



To Mark Scott  
Secretary of the Department of Education  
35 Bridge Street  
Sydney,  
NSW 2000  
April 16, 2017

From  
Geography Teachers Association of NSW  
25 Nyrang Street  
Lidcombe NSW

Dear Secretary Scott,

The purpose of this letter is to raise concerns with you in regards to obtaining recognised qualifications and therefore staffing codes for teaching Geography in secondary schools. This is an issue that impacts on the employment opportunities of many teachers currently teaching Geography 7-10.

Many queries and concerns have been raised with the Geography Teachers Association of NSW Council regarding the difficulty and cost associated with obtaining the Geography teaching code for those who are not trained in the subject. There is a discrepancy between the requirements for Geography compared to those for other subjects.

In general, teachers can apply for additional subject approval to teach a subject based on their teaching experience. This recognizes that knowledge and skills of teachers develop while teaching the subject regardless of training. For example, if someone was to teach Business Studies in Year 11 and Year 12 they could then apply to have that code added to their staffing codes with confirmation from the Principal. The same situation applies to a subject for 7-10 such as History.

There is a marked difference in the expectations of teachers who teach Geography and are trying to obtain the staffing code for Geography, as compared to those trying to obtain the codes in other subjects. It is more difficult to obtain the Geography code from the DoE than most other subjects. A teacher must teach each year from 7-12 to get the Geography code as there is only one code.

Teachers in most other subjects can gain the appropriate code by teaching a secondary subject in either 7-10 or 11-12. For example, a teacher can gain a junior History code and in addition to that can gain the Modern History code, the Ancient History code and the History Extension code. The question is "Why shouldn't a teacher who has taught 7-10 Geography over several years be able to get a code to teach junior Geography?". The answer is obviously that there is no such code. There is no code because there is no delineation between junior and senior Geography, compared to the subjects that have a name change. For example, Science becomes separate strands Biology, Chemistry.

Many teachers teaching junior Geography will never teach 11- 12, nor might they want to, and will always be disadvantaged when applying for employment as a junior geography teacher because there is no separate code. Often these teachers will pay to complete tertiary qualifications at their own expense. Should that same teacher have taught history or science in 7-10 they would not have to go to this same expense if they had taught the subject for several years.

The NSW GTA Council requests a review of this practice of obtaining teaching codes so that the requirements for Geography are comparable to other subjects within the Department of Education. A separate 7-10 and 11-12 codes would be the obvious solution.

Alternatively, would you be willing to join us for one of our meetings, or meet with executive members of Council, to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the current system for obtaining codes?

Thank you.

Lorraine Chaffer  
President GTANSW

Email [lchaffer@tpg.com.au](mailto:lchaffer@tpg.com.au)  
Phone 0415234398  
1c Inderan Avenue  
Lakehaven  
NSW 2263