

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

## **Frequently Asked Questions and Answers**

### **Q 1. Why do we need LPR?**

A 1. The LPR provides an objective reference against which a teacher's proficiency in the language he / she teaches can be gauged. An effective language teacher should be proficient in the use of the language, knowledgeable about the language structure and subject content, and effective in the use of functional language to achieve the holistic blending of language use and teaching into one, in order to enhance teaching effectiveness in the classroom.

### **Q 2. Why does the Education Bureau (EDB) implement the measures of the enhanced LPR for English / Putonghua teachers?**

A 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 English / Putonghua teachers possess at least basic language proficiency. The policy has been implemented for over 20 years, and the overall language proficiency of English / Putonghua teachers has been improving. Taking into account the concerns from the education sector and stakeholders, the latest trends of education development, students' learning needs and schools' needs for deployment of human resources, EDB has reviewed the arrangements of the LPR policy and formulated enhanced measures.

### **Q 3. Who needs to meet the LPR?**

A 3. The LPR policy is **applicable** to all teachers of English / Putonghua holding a **regular** post in aided schools, as well as teachers of English / Putonghua in government schools, caput schools, Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS) schools and private primary / secondary day schools offering a formal curriculum who are comparable to teachers holding a regular post in aided schools. 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, teachers of English / Putonghua NOT holding a regular post are also encouraged to attain the LPR.

Kindly note that 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, as well as teachers using Putonghua as the medium of instruction for teaching the Chinese Language subject.

**Q 4. For teachers who have met the LPR, do they need to take the designated tests and assessments?**

A 4. For teachers who have met the LPR either by attending authorised training courses and passing the internal assessments by the respective institutes between the 2000/01 and 2005/06 school years, through exemption, or possessing “attained” assessment results in the Language Proficiency Assessment (LPA) (formerly known as the Language Proficiency Assessment for Teachers), their qualifications will continue to be recognised.

**Q 5. Who can apply for exemption?**

A 5. Serving and aspiring teachers with relevant qualifications can apply for full exemption from the LPR (English Language). Please note that with the implementation of the enhanced LPR, starting from the 2024/25 school year, exemption from the LPR does not apply to Putonghua teachers.

**Q 6. Following Q5, what is the procedure for applying for exemption?**

A 6. Applicants with relevant qualifications **should** apply for exemption for verification of their eligibility. Applications for exemption from the LPR are accepted all year round as usual. Starting from the 2024/25 school year, new / newly deployed teachers of English holding a regular post should submit applications to EDB **before 30 September** of the corresponding school year. Related application forms and detailed information are available on EDB website ([www.edb.gov.hk/exemption](http://www.edb.gov.hk/exemption)).

**Q 7. For teachers who have attained pass results in the LPA, do they need to take the Classroom Language Assessment (CLA) again and enter for the Academic Module of English Language Testing System (IELTS) / the Test of Proficiency in Putonghua conducted by the State Language Commission (PSC), if they plan to join the teaching profession or change schools with a regular post in the 2024/25 school year or after?**

A 7. Pass results of the LPA are still valid. Teachers who have attained the relevant results in the written and speaking assessments and CLA of the LPA and met the LPR will continue to be recognised, fulfilling the requirement for serving as a regular English / Putonghua teacher or an English Panel Chair. However, since the written and speaking assessments of the LPA will cease to exist from the 2024/25 school year, teachers who failed to attain the proficiency requirement of individual paper(s) in the LPA are required to meet the LPR by obtaining specified results in the designated tests as specified in the enhanced LPR. For illustration purposes, here are some examples of cases:

Case 1

**Teacher A** is an English teacher holding a regular post and plans to change schools in the 2024/25 school year. A regular teaching post is now offered to him. His assessment results in the LPA (English Language) and the year he took the LPA are as follows:

Paper	Year	Level Attained	Has the teacher met the LPR?	Does the teacher need to retake relevant tests / assessments?
Reading	2021	Level 4	Yes	He is not required to take the Academic Module of IELTS.
Writing	2022	Level 3	Yes	
Listening	2021	Level 4	Yes	
Speaking	2021	Level 4	Yes	
CLA	2023	Level 3	Yes	He is not required to retake the CLA.

Case 2

**Teacher B** is a contract teacher who teaches English and plans to join another school as holder of a regular post in the 2024/25 school year. She does not possess appropriate qualifications and is not eligible to be exempted from the LPR (English Language). Her assessment results in the LPA (English Language) and the year she took the LPA are as follows:

Paper	Year	Level Attained	Has the teacher met the LPR?	Does the teacher need to retake relevant tests / assessments?
Reading	2020	Level 3	Yes	She should attain the relevant results in the Academic Module of IELTS #.
Writing	2023	Level 2	No	
Listening	2021	Level 3	Yes	

Speaking	2023	Level 4	Yes	
CLA	2023	Level 2	No	She will have to meet the stipulated requirement in the CLA <sup>1</sup> within the first year of her taking up the duties.

# If Teacher B took the Academic Module of IELTS on 1 October 2022, and attained an overall band score of 7.5 with band scores of 7.0 or above in the Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking papers as shown in the same Test Report Form, she will be deemed to have satisfied the relevant proficiency requirement given her valid IELTS results. She is therefore not required to retake the Academic Module of IELTS. However, she has to enter for the CLA in the 2024/25 school year (i.e. the first year of her taking up the duties as a regular English teacher).

### Case 3

**Teacher C** plans to join the teaching profession in the 2024/25 school year and become a regular teacher to teach Putonghua. As a holder of the Certificate for the Test of Proficiency in Putonghua (Grade B, Level 2) awarded by the State Language Commission, he has been granted partial exemption in 2023. He took the LPA (Putonghua). His assessment results and the year he took the LPA are as follows:

Paper	Year	Level Attained	Has the teacher met the LPR?	Does the teacher need to retake relevant tests / assessments?
Listening and Recognition	2023	Level 3	Yes	He is not required to retake the PSC.
Pinyin	2023	Level 3	Yes	
Speaking	2023	Level 3 (as granted partial exemption)	Yes	
CLA	Yet to take	/	No	He will have to meet the

<sup>1</sup> A teacher should obtain the “attained” results in the CLA, that is, within the same sitting of the CLA, attain at least Level 3 or above on three out of the four scales and Level 2.5 or above on the remaining one scale.

				stipulated requirement in the CLA <sup>1</sup> within the first year of his taking up the duties.
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Case 4

**Teacher D** is a contract teacher who teaches Putonghua and plans to join another school as holder of a regular post in the 2024/25 school year. Her assessment results in the LPA (Putonghua) and the year she took the LPA are as follows:

Paper	Year	Level Attained	Has the teacher met the LPR?	Does the teacher need to retake relevant tests / assessments?
Listening and Recognition	2022	Level 3	Yes	She should attain Grade A, Level 2 in the PSC.
Pinyin	2023	Level 2	No	
Speaking	2022	Level 4	Yes	
CLA	2023	Level 3	Yes	She is not required to retake the CLA.

**Q 8. IELTS (Academic Module) test scores remain valid for up to two years after the date of issuance of the Test Report Form. How should schools verify one's test results as valid when appointing or deploying English regular teachers?**

A 8. New / newly deployed English teachers holding a regular post, who possess valid IELTS results as set out in Paragraph 5 in the EDB Circular Memorandum No. 74/2024 when assuming relevant teaching duties, will be deemed to have met the LPR. Some examples are illustrated as follows:

The validity period for IELTS (Academic Module) results	The date of serving as a regular / temporary English teacher in school	Will the results be deemed as meeting the LPR?
(a) Up to 31 May 2024	1 September 2024	NO. The teacher cannot be employed as an English teacher holding a regular post.

(b) Up to 1 September 2024	1 September 2024	YES.
(c) Up to 1 January 2025	1 December 2024	YES.

Kindly note that in addition to obtaining specified results in the above-mentioned test, new / newly deployed teachers of English holding a regular post should take the CLA within **the first year** of their taking up teaching the English Language subject and fulfil the necessary proficiency requirement. For details, please refer to the EDB Circular Memorandum No. 74/2024.

**Q 9. If the two-year validity of the results obtained in the Academic Module of IELTS has expired, do new / newly deployed regular English teachers need to retake the test?**

A 9. If regular or temporary teachers have attained the specified results as stated in the EDB Circular Memorandum No. 74/2024 in the Academic Module of IELTS which are still valid when taking up teaching the English Language subject, they are not required to retake the test. Conversely, if the two-year validity of their IELTS (Academic Module) results has expired when they take up teaching the English Language subject as a regular / temporary teacher, they will have to retake the test to obtain the relevant qualifications for consideration of appointment to the regular teaching post.

**Q 10. For new/ newly deployed teachers teaching English in the 2024/25 school year, who have already attained the results of the Academic Module of IELTS eligible for promotion to an English Panel Chair (EPC) post (i.e. an overall band score of 8.0 in the Academic Module of IELTS with band scores of 7.5 or above in the Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking papers as shown in the same Test Report Form), do they need to take the Academic Module of IELTS again if the validity of their IELTS results has expired in the subsequent school years, for instance, after the lapse of two years, when they are considered to be promoted to an EPC post?**

A 10. As long as the results in the Academic Module of IELTS are still valid and they meet the requirement set out in Paragraph 6 in EDB Circular Memorandum No. 74/2024 at the time **when the teachers (on employment terms as a regular or contract post holder) start/ started teaching English**, these teachers are not required to retake the Academic Module of IELTS in the subsequent school years when they are promoted to / directly appointed as an EPC at another school afterwards.

In addition, the qualifications of those teachers, who have attained an average proficiency at Level 4 of the English Language Proficiency Requirement (LP4) through attending authorised language proficiency training courses or taking the LPA, will still be recognised as meeting the requirements of an EPC. Hence, these teachers do not need to retake the Academic Module of IELTS.

**Q 11. How do schools verify the teachers of English / Putonghua holding a regular post as having met the LPR for appointment?**

A 11. As required, when appointing or deploying English / Putonghua teachers, schools must verify whether the teachers to be appointed have obtained the relevant qualifications, in order to confirm that they have fulfilled the requirements as stipulated in the enhanced LPR.

Aspiring regular teachers should provide schools with valid certification of results for verification of their eligibility for meeting the respective LPR for serving as a regular English / Putonghua teacher or an EPC. The relevant documents for certification include -

- The LPA results notice; or
- The letter of notification regarding full exemption; or
- The LPR Attainment Certificate / Certificate of Merit; or
- Valid Test Report Form of IELTS (Academic Module) (applicable to **English Language subject**) / Certificate of PSC (applicable to **Putonghua subject**), and CLA results notice.

Schools shall bear the responsibility to pay the salaries on their own if the newly appointed or deployed regular English / Putonghua teachers fail to meet the enhanced LPR. EDB will also take appropriate follow-up actions, including requesting the schools to refund any overpayment of salaries to EDB.

**Q 12. How does EDB ensure the schools' compliance with the LPR policy?**

A 12. A survey on the attainment of the LPR by teachers of English or Putonghua in primary and secondary schools is administered every year. Advisory letters will be sent to the school heads concerned, which will also be copied to the School Supervisor or Chairman of the School Management Committee (SMC) / Incorporated Management Committee (IMC), to inform them of the non-

compliant cases of the LPR policy, and to call for follow-up actions to be taken as appropriate. Besides, 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, teachers of English / Putonghua NOT holding a regular post are also encouraged to attain the LPR.