR policy when planning the deployment of language teachers in the following school year.

Enquiries

9. More information about the LPR policy can be found on the EDB website at: www.edb.gov.hk/lpr.

10. For enquiries, please contact Mr Eddie KWAN at 2892 5492.

Benjamin YUNG
for Secretary for Education

c.c. Heads of Sections – for information