

For information on  
20 July 2015

## **Legislative Council Panel on Public Service**

### **Employment of Ethnic Minorities in the Civil Service**

#### **Purpose**

This paper provides an update on the implementation of the measures to facilitate the employment of ethnic minorities in the Civil Service.

#### **Overview**

2. Appointments to the Civil Service are based on the principle of open and fair competition. All candidates in an open recruitment exercise are assessed on the basis of their ability, performance and character, and having regard to the stipulated entry requirements (including language proficiency) set according to the job requirements of the grade concerned. Race is not a relevant consideration in the selection process.

3. Given the importance of maintaining effective communications, it is necessary to specify appropriate English and Chinese language proficiency requirements (LPRs) for appointments to different grades in the Civil Service. In setting the LPRs for recruitment to the Civil Service, the job nature and operational requirements of the grade concerned are the prime considerations. In accordance with the prevailing guidelines, individual civil service grade management should ensure that the LPRs specified are relevant to and commensurate with the satisfactory performance of the duties of the grades concerned. This arrangement is in line with the guidance of the Equal Opportunities Commission as set out in the Code of Practice on Employment under the

Race Discrimination Ordinance, which provides that an employer must ensure that any language requirement for a job is relevant to and should be commensurate with the satisfactory performance of a job.

## **Implementation of LPRs and other relevant measures**

### ***Setting and review of LPRs***

4. Heads of department/grade (HoDs/HoGs) are responsible for stipulating the LPRs for their respective grades and reviewing the LPRs from time to time taking into account changing operational needs. In this regard, HoDs/HoGs have made continuous efforts to review and where appropriate, suitably adjust the LPRs if operational needs of the grades so justify. Recently, the Aircraft Technician and Air Crewman Officer grades of the Government Flying Service have, upon review, lowered the Chinese LPRs to the effect that candidates are only required to be able to communicate in Chinese. In addition, the Dental Officer grade of the Department of Health has identified certain posts that mainly carry out clinical duties for which the prescribed Chinese LPRs of Level 1 in the Use of Chinese paper in the Common Recruitment Examination (CRE)<sup>1</sup> can be waived without compromising satisfactory performance of the duties of the posts concerned. Candidates who are able to speak fluent Cantonese may be considered for appointment to the posts concerned.

5. To facilitate non-ethnic Chinese (NEC) candidates in applying for civil service jobs, the Government accepts Chinese language results of specified non-local public examinations in addition to local qualifications as meeting the LPRs. Specifically, Chinese language results in the United Kingdom International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE)/ General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE)/ General Certificate of Education (GCE) ‘Ordinary’ (‘O’) Level as well as GCE ‘Advanced’/ ‘Advanced Subsidiary’ (‘A’/ ‘AS’) Levels, which are qualifications popular amongst students learning Chinese as a second language, are accepted for the purpose of appointments to the Civil Service. Moreover, in tandem with the introduction of the Applied Learning Chinese (for non-Chinese speaking students) subject at senior secondary level in the 2014-15 school year, results of “Attained” and “Attained with Distinction” for this subject will be accepted for the

---

<sup>1</sup> CRE is conducted by the Civil Service Examinations Unit of the Civil Service Bureau (CSB). The Use of Chinese and Use of English papers in CRE are set at graduate level by language academics. Results in these two language papers are classified as Level 2, Level 1 or Fail, with Level 2 being the highest.

purpose of meeting the relevant Chinese LPRs for civil service appointments.

### *Selection process*

6. Some departments have made suitable adjustments to their recruitment selection process, particularly the part concerning tests of communication ability. For example, applicants of Police Constable who meet the basic academic qualifications and prescribed English language proficiency standard but do not meet the required Chinese LPRs will be arranged to sit for the Government Standard Examination<sup>2</sup>. At the Group Interview stage, applicants will be arranged to participate in a job-related “Practical Incident Handling Test” to assess their communication ability, judgement and fact-finding ability, under which candidates are required to give a simple account of the incidents as shown in the videos to them in written English and Chinese respectively. This has replaced the previous requirement for candidates to answer questions in Chinese. In addition, applicants who possess proven foreign language skills will be awarded extra marks in the selection process. From April 2010 to March 2015, a total of 103 applications for Police Constable were received from NECs, of whom 20 were appointed.

7. As regards Assistant Officer II of the Correctional Services Department (CSD), a Group Interview has replaced the previous Chinese written test. From April 2010 to March 2015, a total of 147 applications were received from NECs, of whom nine were appointed. In respect of career advancement, CSD has done away with the Chinese language written test for serving staff of the Assistant Officer grade to be considered for appointment to the Officer grade under the “Potential Officer Scheme” and “Special Appointment Scheme”<sup>3</sup>. Candidates are allowed to answer oral questions in either English or Chinese (Putonghua or Cantonese) during the selection process. In the four rounds of exercise conducted with the revised process, a total of 40 staff in the Assistant Officer grade who were NECs participated in these schemes and five of them were appointed to the Officer grade.

---

<sup>2</sup> The Government Standard Examination is conducted by the Civil Service Examinations Unit of CSB and is set at a level equivalent to Level 2 in Chinese Language in the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination (HKDSEE) / Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE).

<sup>3</sup> “Potential Officer Scheme” and “Special Appointment Scheme” are special in-service advancement schemes which enable meritorious Assistant Officers nominated by their supervisors to advance to the Officer rank without having to meet the academic qualifications necessary for direct entry to the Officer grade.

### ***Employment initiatives***

8. Where appropriate, departments have employed NECs to meet specific operational needs. The Education Bureau has employed NECs as teaching staff in government schools with NEC students. Some departments have employed NECs on non-civil service contract terms. For example, the Police Force has been employing NECs as Police Community Liaison Assistants in 14 Police Districts, with a total of 15 positions. The Home Affairs Department (HAD) has employed three NECs since end 2014 to support its work on promotion of racial harmony and enhancement of support services for ethnic minorities. The Social Welfare Department has also launched a trial scheme and hired an NEC since August 2014 as Welfare Support and Liaison Assistant in one of its Integrated Family Service Centres.

9. To ensure that recruitment information on government jobs would be disseminated to the ethnic minority community effectively, CSB has encouraged bureaux/departments (B/Ds) to place recruitment advertisements, where appropriate, with the Support Service Centres for Ethnic Minorities run by HAD. B/Ds will continue to follow up in this regard.

### ***Other supporting measures***

10. To encourage potential candidates including those from the ethnic minority community to apply for government jobs, departments including CSD, Fire Services Department and Immigration Department have carried out outreach work, e.g. conducting career talks in secondary schools with NEC students. The Police Force has also organised engagement projects in certain Police Districts, such as visits to Police Units and sharing by police officers on work experience and job interview skills with NECs interested in joining the Police Force.

11. The Labour Department (LD) piloted an “Employment Services Ambassador Programme for Ethnic Minorities” in September 2014. Under this pilot programme, 15 NEC trainees of the Youth Employment and Training Programme had been employed as employment services ambassadors for six months to serve job seekers at job centres and job fairs while undergoing on-the-job training. The initial response to the pilot project was positive. LD employed a second batch of 17 NEC employment services ambassadors in March 2015.

12. In addition, CSB has organised Chinese language training tailored for the vocational needs of NEC staff working in the Government to facilitate their effective performance of duties and career advancement.

**Advice sought**

13. Members are invited to note the content of this paper.

**Civil Service Bureau  
July 2015**