

EDUCATION BUREAU CIRCULAR MEMORANDUM NO. 16/2022

From: Secretary for Education

To: Heads of Government, Aided (including special schools) and Caput schools as well as schools under the Direct Subsidy Scheme and Private Day Schools offering formal local curriculum at primary and secondary levels

Ref. : EDB(LE)/P&R/MISC/35 XIX

Date: 11 March 2022

Professional Enhancement Grant Scheme for Chinese Language Teachers (Teaching Chinese as a Second Language)

Summary

This circular memorandum aims to inform school heads and Chinese Language teachers at primary and secondary levels that with effect from the 2023/24 school year, the Education Bureau (EDB) will terminate the “Professional Enhancement Grant Scheme for Chinese Language Teachers (Teaching Chinese as a Second Language)” (“the Scheme”). Serving Chinese Language teachers interested in joining the Scheme are invited to apply for the last round of the Scheme in the 2022/23 school year. Please note that admission to the recognised programmes of the Scheme is the prerequisite for applying for the basic subsidy.

Background

2. With the support of the Language Fund (LF), EDB launched the pilot run of the Scheme in the 2014/15 school year. Upon endorsement by the Standing Committee on Language Education and Research (SCOLAR) in 2016 and 2018 respectively, the pilot run was extended up to the 2021/22 school year. Through the provision of a grant under the Scheme, serving primary and secondary school Chinese Language teachers are encouraged to take structured recognised part-time programmes so as to enhance their pedagogical knowledge and skills in teaching Chinese to non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students.

3. While the pilot run of the Scheme will soon end in the 2021/22 school year, EDB conducted a territory-wide questionnaire survey in October 2021 to review the Scheme. The findings of the survey revealed that teachers’ demand for the recognised programmes

of the Scheme was low and they preferred other relevant short-term training opportunities. Taking into account the diversified professional development opportunities which have long been provided in various modes by EDB and the survey findings, EDB accepted SCOLAR's recommendation to terminate the Scheme with effect from the 2023/24 school year for ensuring the cost-effective use of LF. Serving Chinese Language teachers interested in joining the Scheme are invited to apply for the last round of the Scheme in the 2022/23 school year. Details of the Scheme are set out as follows –

The Scheme

Objectives

4. The Scheme aims to encourage serving Chinese Language teachers at primary and secondary levels to pursue recognised structured part-time programmes so as to equip them with the necessary pedagogical knowledge and skills in teaching Chinese to NCS students as well as inter-cultural understanding in teaching Chinese to NCS students.

Eligibility

5. The Scheme is open to all registered or permitted teachers¹ who are employed in government, aided (including special schools) and caput schools as well as schools under the Direct Subsidy Scheme and private day schools at primary and secondary levels which offer formal local curriculum. Applicants, irrespective of their terms of appointment and posts, may apply for the Scheme provided that they are Chinese Language teachers at the time of application.

6. Teachers who have participated in the “Professional Development Incentive Grant Scheme for Language Teachers” (“PDIGS”)² are still eligible for the grant under the Scheme. However, an applicant cannot apply for the above two grants respectively for the same study programme. In brief, if a study programme is recognised under both the Scheme and PDIGS, applicants can only apply for grant from either one scheme.

Programmes of Study

7. The recognised programmes of study under the Scheme focus on enhancing teachers' qualifications in teaching Chinese to NCS students and helping teachers cope with

¹ Teachers in government schools who possess equivalent qualifications as registered or permitted teachers can also apply for the grant.

² “Professional Development Incentive Grant Scheme for Language Teachers” (“PDIGS”) is another funding scheme under the LF. PDIGS was launched in April 2004 to encourage serving language teachers who joined the teaching profession before the 2004/05 school year to enhance their subject knowledge and pedagogy in the language they teach by providing financial incentives. Details of the PDIGS have been uploaded onto the SCOLAR website (<https://scolar.gov.hk>).

the practical pedagogical challenges of teaching NCS students Chinese. Teachers who completed the relevant programmes will be awarded a Postgraduate Certificate/Diploma and/or Master's Degree in part-time mode. Information of the recognised programmes has been uploaded onto the SCOLAR website (<https://scolar.gov.hk>).

Amount of Grant

8. The provision of grant is of two tiers, including a basic subsidy and an extra subsidy –

(i) Basic Subsidy

A basic level of subsidy will be offered at **50% of the tuition fee of a programme of study recognised under the Scheme**, subject to **maximum of \$64,000 per teacher**, upon successful completion of programme of study without any undertaking.

(ii) Extra Subsidy

In order to encourage more teachers who teach Chinese to NCS students to apply for the grant and continue to teach in schools offering formal local school curriculum upon successful completion of programme of study, **an extra grant amounting to 30% of the tuition fee of a programme of study capped at \$30,000 per teacher**, will be offered to those teachers who **continue to teach NCS students Chinese in schools offering formal local curriculum for a total of three years** within the five years upon successful completion of programme of study. To apply for this extra 30% of the tuition fee, teachers are required to submit their applications with the principals' certification.

Application

9. Eligible Chinese Language teachers who are interested in joining the Scheme can only apply for the Scheme **upon admission to the recognised programmes of studies**. If applicants are admitted to the recognised programmes in the **2022/23 school year³**, they should submit their applications for the grant **within six months from the commencement of the programme**. Late applications will not be processed. The application form, notes to applicants and recognised programmes under the Scheme can be downloaded at the SCOLAR website (<https://scolar.gov.hk>). The completed application form should be sent by post or by hand to –

³ Should there be more applications received than the number of places offered by local higher education institutions, these institutions will consider according higher priorities to those teachers teaching in schools with higher concentration of NCS students.

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Enquiries

10. For enquiries, please contact the Language Education and SCOLAR Section at 3527 0174.

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c.c. Head of Sections – for information