

CSBCR/PG/4-030-002/4

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(Urgent by fax – 2869 6794)

14 July 2003

Clerk to Panel
LegCo Panel on Public Service
(Attn.: Ms Rosalind Ma)
Legislative Council Building
8 Jackson Road
Central
Hong Kong

Dear Ms Ma,

Panel on Public Service
Follow-up to meeting on 16 June 2003

Thank you for your letter of 16 June 2003. Our response to the two points raised is set out in the following paragraphs.

(a) Civil Servants operating electro-encephalograph machines

The relevant hospitals of the Hospital Authority have confirmed that three civil servants (Registered Nurses) working in the Hospital Authority were in receipt of the Extraneous Duty Allowance (EDA) for operating electro-encephalograph machines before the cessation of the EDA took place. They also confirmed that adequate training had been provided to the officers concerned for operating the machines in question.

(b) Governing principle regarding payment of multiple job related allowances (JRAs) for application to civil servants

One of the governing principles of JRA for application to civil servants is that “Multiple allowances should not be paid unless each of the individual allowances can be independently justified as being in accordance with the principles and criteria applicable to that allowance”. This principle aims to ensure

that no more than one JRA is paid for a specific additional or unusual duty. Civil Servants may receive multiple allowances only if their payment could be separately and independently justified. For example, an officer who is required to work shift and to perform during the shift period duties which may render him liable to bodily harm or physical impairment of a degree not normally expected of the same grade and rank may receive a Shift Duty Allowance and a Hardship Allowance, subject to the rules and criteria applicable to the two allowances.

The governing principles of JRA, including the one regarding payment of multiple JRAs, are intended for application to the civil service. It is up to individual policy bureaux, in considering the control and monitoring mechanism for the remuneration practices of the subvented/aided organizations under their purview, to decide whether any reference should be made to practices in the civil service. In the case of allowances payable to the heads of aided schools and practical schools, EMB's decision and the rationale are set out in the Appendix.

Yours sincerely,

(Mrs Alice Cheung)
for Secretary for the Civil Service

c.c. Secretary for Education and Manpower
(Attn.: Mrs Betty Ip)
(Fax No. : 2119 9061)

Review of Job-related allowances
Allowances payable to heads of special schools and practical schools

The EMB has all along followed the practice that the conditions of employment of aided school staff should be no better than those of civil servants, and the EMB has no intention of deviating from such practice at the moment. In the light of this, the EMB has decided to review job-related allowances payable to staff of aided schools with due reference to the guidelines issued by CSB in respect of the review of JRAs payable to civilian grades of the civil service.

2. In respect of the Special Education Allowance (SEA) payable to heads of aided special schools and practical schools and the Boarding Responsibility Allowance payable to the heads of aided special schools and practical schools with a boarding section, the EMB has decided that, with effect from 1 September 2003, the Boarding Responsibility Allowance may continue to be payable subject to review in two years and on condition that the SEA is not to be payable.

3. SEA is payable to teaching grade staff engaged in special education. EMB is of the view that the SEA is not fully justified under present day circumstances since special education duty should be regarded as inherent duties of the grades concerned. It is only in view of the upcoming review and the various changes introduced / to be introduced to the provision of special education and the approaches to support students with special educational needs that EMB considers it appropriate to adopt special arrangements for the existing SEA recipients. Against this background, EMB considers that while payment of the Boarding Responsibility Allowance may be justified on the grounds that the supervision of boarding section is not an inherent duty for the majority of special school heads, it is not fully justified for the heads of aided special schools with boarding section to also receive the SEA. This arrangement will take effect from 1 September 2003 and be reviewed in 2 years' time.