

EDB announces details on requirement for newly appointed teachers in public sector schools to pass Basic Law Test

The Education Bureau (EDB) issued a circular to all public sector primary and secondary schools (including special schools) in Hong Kong today (November 11), announcing details of a requirement for newly appointed teachers in public sector schools to pass the Basic Law Test (BLT) starting from the 2022/23 school year.

A spokesman for the EDB said, "The Basic Law is closely related to our lives and is also a key element of the school curriculum which should be strengthened. Teachers should have a correct understanding of the Basic Law in order to enlighten students and help them correctly understand the constitutional status of Hong Kong and develop positive attitudes towards the Basic Law and 'one country, two systems'.

"In this regard, while the EDB and teacher training institutions have been strengthening training on the Basic Law, the Chief Executive's 2021 Policy Address has stated specifically that starting from the 2022/23 school year, newly appointed teachers in public sector schools are required to pass the BLT."

The spokesman said that by then, newly appointed regular teachers (including newly joined teachers, teachers changing schools, and teachers changing from teaching posts remunerated with a cash grant to those remunerated with a Salaries Grant) and monthly paid temporary teachers in all public sector schools are required to pass the BLT in order to be considered for appointment. The requirement applies to all ranks of the teacher grade (including principals).

To tie in with the above requirement, the EDB will conduct two rounds of the BLT in January and February 2022 respectively for teachers on a pilot basis. The relevant test results are only applicable to the newly appointed teachers in the 2022/23 school year. For the content and format of the BLT, the EDB will draw reference to the arrangements of the BLT conducted by the Civil Service Bureau (CSB). Candidates have to answer 15 multiple-choice questions within 20 minutes. Those who get at least eight out of 15 questions correct (i.e. attaining a score at or above 53 out of the full mark of 100) will be deemed to have a "pass" result. Teachers who have sat for a BLT conducted by the CSB and attained the abovementioned passing score will be deemed to have met the relevant requirement.

The first round of the BLT is scheduled for January 8, 2022. Persons interested in taking the first round of the test may apply from November 15 through the online application system on the EDB webpage (www.edb.gov.hk/en/basiclawtest). Applications must be made before 5pm on November 26 (Friday) (Hong Kong time). As places for the test are limited,

applicants will be arranged to sit for the test on a first-come, first-served basis. The date of the second round of the BLT will be announced in due course.

The spokesman said that the EDB will draw on the experience gained from the pilot test and explore the mode to be adopted in future (such as considering commissioning an assessment service provider to conduct the BLT on a self-financing basis) with a view to providing more convenient and efficient test services. Moreover, if the CSB updates the BLT and/or relevant test for civil service recruitment, the EDB will draw reference to the experience and views of the CSB upon the launch of the updated test, and draw up the arrangements for teachers in and after the 2023/24 school year.

He added that at the current stage, the BLT requirement is temporarily not applicable to daily rated supply teachers, teachers employed under the Native-speaking English Teacher Scheme and teachers who are remunerated with cash grants. The EDB will consider progressively extending the relevant requirement to other schools (such as schools joining the Direct Subsidy Scheme, kindergartens joining the kindergarten education scheme, etc) and other teachers.

For more details about the BLT requirement and the BLT organised by the EDB, please refer to the EDB Circular No. 18/2021 and the EDB webpage (www.edb.gov.hk/en/basiclawtest).