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To Chief Executive Officers of  
Vocational Education Committees

**Circular PEN 4/02**  
**Purchase of Notional Service by Teachers who are Job-sharing**

The arrangements which apply in the case of teachers who wish to purchase notional service are set out in the statutory provisions and are also explained in the information booklet, "Your Questions Answered", which has been circulated recently. It has come to the Department's notice that the information supplied in the booklet regarding purchase of notional service by job-sharing teachers is in need of further clarification.

The position is that it is open to a teacher to purchase notional service where the teacher is job-sharing but would, if he or she ceased job-sharing and resumed wholetime employment, **have less than 40 years** of actual pensionable service at age 65. The teacher must, of course, satisfy the usual conditions for purchase as set out in paragraphs 27.1(1) to 27.1(4) of the Information Booklet.

Since 1994, following the issue of Circular S.8/94 of the Department of Environment, it has also been open to a teacher to purchase notional service where the teacher is job-sharing but would, if he or she ceased job-sharing and resumed wholetime employment, **have 40 or more years** of actual pensionable service at age 65. In this case, in addition to the usual conditions, the teacher must :-

- (a) have been job-sharing for at least 5 years, OR
- (b) be 50 years of age or more on commencing job-sharing.

To sum up, the general position regarding eligibility to purchase notional service is set out in the attached Appendix in the form of a revised **paragraph 27.1** of the Information Booklet.

The terms of this circular letter and Appendix should be brought to the attention of any teachers who are job-sharing at present or who indicate in the future that they wish to commence job-sharing.

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VEC Pensions Section

27 March 2002

Appendix to Circular PEN 4/02

**Revision of Paragraph 27.1 of the information booklet:-**

**The Vocational Teachers' Superannuation Scheme –  
Your Questions Answered**

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**27.1 Who can purchase notional service?**

The Notional Service scheme is not open to members of the **1956 Superannuation Scheme**.

A teacher who is a member of the **Revision Superannuation Scheme** may purchase notional service provided he/she fulfils the following conditions.

- 1) The teacher is in **wholetime service** or is **job-sharing**.
- 2) The teacher would have **at least 9 years'** actual pensionable service (i.e. excluding notional service) by the time he/she attains age 65. In determining whether a **job-sharing** teacher fulfils this condition, each year of potential service to age 65 should be counted as a job-sharing year, i.e. half a year.
- 3) The teacher is not on sick leave or suspended from duty (with or without pay) or likely to retire on medical grounds.
- 4) The teacher is not disqualified by virtue of having received, or having an entitlement to retained benefits from a previous occupational pension scheme which, in the judgement of the VEC, in consultation with the Department of Education and Science, would bring total superannuation benefits at the time of retirement to more than the equivalent of the benefits arising from 40 years pensionable service as a teacher.
- 5) A teacher who is **job-sharing** and who would, if he or she ceased job-sharing and resumed wholetime employment, have **40 or more years** of actual pensionable service at age 65, may purchase notional service where the following additional conditions are fulfilled:-

The teacher (a) has been job-sharing for at least 5 years, OR  
(b) was 50 years of age or more on commencing job-sharing.

Condition (5) above makes special provision for the purchase of notional service by teachers who would otherwise be ineligible to enter into a notional service contract. The purchase of notional service is also, of course, open to a job-sharing teacher who would, if he or she ceased job-sharing and resumed wholetime employment, have **less than 40 years** of actual pensionable service at age 65.

Note that the current scheme for the purchase of notional service makes no provision for the purchase of such service by part-time teachers. This question is under review in the context of the admission of part-time teachers to ongoing pensionability.

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