

For discussion on
20 January 2020

Legislative Council Panel on Public Service Employment of Persons with Disabilities in the Civil Service

Purpose

This paper provides an update on the employment of persons with disabilities in the civil service.

Overview

2. As an equal opportunities employer, the Government is committed to eliminating all forms of discrimination against persons with disabilities in employment. To this end, we endeavour to ensure that persons who have declared their disabilities (“applicants with disabilities”), like other applicants, enjoy equal opportunities in applying for government jobs by formulating and implementing appropriate measures to facilitate their participation in the recruitment process. These measures include –

- (i) applicants with disabilities meeting the basic entry requirements for a post will not be subject to shortlisting criteria, if any, and will automatically be invited to attend the selection test/interview;
- (ii) the recruiting bureau/department (“B/D”) is required to proactively ascertain from individual applicants with disabilities any assistance or accommodation needed, and suitably adjust the test/interview process to cater for their special needs¹;

¹ Examples include extending the examination duration for applicants with dyslexia, providing larger monitors, electronic magnifiers, enlarged/braille test papers, enlarged answer books and table lamps for applicants with visual impairment, and conducting interviews through written communication for applicants with hearing impairment, etc.

- (iii) if an applicant with disabilities is found suitable by the recruitment board to carry out the duties of certain posts in a specific rank, he/she may be recommended for appointment even though he/she may not be able to perform the full range of duties of every post in the rank concerned due to his/her disabilities;
- (iv) an appropriate degree of preference may be given to applicants with disabilities found suitable for appointment by placing them ahead of other applicants whose suitability for appointment is considered comparable to the former²; and
- (v) if an applicant with disabilities who meets the basic entry requirements for a post is not recommended for appointment, the recruitment board is required to submit the recommendation to an officer at a rank not lower than the Assistant Director level in the recruiting department/grade for consideration and decision.

3. The Government does not require serving civil servants to declare if they have any disabilities. However, if they make any request for financial assistance to purchase technical aids to assist in their performance of duties, their disabilities will be made known to B/Ds to which they belong. The Government also does not require applicants for government jobs to declare their disabilities, but they may declare on a voluntary basis and request the recruiting B/D to consider providing special arrangements for them in attending the selection test/interview having regard to their disabilities. As such, their disabilities will be made known to the relevant B/Ds.

Statistics and Analysis

4. Every year we report to the Panel the situation of serving civil servants with disabilities (“civil servants with disabilities”) and applicants with disabilities that are made known to B/Ds through the above channels. According to the information collected, there were 2 881 civil servants with

² In accordance with the existing guidelines, a recruiting B/D should categorise applicants who have attained the passing mark into three groups of suitability for appointment (i.e. very suitable, suitable and marginally suitable) as appropriate. The priority of applicants with disabilities in a particular group will be advanced to the top of that group.

disabilities as at 31 March 2019, representing around 1.6% of the strength of the civil service. As mentioned above, since we only have limited information on the number of civil servants with disabilities, these statistics only reflect the lowest estimate known to us. On the other hand, among the recruitment exercises concluded³ in the 18 months from April 2018 to September 2019, 188 exercises (conducted by 48 B/Ds respectively) involved qualified applicants with disabilities. Among the 399 055 qualified applicants in these exercises, 3 187 (or 0.8%) were persons with disabilities. All of them were invited to the selection tests/interviews and 104 were offered appointment. For the remaining 395 868 qualified applicants, 97 283 (or 24.6%) were invited to selection tests/interviews and 17 955 were offered appointment. Overall speaking, the success rate of applicants with disabilities for civil service vacancies was **3.26%**, whereas the success rate of other applicants was **4.54%**.

5. For B/Ds where applicants with disabilities had lower success rates, the Civil Service Bureau (CSB) will continue to follow up with them with a view to exploring if there would be room for further enhancement in the recruitment arrangements to facilitate the participation of persons with disabilities in the process. We will also sustain our efforts in inviting B/Ds with higher success rates of applicants with disabilities⁴ to share their experience and tips, so that colleagues responsible for recruitment in other B/Ds may apply such practical skills in their future recruitment exercises. In addition, we will follow up with the Selective Placement Division of the Labour Department to help promote civil service recruitment exercises with a view to attracting more applications from qualified persons with disabilities. We will keep in close view the success rates of persons with disabilities and other applicants in civil service recruitment, so as to monitor the effectiveness of these targeted measures.

³ This refers to recruitment exercises in which the relevant B/Ds have made offers of appointment in respect of all vacancies targeted to be filled or to all candidates found suitable for appointment. Figures for the two large-scale recruitment exercises which are close to conclusion and have straddled two financial years are also included.

⁴ The success rates of applicants with disabilities in 12 B/Ds (namely CSB, the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau, Department of Health, Department of Justice, Education Bureau, Fire Services Department, Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, Hong Kong Police Force, Inland Revenue Department, Leisure and Cultural Services Department, Office of the Government Chief Information Officer and Transport Department) were higher than the overall 3.26%.

Internship Scheme for Students with Disabilities

6. CSB has since 2016 launched the Internship Scheme for Students with Disabilities (“the Scheme”), and doubled the number of internship places in 2018 from an average of 50 a year to 100⁵. Since its inception, 300 full-time students with disabilities from tertiary institutes as well as the Shine Skills Centre (“Shine”) ⁶ of the Vocational Training Council participated in the internship programme. They were assigned to various B/Ds to perform administrative support, clerical or other duties. Each year, the Secretary for the Civil Service meets the interns in person and has received very positive feedbacks on the Scheme from them. Such meetings also offer an opportunity for the Secretary to personally give them support and encouragement. We are pleased to know that some alumni of the Scheme were offered employment in government departments of their choice or in the private sector upon graduation.

7. During the summer vacation in 2019, we arranged a total of 62 local students with disabilities from post-secondary institutes to have their internship in 41 B/Ds to gain work experience. They were assigned to perform various duties, including making preparation for setting up and updating database and technical systems, editing departmental publications, event management, graphics design and production, developing teaching aids, and providing support for enquiry counter services. In the fourth quarter of the same year, we also arranged 35 students from Shine to have their internship in 20 B/Ds. They were assigned with diversified jobs having regard to their aptitude and interests, including simple graphics design, editing and processing databases, providing support for sports ground, as well as event coordination and support. We will discuss with the institutes and B/Ds in due course to prepare for this year’s internship programme.

⁵ The Chief Executive announced in the 2017 Policy Address that we would further expand the Scheme in 2018, with a target to double the number of internship places from an average of 50 a year to 100. Meanwhile, all local subvented and self-financing post-secondary institutes have been invited to nominate students to participate in the Scheme since 2018.

⁶ Shine offers vocational training programmes and support services for development of students with special education needs who are aged 15 or above.

Apart from providing about 100 internship places, we will continue to enrich the Scheme by arranging diversified jobs for the interns.

Advice Sought

8. Members are invited to note the contents of this paper.

Civil Service Bureau
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