



中華人民共和國香港特別行政區政府總部教育局
Education Bureau

Government Secretariat, The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
The People's Republic of China

EDB(CDI/TR)/300-30/1/12 (1)

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24 May 2018

Dr Hon CHIANG Lai-wan, JP
Room 605
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central
Hong Kong

Dear Dr CHIANG,

Re: Review of textbooks

Thank you for your letter dated 8 May 2018.

In response to the concerns raised in Hon HUI Chi-fung's letter, our written reply in both Chinese and English are provided as attached.

Yours sincerely,

(Sheridan LEE)

for Secretary for Education

Legislative Council Panel on Education Textbook Review

The Education Bureau (EDB) sets up a textbook review mechanism to ensure that textbooks included on the Recommended Textbook List are accurate in content, in line with the curriculum, of good quality and fit for student learning. Generally speaking, publishers are required to make reference to the latest guidelines on textbook printing and review issued by the Curriculum Development Institute of the EDB as well as the Textbook Writing Guidelines for each subject. Textbooks submitted for review are assessed by relevant subject review panels. Each textbook is to be assessed by about 5 reviewers of the subject review panel drawn from within and outside the EDB. Internal reviewers are members of relevant subject sections of the EDB, while external ones include serving principals, teachers, academics, and other professionals well versed in the subjects concerned. External reviewers are appointed on the recommendation of the relevant subject sections for a term of two years, and take turns to review different textbooks. The procedure is fair and impartial.

As the quality of textbooks would affect student learning, it is our duty to place serious requirements on textbooks. The basic requirements which are applicable to textbooks of all subjects include: the textbook should meet the aims and objectives of relevant curricula, learning objectives of the topics, as well as the needs of student learning, teaching and assessment. Moreover, for textbooks in different subjects there should also be specific requirements fitting for the subject. Take history subject as an example, as one of the aims of history education is to enable students to learn how to approach past events in an impartial and empathetic manner from different perspectives, and to help them acquire the methods to study history, including the skills to present objective, balanced, logical and coherent arguments supported by appropriate use of historical data. As such, contents of textbooks should serve this aim. The accuracy of information, comprehensiveness of contents, objectivity and rationality of arguments, and clarity of presentation and writing are also the requirements to be met by textbooks. If textbooks contain citations taken from historical materials/documents or various perspectives of historians and viewpoints of textbook authors (if any), it should be clearly stated to avoid causing misconception or confusion to students. Different historical perspectives or viewpoints should be presented clearly and logically together with arguments and conclusions. Unsupported conclusions are not desirable.

In addition, unsupported viewpoints and stances, over-simplification of the cause-and-effect relationship of historical events, and inconsistency in presentation of

viewpoints between textbooks and primary source materials, which may mislead students about the sources of the viewpoints concerned should be avoided. Textbooks should also be penned accurately with a smooth flow rather than abstractly, and displaying fluency in writing.

Textbook review panels conduct their work in accordance with the above requirements. They examine textbook contents in context as a whole. The appropriateness of specific phrases is determined having regard to whether the phrases in question help provide clarity within the relevant context and support the arguments, as well as their impact on the presentation of the writing, etc. As can be seen from the examples stated above, comments cannot be taken out of context. They should be read as a whole. On the understanding that textbook authors will for certain read and consider the comments together with the textbooks submitted for review, the comments are concise and precise. We have made it clear in our letter sent to textbook publishers together with the review reports that should they have any questions about the comments of review reports, they can approach us directly. We will be happy to explain the comments to them face to face. As a matter of fact, we have received such requests for meeting from time to time so that textbook publishers may explain their approach to writing and presentation.

Education Bureau
May 2018