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Ministry of Public Services,
Provincial Councils and Local Government
Independence Square
Colombo 07.

16.10.2020

Secretaries to Ministries
Chief Secretaries of Provinces
Heads of Departments

Implementation of Official Language Policy

Your attention is hereby drawn to the Public Administration Circular 01/2014 dated 21.01.2014 and the circulars issued revising the above in respect of the implementation of Official Language Policy relating to the officers of Public Service or Provincial Public Service. Accordingly, period of concession granted to the public officers by Public Administration Circular 01/2014(VII) dated 03.10.2019 to acquire the competency in other Official Language shall be effective up to 16.10.2020 and it has been decided at the meeting of the Cabinet of Ministers held on 05.10.2020 that the provisions of this circular shall be applicable after 16.10.2020 in lieu of the provisions introduced by Public Administration Circular 01/2014 and all other circulars which revised the same issued pertaining to Official Language Policy.

02. Categorization of public officers as per the levels of competency to be acquired by the officers and prescribed courses

2.1 The categorization of public officers in relation to the competency in official language to be acquired by the public officers and the duration of the courses to be completed in relation to each category are as follows

Service Level as per the Public Administration Circular 03/2016	Related Category	Duration of the Courses
Primary	3	100 hours
Secondary	2	150 hours
Tertiary/ Senior	1	200 hours

2.2 All the above courses shall consist of both written and oral parts and a methodology for continuous assessments shall be applied throughout the course period.

2.3 An officer shall prove at least 80% or more attendance in the prescribed language courses in order to satisfy the requirement of the competency in the relevant language.

2.4 The appointing authorities shall take action to include courses as mentioned in 2.1 above in relation to each post as a part of the induction training of all posts for which such induction training is conducted at present.

03. Satisfying the requirement of the competency in the languages
- 3.1 All the officers who have been recruited to a new post under any stream i.e. open or limited or merit up to the effective date of this circular from 01.07.2007 and not satisfied the level of competency in other official language so far shall acquire the level of competency in other official language in addition to the official language, in which they entered the service, within a period of 03 years from the effective date of this circular as per paragraph 02 of the circular.
 - 3.2 All the officers, who are recruited under any stream i.e. open or limited or merit from the effective date of this circular, shall acquire the level of competency in other official language prescribed for them within 03 years from the date of appointment. The salary increment, which should be granted at the end of the prescribed period for satisfying the said qualification as per 3.1 above and this section given for the officers who do not satisfy the requirement of competency in language, shall be suspended until they satisfy the prescribed qualification. No language course completed by an officer before joining the public service shall be made applicable for the requirement of completing the language courses mentioned in section 2.1 of this circular.
 - 3.3 Following provisions shall be made applicable for acquiring the competency in mother language and other official language for the officers, who joined the service in English medium under open or limited or merit stream, from the effective date of this circular
 - a) The officers, who have joined the service in English medium shall be considered as exempted from the requirement of the competency in the mother language due to their passing Sinhala/Tamil language and Literature in G.C.E. (O/L) Examination before joining the service or passing Sinhala/Tamil language and Literature in G.C.E. (O/L) Examination or following a course at certificate level on Sinhala/ Tamil language conducted by the Department of Official Languages specifically designed for acquiring competency in Sinhala or Tamil, which is the mother language other than the medium of language, in which such officer joined the service, before completion of 03 years from the appointment date.
 - b) Further, all the provisions included in paragraph 02 of this circular shall be made applicable for the aforesaid officers for the purpose of satisfying the competency in other official language.
 - 3.4 Officers, who have satisfied the competency in other official language as per the provisions of Public Administration Circular 01/2014 and other consecutive circulars as at the effective date of this circular, are not required to satisfy the competency in official language again as per the provisions of this circular. Such officers shall be treated as having completed the prescribed level of competency in official languages.
 - 3.5 The officers who have joined the service under any stream i.e. open or limited or merit up to the effective date of this circular from 01.07.2007 and have not satisfied the competency in mother languages and other official language, shall take action within a period of 03 years from the effective date of this circular as per the provisions of sections 3.3 (a) and (b) of the circular in order to acquire the competency in mother language and other official languages.

- 3.6 When an officer, who has applied for the prescribed language course, has made a request to participate in such a course, the respective Head of the Institution shall approve leave for the officer. When granting approval for leave, the priority order of due date for satisfying the competency in official language by each officer shall be taken into consideration.
04. Responsibility of the Ministry in charge of the subject of Official Languages
- 4.1 The responsibility for conducting training courses mentioned in Paragraph 02 above, which are prepared applicable to services/ posts, is entrusted to the Department of Official Languages and National Language Education and Training Institute under the supervision of the Ministry in charge of the subject of Official Languages and the responsibility of the formulation of course syllabus is entrusted to the Department of Official Languages.
- 4.2 Further, the introduction and provision of sole guidance of Sinhala/ Tamil spoken courses in relation to each service for facilitating the public service delivery considering to the duties of the public institutions shall be undertaken by the Ministry in charge of the subject of Official Languages.
- 4.3 In the meantime, formulation of guidelines for the identification of strategies and environment required to apply and promote the usage of language competencies by officers, who have the bilingual and trilingual capacity, shall be ensured by the Ministry in charge of the subject of Official Languages.
05. Introduction of annual evaluation test (National Language Qualification – NLQ) to promote the usage of other official language
- 5.1 An evaluation test for **National Language Qualification (NLQ)** to be conducted annually ensuring the proper usage of language skills of public officers should be introduced for the public service by the Department of Official Languages under the direction of the Ministry in charge of the subject of Official Languages and the initial measures in this regard shall be taken by the Secretary of the Ministry in charge of the subject of Public Services.
- 5.1.1 Relevant provisions shall be formulated in order to establish this evaluation test to be conducted island wide as a test recognized at the national level and applied to measure the level of competency in languages of officers representing all the sectors as well as other parties, who are interested in the improvement of competency in languages.
- 5.1.2 An incentive allowance shall be paid once and for all to the officers, who pass this NLQ test, based on the level of marks secured by them irrespective of the education qualifications prescribed for recruitment to public service or services or posts.
- 80 - up to 100 Marks - Rs. 25,000/-
65 - up to 79 Marks - Rs. 20,000/-
50 - up to 64 Marks - Rs. 15,000/-

In addition to the above, a non-pensionable additional salary increment shall also be granted.

However, in order to be qualified to receive this non-pensionable additional salary increment continuously, it is compulsory for officers to secure more than 50 marks after appearing for NLQ test once in every 05 years.

Whenever an officer secures a level of marks, which is higher than the marks secured at the previous sitting, such officer should be paid the difference between the previous allowance and the allowance applicable to the higher level of marks. The maximum allowance, which an officer can receive during his service is Rs. 25,000/-.

However, in case where an officer secures a level of marks, which is lower than the marks secured at the previous sitting, the allowance paid at the previous occasion shall not be recovered.

06. Monitoring Committee and its role

6.1 The issues arisen in the implementation of the provisions of this circular shall be submitted to the convener of the following Committee by the Secretary of the relevant Ministry along with his/her recommendation regarding such issue and accordingly the final decision on the issue shall be taken by the Committee.

- I. Secretary of the Ministry in charge of the subject of Public Services or an Additional Secretary nominated by the Secretary (Chairman)
- II. A senior officer nominated by the Secretary of the Ministry in charge of the subject of Official Languages.
- III. A senior officer nominated by the Secretary of the Ministry in charge of the subject of Education
- IV. A senior officer nominated by the Secretary of the Public Service Commission
- V. Director General of Establishments – Convener
- VI. Commissioner General of Official Languages
- VII. Director General of Management Services or a senior officer nominated by Director General of Management Services

6.2 The officers, who have followed Sinhala/ Tamil courses (basic, higher, spoken) conducted by the Department of Official Languages and passed relevant written and oral tests or successfully completed a certificate/ higher course in Sinhala/ Tamil conducted by the Institutions recognized by the University Grants Commission or studied Sinhala/ Tamil language as the other language for the degree in a University recognized by the University Grants Commission before 16.10.2020, may make inquiries from the above Committee regarding the possibility for exemption from the requirement of the competency in languages mentioned in Paragraph. 2.1 of this circular by way of submitting their certificates through the Secretary to the respective Ministry.

6.3 In case where appointing authorities recommend that a competency in a certain language is required to a service/ post apart from these new provisions applicable to the competency in languages, action shall be taken to make a decision submitting such requests to the above mentioned Committee.

07. Providing facilities to the officers to satisfy the requirement of language competency

The Head of Institutions shall be responsible to make the officers participated a course to enhance the knowledge on relevant language proficiency once in 05 years, though they have acquired the level of competency of the prescribed languages as mentioned above within the given period but further interested in improving their competency of languages, in accordance with the syllabus prepared by the Department of Official Languages under the direction of the Ministry in charge of the subject of Official Languages. The respective Heads of Institutions shall take action to grant duty leave not more than one day per week to the officers, who follow this course.

08. Provisions connected to the circulars, which have so far been issued on acquiring language competency

8.1 Only one opportunity shall be given in due course to the officers, who have so far satisfied only the requirement of written test as per Public Administration Circular 01/2014, to satisfy the requirement of oral test as per the provisions of the same circular. The Department of Official Languages will conduct only one oral test accordingly. The officers, who pass the aforesaid oral test, are also treated as having acquired the level of competency in the official language prescribed to them.

8.2. Public Administration Circular 03/2007 dated 09.02.2007, by which incentive allowances are paid at present on competency on other official language, shall be cancelled from the effective date of this circular without causing prejudice to the officers, who receive allowances as per above provisions.

8.3 Public Administration Circular 29/98 dated 30.12.1998 and 29/98(i) dated 23.06.2004 shall be applied further for the payment of incentive allowances for the competency in English language, which is the Link Language.

09. Provisions in relation to other Official Language, contained in all Schemes of Recruitment and Service Minutes, shall be considered as having been revised as per the provisions of this Circular.

Sgd/ J.J.Rathnasiri
Secretary
Ministry of Public Services,
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