

Education Bureau Circular Memorandum No. 128/2021

From : Secretary for Education	To : Heads of All Primary and Secondary
Ref : (5) in EDB/LTQ/PRO/19/7/3	Schools (except ESF schools and
Date : 31 August 2021	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 primary and secondary 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 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 Language Commission will be exempted from the proficiency requirement in Speaking. Please note that no Putonghua teachers will be exempted from the proficiency requirement in the Classroom Language Assessment (CLA).

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

(b) Language Proficiency Assessment for Teachers (LPAT)

The HKEAA and the EDB jointly conduct the LPAT annually. In general, the written and speaking assessments are conducted in the period from January to March 2022 and the CLA from November 2021 to April 2022. 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: <http://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. After the release of results of the LPAT (2022) in May 2022, schools are reminded to review the LPR attainment progress of their new / newly deployed teachers of English / Putonghua, and make appropriate deployment as needed.

5. Due to the impact of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), school arrangements for face-to-face classes had to be adjusted, hence the assessment period of the CLA (2021) had to be extended as well. An extension of the deadline for meeting the LPR (i.e. extended from on or before 31 August 2021 to on or before 31 August 2022) was granted to the eligible teachers. Notifications were sent to the respective teachers and schools in May 2021.

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.

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 the Listening and Recognition, Pinyin and Speaking papers in the LPAT (Putonghua).

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 assigned to teach the relevant subject in schools 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 schools 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: <http://www.edb.gov.hk/lpr>.

10. For enquiries, please contact Ms Ada LAM at 2892 5764.

Ms W P LEE
for Secretary for Education

c.c. Heads of Sections – for information