Frequently-asked Questions
(For reference of school principals and teachers)

(1) Professional Ladder for Teachers

Q1 : What are the purpose(s) and function(s) of the Professional Ladder for Teachers? How would the Education Bureau support the professional development of teachers with the implementation of the Professional Ladder for Teachers?

A1 : The Education Bureau (EDB) has established the Professional Ladder for Teachers in Hong Kong with an aim to promote teachers’ professional growth and enhance teachers’ professional status. It adopts the professional roles of teachers and principals as portrayed in the “T-standard” as the goals for teachers’ professional development, and the three core elements of teachers’ professional growth (including professional competencies; professional values and conduct; and aspiration for self-advancement through self-reflection) as its foundation. With the aspiration to actualise the professional roles of “T-standard”, teachers can reflect on their professional development and formulate professional development plans with regard to their professional stages.

To implement the Professional Ladder for Teachers and support the professional growth of teachers, the EDB has devised systematic training for newly-joined teachers and all in-service teachers, and enhanced the training requirements for promotion of teachers. These training programmes serve to equip teachers with the professional competencies and abilities required for different duties and posts.

Q2 : Are there any changes to the prevailing Continuing Professional Development (CPD) policy? How should schools implement the Professional Ladder for Teachers?

A2 : The existing CPD policy remains unchanged. All training programmes that support the Professional Ladder for Teachers are implemented under the prevailing CPD policy.
Making reference to the Professional Ladder for Teachers, schools could review teachers’ professional development needs as a whole to formulate school-based strategies and set feasible professional development plans with teachers to support their fulfilment of the requirements. Schools should also provide guidance to help teachers meet the respective CPD requirements within every 3-year cycle, regularly review teachers’ participation in the CPD activities, and report to the SMCs/IMCs.

(2) **Training Programme for Newly-joined Teachers**

**Q3**: Why are newly-joined teachers required to attend the training programme? What are the programme contents?

**A3**: The Training Programme for Newly-joined Teachers is developed to cater for their needs of professional growth. The core training aims to promote newly-joined teachers’ reflection on their professional roles and to enhance their understanding of local education policies and initiatives, and national and international education development. The elective training provides opportunities for newly-joined teachers to attend relevant programmes/activities according to their strengths, interests or career development needs. For details of Training Programme for Newly-joined Teachers, please refer to Annex 2 of Education Bureau Circular No. 6/2020.

**Q4**: When will the Training Programme for Newly-joined Teachers commence? How do teachers apply for the Programme?

**A4**: The Training Programme for Newly-joined Teachers will commence in the 2020/21 school year and application for the Programme will be open from September 2020. Newly-joined teachers could apply for programmes/activities, namely “Series of Training Programme for Newly-joined Teachers” through the Training Calendar System (TCS), and could also attend elective training programmes/activities provided by the EDB, teacher education universities, school sponsoring bodies or schools.
To facilitate teachers’ enrolment in the relevant programmes/activities, courses on TCS will be clearly indicated to assist newly-joined teachers in identifying the core and elective training programmes/activities.

Q5: How do teachers record the programme information and CPD hours after completing the training programme?

A5: For teachers with e-Services Portal accounts, the information of the programmes applied through the TCS will automatically be recorded in their respective e-Services accounts upon completion. Teachers could review their training records at “Teacher CPD Activities Records” of their e-Services Portal accounts. If the elective training programmes/activities are not applied through the TCS, teachers need to self-input the relevant data for future review. Schools/newly-joined teachers could also use the school-based systems or tools to record and review teachers’ participation in the training programmes.

Q6: Do newly-joined teachers include both the teachers under the establishment and contract teachers? Is a full-time private school teacher required to enrol in Training Programme for Newly-joined Teachers if he/she is appointed to teach in a public sector or DSS school for the first time in the 2020/21 school year? How should the training record be handled and verified if a teacher transfers to another school during the first three years of teaching?

A6: The target participants of the Training Programme for Newly-joined Teachers are full-time teachers appointed to teach in public sector schools (including government, aided and caput schools) or schools under the Direct Subsidy Scheme for the first time, including teachers under establishment and contract teachers.

Starting from the 2020/21 school year, all private school teachers, who transfer to public sector or DSS schools as full-time teachers and have never enrolled in the core and elective training programmes, are required to complete the training programme within their first three years upon transfer, regardless of their years of teaching experience. For teachers who have already completed some of the training, they could finish the rest of the programme while working in the
transferred schools.

The newly-joined teachers on transfer between schools in the first three years are required to submit their training records to the transferred schools. Schools should provide guidance to teachers concerned to complete the remaining programme, regularly review their learning progress, and report to the SMCs/IMCs.

Q7: Some newly-joined teachers will enrol in the postgraduate diploma in education or other master’s degree programmes during the first few years of their service. Could these programmes be counted as the Training Programme for Newly-joined Teachers?

A7: The EDB has been encouraging newly-joined teachers to enroll in suitable programmes/activities according to their individual professional and school development needs. All structured learning undertaken can be counted as elective training programmes. Hence, the postgraduate diploma in education or other master’s degree programmes that the newly-joined teachers attend in their first three years could be counted as elective training programmes.

Q8: In general, schools will provide induction/support programmes for newly-joined teachers. Could these school-based professional development programmes be counted as the core training provided by the EDB? In addition, are all courses on the TCS regarded as elective training programmes?

A8: In general, school-based induction/support programmes for newly-joined teachers are mainly developed based on schools’ development needs. The core training provided by the EDB aims to assist newly-joined teachers to understand their professional roles and demonstrate professional values and conduct as well as to acquire the latest developments in education policies and practices. As the content of the core training is different from that of the school-based induction/support programmes, newly-joined teachers are required to complete the core training offered by the EDB.

The elective training mainly includes professional development programmes related to Key Learning Area(s)/subject(s) and fostering students’ whole-person development. Generally speaking, most courses on the TCS
are regarded as elective training programmes. To facilitate teachers’ enrolment in relevant programmes, course organisers will provide programme/activity details with clear indication on the TCS to assist newly-joined teachers in identifying the core and elective training programmes/activities.

Q9 : Could the school-based professional development activities, such as collaborative lesson planning, peer lesson observation, panel meetings in schools, be counted as elective training?

A9 : The elective training of the Training Programme for Newly-joined Teachers are required to be structured learning, including local/non-local conferences, seminars, thematic lectures, workshops, and local and non-local study tours. Other modes of CPD activities, such as collaborative lesson planning and peer lesson observation, are not regarded as elective training. These hours may be counted as training other than the core (30 hours) and elective (60 hours) training when achieving the goal of participating 150 hours of CPD activities in every three years.

Q10 : Schools are required to submit teachers’ training records to the SMCs/IMCs. How should SMCs/IMCs use and follow up on the information?

A10 : Schools should regularly review the newly-joined teachers’ participation in CPD activities and report to the SMCs/IMCs for appropriate follow-up. If newly-joined teachers fail to fulfil the training requirements, the SMCs/IMCs should continue to follow up and provide guidance for the newly-joined teachers to meet the training requirements as early as possible. In addition, the SMCs/IMCs could devise school-based teachers’ professional development plans based on the analysis of the information on teacher training.
Enhanced Training for In-service Teachers

Q11: Why is it necessary to enhance the training for in-service teachers?

A11: To align with the full implementation of the all-graduate teaching force policy under which all teachers are required to shoulder more diversified professional duties, the EDB plans to develop more focused training programmes in response to teachers’ needs in different stages of professional growth and working posts. Teachers are expected to plan their individual professional development plans more systematically, cultivate a reflective culture in the teaching profession, align with the school development, and enhance the quality of learning and teaching.

Q12: When will the EDB provide the relevant programme information and self-learning/training resources for schools and teachers? Are there any concrete guidelines or examples on how the schools should make good use of these resources?

A12: Starting from the 2020/21 school year, the EDB will provide training programmes for schools and in-service teachers, and teachers could apply for the programmes through the TCS. The online self-learning packages and training packages for schools will also be gradually available from 2021/2022 school year.

When devising school-based CPD plans, schools should make reference to the Professional Ladder for Teachers to formulate school-based strategies based on the overall professional development needs of its teaching staff and set feasible professional development plans with teachers to cater for their needs at different stages of professional growth. Schools should also provide guidance to help teachers meet the CPD requirements and regularly review teachers’ participation in the CPD activities.
Q13 : Apart from joining the training programme/activities provided by the EDB, could the teachers enrol in the training programme/activities offered by other institutions?

A13 : In-service teachers could choose to participate in training programmes/activities provided by the EDB and teacher education universities. The training programmes/activities could also be school sponsoring body (SSB)/school-based professional development activities. SSBs/schools can make good use of the training resources provided by the EDB for planning the SSB/school-based professional development activities.

Q14 : As the three-year CPD cycle varies among individual teachers, how should schools assist teachers in fulfilling the training requirements?

A14 : As the “soft target” of requiring teachers to participate in no less than 150 hours of CPD activities in every three-year cycle has been implemented for years, many schools have developed a well-conceived CPD policy that can effectively identify and calculate teachers’ CPD hours. Taking into account the school-based circumstances, schools could flexibly adjust and assist teachers to incorporate the enhanced training requirements into their original professional development plans.

Q15 : Are the teachers allowed to carry forward their CPD hours from one school to another during school transfer?

A15 : For the purpose of continuing professional development, teachers can carry forward their CPD hours from one school to another within the same 3-year CPD cycle.
Q16: Do newly-joined teachers and in-service teachers only need to undertake 90 and 30 CPD hours respectively?

A16: As the prevailing CPD policy remains unchanged, the “soft target” for teachers to engage in CPD activities of not less than 150 hours every three years is still in effect. The provision of core training and the relevant training requirements by the EDB for newly-joined teachers and in-service teachers in the 2020/21 school year aims to help them formulate more systematic professional development plans in accordance with their individual professional development and needs of career development. In addition to completing the designated training programmes, teachers should continue their professional development to achieve the “soft target” of 150 hours of participation in every three years to promote professional growth.

Q17: Who are the target participants of the Enhanced Training for In-service Teachers?

A17: The major target participants of the Enhanced Training for In-service Teachers are full-time teachers in government, aided, caput schools and schools under Direct Subsidy Scheme.

Q18: What are the possible topics of the professional development programmes/activities under Category 1 of the Enhanced Training for In-service Teachers?

A18: Topics of the professional development programmes/activities under Category 1 of the Enhanced Training for In-service Teachers may include teachers’ professional roles, values and conduct, the Constitution, Basic Law and Hong Kong National Security Law, as well as values education in various domains such as civic education, national education, Constitution and Basic Law education and national security education.
(4) **Enhanced training requirements for promotion**

**Q19 :** Why are changes introduced to enhance the long-standing training requirements for promotion?

**A19 :** The Government attaches great importance to teachers’ professional development, and has implemented various measures to enhance teachers’ professional competencies and sustain excellence in education. With the growing complexity in teachers’ responsibilities, teachers, in particular the middle leaders, must possess professional competencies and perspectives (e.g. understanding of social and policy developments as well as global education trends, etc.) to meet the needs in the promotion posts. Enhancing the training requirements for promotion can keep teachers abreast with the latest developments and adequately equip them with the necessary professional competencies to meet the needs in the promotion posts. Please refer to Annex 4 of EDB Circular No. 6/2020 for details of the enhanced training requirements for promotion.

**Q20 :** Why is the validity period for the training for promotion shortened to 5 years?

**A20 :** With the growing complexity in teachers’ responsibilities, teachers, in particular the middle leaders, must possess professional competencies and perspectives (e.g. understanding of social and policy developments as well as global education trends, etc.) to meet the needs in the promotion posts. The EDB shortens the validity period of training for promotion for the middle management to ensure that teachers receive up-to-date training that is aligned with the latest social development and education trends and meet the needs in the promotion posts.

**Q21 :** Can SMCs/IMCs consider accepting higher degree programmes, teacher’s certificates or post-graduate diplomas in education as the training programmes of the Elective Part?

**A21 :** Under the enhanced arrangements of training for promotion, SMCs/IMCs should follow the guiding principles stipulated in Annex 4 of the EDB Circular No. 6/2020 when considering
whether to accept a higher degree, teacher’s certificate or a post-graduate diploma in education as the training programme of the Elective Part. SMCs/IMCs could consider factors such as course contents, learning modes, contact hours and training providers, etc. when endorsing courses. Nevertheless, teachers still have to complete the designated training programmes in the Core Part provided by the EDB in order to fulfil the training requirements for promotion.

Q22: Will the Bureau continue to offer the Refresher Training and Management Training?

A22: The Refresher Training offered by the EDB could be accepted as the training programme(s) in the Elective Part under the enhanced arrangements of training for promotion. The Management Training will be offered until the full implementation of the enhanced training requirements for promotion on 1 September 2023.

Q23: Under the enhanced arrangements of the training for promotion, how should schools handle the promotion of teachers who fail to fulfil the training requirements for promotion?

A23: Schools should consider a basket of factors, including but not limited to the training requirements for promotion, when promoting teachers to a higher rank. The Codes of Aid stipulate that to be eligible for substantive promotion to a higher rank of grade, a candidate must have undertaken training specified by or acceptable to the Permanent Secretary for Education. In the case where teachers meet all requirements for promotion except the training requirements, the teachers can act up the promotion posts until the fulfilment of all requirements. Please refer to the Codes of Aid and relevant EDB Circular(s) for details.

Q24: Is it obligatory for SMCs/IMCs to use the “Record Form for Training Requirements for Promotion” provided by the EDB when reviewing teachers’ fulfilment of the training requirements for promotion?
A24: The “Record Form or Training Requirements for Promotion” (Record Form) is provided by the EDB to facilitate schools’ review of teachers’ fulfilment of the training requirements for promotion. Schools are welcome to document teachers’ training records in their own ways or download the Record Form from the EDB Website\(^1\) for adaptation. Irrespective of the forms of records, schools must properly maintain the records and related proofing documents (e.g. proof of attendance in courses, certified true copies of the training certificates, etc.) for the purpose of inspection.

(5) **Establishing commendation schemes**

Q25: Currently there are various commendation schemes for teachers (such as Teachers’ Day and Commendation Certificate Presentation Ceremony, as well as Chief Executive’s Award for Teaching Excellence). What are the purposes of establishing the new commendation scheme?

A 25: To enable the teaching profession and the society to learn about the excellent performance of outstanding teachers, Committee on Professional Development of Teachers and Principals (COTAP) recommended the establishment of new commendation schemes at various levels after extensive consultation, thorough research and discussions. Through the new commendation scheme, the teaching profession can identify more outstanding teachers and foster professional exchange to promote a professional culture.

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\(^1\) The Record Form has been uploaded to the EDB webpage ([Home > Teachers Related > Qualifications, Training and Development > Development](#))

Professional Development and Training Division

Education Bureau

November 2021