

For information
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LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL PANEL ON PUBLIC SERVICE

Determination of salaries of Government school teachers

Introduction

Two Members of the Panel on Public Service relayed the concerns of the Education Employees General Union over the determination of Government school teachers' salaries *vide* a letter of 7 May 2013. The main concerns were –

- (a) Government school teachers with more experience were paid less than those with less experience (referred to as “salary differential within Government schools” hereafter); and
- (b) Government school teachers with the same number of years of service were paid less than their counterparts in aided schools (referred to as “salary differential between Government schools and aided schools” hereafter).

This paper provides information about the determination of Government school teachers' salaries and accounts for the above situations of “salary differential”.

Determination of Government School Teachers' Salaries

2. Government school teachers appointed on civil service terms belong to one of the three civil service teaching grades, namely the two graduate grades of Education Officer (EO) and Primary School Master/Mistress (PSM) and the non-graduate Certificated Master/Mistress (CM) grade. Irrespective of the grades they belong to, all Government school teachers are civil servants and are thus subject to the Civil Service Regulations (CSRs). Their salaries and other employment terms and conditions are determined according to the CSRs as well as other rules and regulations promulgated by the Civil Service Bureau.

Determining the pay of civil servants upon first appointment or transfer between grades (including the teaching grades)

3. The salaries of individual civil servants (including Government school teachers) are influenced by a host of factors, including the time of their appointments and the salary assessment rules prevailing at the time of their appointments, etc. Relevant CSRs which govern the determination of civil servants' entry pay include –

- (a) **CSR 130(1):** CSR 130(1) provides that the entry pay of an appointee (including a new recruit and a serving civil servant appointed on transfer from one civil service grade to another) shall normally be offered at the minimum pay point of the civil service grade to which the appointee is appointed. Individual grades may offer a higher entry pay to an appointee to take account of relevant qualifications and/or experience above the prescribed levels in accordance with any prevailing arrangement as may be promulgated by the Secretary for the Civil Service (SCS);
- (b) **CSR 130(2):** For a serving civil servant appointed on transfer from one civil service grade to another, e.g. from a non-graduate teaching post to a graduate teaching post, the entry pay may be determined by CSR 130(2) if application of this sub-regulation produces a higher entry pay for the concerned officer than application of CSR 130(1). Specifically, CSR 130(2) provides for a formula for calculating the entry pay of a serving officer appointed on transfer to another office by taking into account his existing pay, the minimum pay of the new grade as well as the former grade. Pursuant to this CSR, the amount so calculated will be capped by (i) the next pay point immediately above the pay point on the pay scale of the new office nearest to the officer's existing pay in the former office; and (ii) maximum pay point of the new office; and
- (c) **CSR 130(5):** SCS has the authority and discretion to determine the pay to be offered to an appointee on substantive appointment to an office or to grant additional increments under exceptional circumstances.

Special arrangement for the teaching grades

4. In recognition of the uniqueness of the teaching profession and to

encourage movement of talents in the public education sector (e.g. from Government schools to aided schools or the other way round), a special arrangement which provides for the “carry-forward” arrangement as an option for salary determination was put in place on 1 April 2000. Under this special arrangement, the salary of teachers transferring between aided schools or between aided and Government schools (within the same or equivalent teaching grade or from non-graduate teaching grade to graduate teaching grade) without a break will be set as the higher between –

- (a) their salary before the transfer (i.e. the “carry-forward” arrangement); and
- (b) the then prevailing starting salary of the new grade plus the increments for relevant experience where applicable.

Salary Differential within Government Schools

5. The salary differential within Government schools as described in paragraph 1(a) above may be attributed to the “carry-forward” arrangement implemented after the 1999 Starting Salaries Review and the “normal conversion” arrangement implemented after the 2006 Starting Salaries Survey as illustrated in the ensuing paragraphs. In any case, it should be noted that at the teaching profession level, **all** the then prevailing policies for determining the salaries of the concerned Government school teachers have been consistently and properly implemented and at a personal level, **none** of the serving teachers has suffered from any salary reduction/loss because of the implementation of the concerned arrangements.

“Carry-forward” arrangement following the 1999 Starting Salaries Review

6. Based on the findings of the 1999 Starting Salaries Review, the Legislative Council (LegCo) Finance Committee (FC) approved the reduction of starting salaries of various civil service grades with effect from 1 April 2000. The starting salaries of the basic ranks of the three civil service teaching grades were also reduced, with details as follows –

- (a) the starting salaries of the basic ranks of the EO and PSM grades (namely the Assistant Education Officer (AEO) and Assistant Primary School Master/Mistress (APSM) ranks) were reduced by five pay points (from Master Pay Scale (MPS) 17 to MPS 12); and

- (b) the starting salary of the basic rank of the CM grade (namely the CM rank) was reduced by two pay points (from MPS 14 to MPS 12).

7. Following the above reduction, the reduced starting salary of the AEO/APSM rank was the same as the reduced starting salary of the CM rank. This reduction in starting salaries together with CSR 130(1) (paragraph 3(a) above) would mean that the entry pay of aided school teachers appointed to the civil service as Government school teachers would be subject to the reduced starting salaries, deterring their moving across to become Government school teachers.

8. As an alternative to CSR 130(1), the “carry-forward” arrangement mentioned in paragraph 4 above was put in place on 1 April 2000 for aided school teachers appointed to Government schools. The arrangement has effectively protected these teachers from being affected by the reduction in starting salaries during the period from 1 April 2000 to 31 July 2007.

“Normal conversion” arrangement following the 2006 Starting Salaries Survey

9. Based on the findings of the 2006 Starting Salaries Survey, the LegCo FC approved the upward adjustment of starting salaries of various civil service grades with effect from 1 August 2007. The starting salaries of the basic ranks of the three teaching grades were also adjusted upward as follows –

- (a) the starting salaries of the AEO and APSM ranks were increased by five pay points (from MPS 12 to MPS 17); and
- (b) the starting salary of the CM rank was increased by two pay points (from MPS 12 to MPS 14).

10. In addition to the above, the LegCo FC also approved the following measures which took effect with the implementation of the then new starting salaries on 1 August 2007 –

- (a) the application of the “normal conversion” arrangement to “affected serving civil servants”, namely those appointed to ranks subject to reduced starting salaries from 1 April 2000 to 31 July 2007 and remained on these ranks on 1 August 2007¹. Under this arrangement, where the pay of an affected serving civil servant on 1 August 2007 was lower than the increased starting

¹ For example, a CM appointed after April 2000 and later appointed as an AEO (before August 2007) and remained on the rank on 1 August 2007 was an “affected serving civil servant”.

salary of his rank, his pay would be brought up to the increased starting salary. Where the pay of an affected serving civil servant on 1 August 2007 was equal to or higher than the increased starting salary of his rank, his salary would be brought up to the next higher pay point; and

- (b) as a special arrangement, on top of the “normal conversion” arrangement, the grant of two additional pay points for affected serving teachers who possessed a Post-Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) qualification in Government and aided schools in the AEO/APSM and the Graduate Master/Mistress ranks and one additional pay point for affected serving teachers who possessed a PGCE qualification in Government and aided schools in the CM rank. The additional pay point(s) granted was known as the special incremental award for qualification (the “Special IAQ” arrangement).

11. Following the implementation of the arrangements as set out in paragraph 10 above, individual cases of salary differential within Government schools may arise in the following circumstances –

- (a) government school CMs who were first appointed before 1 April 2000 were protected by the “carry-forward” arrangement when they transferred to the EO or PSM grades² during the period of 1 April 2000 to 31 July 2007. They had not been adversely affected by the reduction in starting salaries during the period, the “normal conversion” and “Special IAQ” arrangements (as mentioned in paragraphs 10 (a) and (b)) above were not applicable to them. On the other hand, those who were first appointed as CMs after 1 April 2000 and transferred to the EO or PSM grades at the time of the reduced starting salaries were adversely affected by the reduced starting salaries. They were hence eligible for the “normal conversion” and the “Special IAQ” arrangements upon implementation of the then new starting salaries on 1 August 2007. As a result, after 1 August 2007 their salaries may be higher than the former group of teachers; and
- (b) from 1 April 2000 to 31 July 2007, the “carry-forward” arrangement applied to some of Government school teachers transferring from the non-graduate CM grade to the graduate EO

² If their salary as CMs before the transfer was higher than the then prevailing starting salary of the new grade plus the increments for relevant experience where applicable.

or PSM grades was already the better option among different salary calculation methods for these teachers and has, in effect, ensured that they would not be adversely affected by the reduction of starting salaries during the period. After July 2007, the salary on in-service transfer of CMs to EO or PSM grades has been determined according to CSR 130(2) as it can yield a higher salary. The salaries for the latter group may be higher than the former group with the application of CSR 130(2) after July 2007.

Salary Differential between Government Schools and Aided Schools

12. The salary differential between Government schools and aided schools, as described in paragraph 1(b) above, can be attributed mainly to the different arrangements on the grant of increments for relevant experience in the civil service and in aided schools. The prevailing arrangement in the civil service is that incremental credits for experience may be granted to an appointee possessing relevant experience when there is a specific need to recruit people with relevant experience and at the same time there is difficulty in recruiting such people. Such arrangement is applicable service-wide. On the other hand, we understand that the granting of increments for relevant experience in aided schools is subject to different considerations as provided in the Codes of Aid and the salary assessment rules. Different approaches are adopted and not comparable since teachers in the civil service and teachers in aided schools are under different employers, different management and terms and conditions of service, etc.

Advice Sought

13. Members are invited to note this paper.

Civil Service Bureau
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