



# FIJI TEACHERS UNION

(THE CHILD OUR HOPE)

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Affiliated to EDUCATION INTERNATIONAL, FTUC, Fiji Teachers Confederation & COPE

President : Muniappa Goundar

Our Ref:

General Secretary: Agni Deo Singh

## PRESS RELEASE Your Ref:

### MINIMUM QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENT FOR PROMOTION TO HEADS OF SCHOOL POSITIONS

Fiji Teachers Union is seeking a declaration by the Employment Court with respect to the decision by the Ministry of Education Heritage and Arts to change the Minimum Qualification Requirement for promotion and appointment to Heads of Secondary positions. We believe the decision is unfair, unjustified and discriminatory and shows the total disregard of their own policies. MEHA has eliminated senior school leaders with relevant qualification experience and proven performance record on the sole basis of post graduate qualification. This decision we believe was made in December 2021. The Union has made an application to the Court to grant a “stay” on the processing of these posts till court proceedings are concluded and a ruling delivered.

The Union has submitted that any change to the existing MQR that had been deemed suitable all these years must remain and no change made without consultation with the teacher Unions. The Union has further submitted that those who already possess equivalent qualification ie degree in the relevant subjects plus the teacher training component must not be eliminated. Promotions as per the OMRS were done on the same basis in 2018. Subsequent to this, MEHA has been thoroughly inconsistent in applying the OMRS guideline in promotions, breaching its own rules. The current Acting Principals have been ably leading schools for several years. They have proven track record. Some of them were recently described by Ms. Jokhan as the best school leaders. Some of them also had been confirmed Principals for several years prior to the JEE 2017.

After the JEE the Ministry for Civil Service declared all posts that had salaries adjusted by more the 15% vacant. These Principals lost those posts and were appointed to act on the same positions till they were advertised again in September 2021.

All correspondence to the General Secretary Fiji Teachers Union, Please.

Branches: Suva, Nasinu, Rewa, Tailevu, Ra, Tavua, Ba, Lautoka, Nadi, Sigatoka, Navua, Labasa, Bua, Taveuni, Savusavu, Levuka.

**MEHA suddenly changed the MQR without any prior notice and decided only those who possess post graduate qualification be promoted.**

The Following qualifications were recognized for the purpose of promotions till now.

- 1) Degree plus STTC – Secondary School Teacher Training Certificate  
Fiji College Advance Education
- 2) Degree plus DTT - Diploma in Tertiary Teaching  
Fiji National University
- 3) Bachelor of Education - USP
- 4) Primary trained teachers who upgraded qualification in relevant teaching subjects and joined secondary schools.

This is yet another decision made in haste, without any thought to the damage and disruption it will cause to the smooth running of the schools.

We demand that the Ministry immediately withdraw this decision and stick to the existing MQR. The Union will not accept anything less.

Higher qualifications such as Masters etc are an added advantage. Any change in the MQR for promotions must first be planned in good time, opportunities be provided for serving teachers to upgrade their qualification by availing scholarships and paid leave as was the practice in the past.

Sudden derecognition of qualifications that were previously incepted and conducted by Governments owned institutions like the Fiji College of Advanced Education and Fiji National University is indeed void of all reasoning and grossly unjust to those who have been delivering well above par for several years.

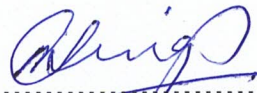
Tertiary Institutions keep revising / changing course contents in all programmes. This does not mean that the qualifications acquired earlier become invalid. If this was the case, all those who completed their degrees, Masters, PhDs etc. more than two decades ago should now be declared unqualified? The list I believe would include the top officials in MEHA as well.

The Senior heads who have been eliminated are being further embarrassed and demoralized as they see their subordinates with only a few years of teaching experience are being included in the promotion process solely on the basis of post graduate qualification.

While we encourage teachers to upgrade their qualification, we firmly believe that relevant experience and proven track record must be given due recognition. It is indeed very sad that teachers with just a few years of experience are given preference over senior HOS who are about to retire.

The Minister and Permanent Secretary fail to understand that STTC and DTT are also post graduate qualifications in pedagogy. They also fail to see the other qualifications that include degree in relevant teaching subject as well as teacher training.

Any new requirement should logically apply to those who enroll or join teaching after the implementation of such requirement. This abrupt decision by Hon. Premila Kumar and Madam Angela Jokhan will do immeasurable damage to quality education.



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**AGNI DEO SINGH**  
**GENERAL SECRETARY**  
20<sup>th</sup> January 2022.