

For discussion on
26 February 2018

Legislative Council Panel on Public Service

Employment of Non-ethnic Chinese in the Civil Service

Purpose

This paper provides an update on the implementation of the measures to facilitate the employment of non-ethnic Chinese (NEC) in the civil service.

Background

2. The Government, being the largest employer in Hong Kong, is a strong advocate for equal opportunities in employment. Appointment to the civil service is 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. In order to maintain effective communication for delivering public service, Heads of Department / Grade (HoDs/HoGs), having regard to the job requirements of the grades under their respective purview, specify appropriate Chinese and English language proficiency requirements (LPRs) as part of the entry requirements for the grades concerned. This arrangement is in line with the guidance of the Equal Opportunities Commission as set out in its 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. It is Government policy to ensure the Chinese LPRs for all the grades of the civil service are no more than necessary for

performance of the job, so that NEC, like other applicants, have equal access to government job opportunities.

4. The 2017 Policy Address has mentioned that with a view to increasing government job opportunities for NEC, Civil Service Bureau (CSB) has started to co-ordinate a comprehensive review on the entry requirements relating to Chinese proficiency for all the grades of the civil service, and that the review is expected to be completed in early 2018. The ensuing paragraphs set out the review outcome.

Review of Chinese LPRs

5. HoDs/HoGs are responsible for keeping in view the situation of grades under their respective purview from time to time. As reported at the Panel meeting in May 2017, 31 grades had lowered Chinese LPRs since 2010.

6. In the 2017 comprehensive review, CSB has invited all HoDs/HoGs to give due regard to the job requirements of all civil service grades under their respective purview and analyse in detail the necessary Chinese LPRs. After this comprehensive review, the number of grades that have lowered / will lower Chinese LPRs has increased by 22¹ to 53.

7. The newly added 22 grades can be classified as follows –

- (a) 8 grades belong to degree / professional grades and they will lower the Chinese LPRs from Level 2 result of the Use of Chinese paper of the Common Recruitment Examination (CRE)² to Level 1 result. These grades include Analyst/Programmer and Treasury Accountant, etc.

¹ The newly added 22 grades is the sum of the number of grades mentioned in paragraphs 7(a) and 7(b).

² CRE comprises two papers, namely Use of Chinese and Use of English. Results in these two language papers are classified as Level 2 (the highest level), Level 1 or Fail. Different levels may be set for the Chinese and English LPRs of a grade respectively, having regard to the operational needs of the grade concerned.

- (b) 14 grades belong to grades involving technical or operative duties. The HoDs/HoGs concerned, after reviewing the prevailing job requirements, will lower the Chinese LPRs of the grades concerned correspondingly. These grades include Laboratory Attendant in Government Laboratory, Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) and Food and Environmental Hygiene Department and they will lower the Chinese LPRs from Secondary 3 level to Primary 6 level; and Chainman³ in Civil Engineering and Development Department and Housing Department which will require written proficiency in simple Chinese in place of the previously adopted Primary 6 level .
- (c) Some grades involve different types of work in different departments, with their respective entry requirements set by the individual departments concerned having regard to the actual job requirements for a type of work. Through experience sharing in the 2017 comprehensive review, a number of types of work will lower Chinese LPRs. For example, in the light that some types of work for Artisan and Senior Artisan have been accepting written proficiency in simple English as an alternative to written proficiency in simple Chinese⁴, instead of requiring written proficiency in both languages, 4 other types of work have followed suit after this comprehensive review and will lower their Chinese LPRs to the aforesaid level. For Works Supervisor⁵, 6 types of work will lower the Chinese LPRs from Level 2 in Chinese Language in Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination (HKDSEE) / Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE) to Secondary 3 level after this comprehensive review.

³ The major duties of the posts concerned include assisting in the conduct of surveying work in the field, preparation and transportation of surveying tools and materials, etc.

⁴ For example, Artisans in AFCD and Fire Services Department who perform duties such as field work and maintenance of fire fighting appliances respectively.

⁵ The major duties of Works Supervisor are to carry out site investigations, monitor the works progress and perform technical duties, etc.

Tapping the Talent Pool of NEC

8. Relevant bureaux/departments (B/Ds) have continued to undertake appropriate measures to tap into the pool of talents possessing knowledge in NEC languages and cultures, with a view to facilitating the provision of public services for these communities. The Police Force, Immigration Department and Social Welfare Department have continued to employ Police Community Liaison Assistants in Police Districts, Interpreters in Removal Assessment and Litigation (Operations Support) Section and Welfare Support and Liaison Assistants in Integrated Family Service Centres respectively to strengthen communication with NEC. Home Affairs Department has recruited persons who can command South / Southeast Asian language(s) widely spoken in Hong Kong in its Race Relations Unit. Labour Department (LD) has engaged employment assistants proficient in NEC languages at two job centres on a pilot basis since 2017 to strengthen employment support for NEC job seekers, including following up on their career needs and producing promotion materials for these job seekers in NEC languages, etc. CSB will continue to liaise with other B/Ds which provide services for NEC to identify room for trawling suitable candidates who possess NEC language skills for relevant jobs in the Government.

9. Equipping NEC youths with relevant skills can facilitate their integration into the employment market in the future. Under Education Bureau's Life Planning Education initiative, some government departments have organised sharing sessions for NEC students for enhancing their understanding of the job nature and career paths in the civil service. The Police Force has launched a regular cross-disciplined forces training programme targeting NEC youths in 2017, including career talks and training camps and visits of facilities arranged by disciplined services for NEC youths so as to provide them with discipline, physical and team-building training. LD has also continued to undertake the "Employment Services Ambassador Programme for Ethnic Minorities", under which trainees are arranged to serve at job centres and job fairs while undergoing on-the-job training. LD has recruited a total of 110 NEC ambassadors in 7 batches for the period of more than 3 years from the launch of the programme in September 2014 till now.

Advice Sought

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

**Civil Service Bureau
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