

**For discussion
on 17 March 2003**

Legislative Council Panel on Public Service

**Proposal to subsume the Official Languages Agency
under the Civil Service Bureau**

PURPOSE

This paper seeks Members' advice on a proposal to subsume the Official Languages Agency (OLA) under the Civil Service Bureau (CSB).

PROBLEM

2. We consider that there is scope to streamline the organisation structure and working relationship between OLA and CSB and to rationalise the service delivery and the role of OLA for better efficiency and economy.

PROPOSAL

3. We propose that, with effect from 1 July 2003 –
- (a) OLA be subsumed under CSB;
 - (b) one post of Commissioner for Official Languages (COL) (Administrative Officer Staff Grade B [AOSGB]) (D3) (\$128,365 - \$136,015) and one post of Chief Conference Interpreter (CCI) (D1) (\$98,595 - \$104,615) in OLA be deleted;
 - (c) one Administrative Officer Staff Grade C (AOSGC) (D2)/ non-civil service position at D2-equivalent (\$117,040 - \$124,305) post be created to serve as the Administrative Assistant to the Secretary for the Civil Service (SCS); and

- (d) one supernumerary Administrative Officer Staff Grade C (AOSGC) (D2) post in CSB be deleted in advance of its expiry on 31 December 2003.

JUSTIFICATION

4. CSB has implemented Phase One of its reorganisation on 1 November 2002 by reorganising its internal organisation structure and devolving more human resources management responsibility to bureaux and departments. The exercise has enabled bureaux and departments to assume greater ownership in the management of their staff, accelerated the decision-making processes and achieved a better use of manpower resources. As compared with March 2002, the Bureau will be able to reduce its establishment by about 10% or 34 non-directorate posts by April 2003, representing a net savings of about \$9.5 million in terms of full annual average staff cost.

5. In Phase Two of CSB's reorganisation exercise, we have reviewed the working relationship between CSB and OLA and the scope for further streamlining in the organisation structure. We consider that there is scope for rationalising the work between OLA and the CLO teams in bureaux and departments. In addition, considering that the standard of Chinese language of civil servants has improved generally, OLA should reprioritise its work so that it is not just a primary service provider in respect of translation and interpretation services, but should also become the Government's language advisor in driving the effective use of the official languages in the civil service. The existing structure of OLA should be streamlined and OLA be subsumed under CSB to reflect these changes as well as to achieve economies in operation and maximize the use of resources.

The existing structures of CSB and OLA

6. At present, there are a total of 21 (20 permanent and one supernumerary) civil service directorate posts in CSB and OLA –

- (a) for CSB, there are 18 directorate posts comprising the Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service (PSCS) (AOSGA1) (D8), three Deputy Secretaries (one AOSGB1 (D4) and two AOSGB (D3)), one Director of General Grades (D3), nine

(eight permanent and one supernumerary posts of) Principal Assistant Secretaries (AOSGC) (D2), two Senior Principal Executive Officers (D2) and two Principal Executive Officers (D1); and

- (b) for OLA, there are three directorate posts comprising one AOSGB (D3) (COL), one Principal Chinese Language Officer (D1) and one CCI (D1).

The existing organisation charts of CSB and OLA are at **Enclosures 1 and 2**.

Rationalisation of service delivery and role of OLA

7. Since the establishment of the OLA in 1996, a number of development necessitates a change in the role and structure of OLA –

- (a) OLA has completed the major policy tasks with which it was originally entrusted. It has issued 44 sets of guidelines and standards for the use of official languages in the past six years. Through the intensive and concerted efforts on the promotion of wider use of Chinese by OLA and CLOs stationed in bureaux and departments, many civil service colleagues are now more accustomed to drafting papers in Chinese and the standard in Chinese has improved generally. The overall level of Putonghua proficiency within the civil service is also steadily improving. As the Chinese language standard and Putonghua proficiency of civil servants further improve, the reliance on CLOs to provide straightforward and simple translation support and Putonghua interpretation service should diminish over time. A Training and Development Study for the CLO Grade conducted in 2002 has recommended that CLOs should take up the enhanced role of language advisors and facilitators in driving the effective use of the official languages in the civil service, Chinese and Putonghua in particular. In addition to their core duties of translation, vetting and interpretation, they should also be engaged in other high-level language-related services such as drafting speeches for senior

officers, or acting as language advisors/tutors for other officers;
and

- (b) There is scope for streamlining the organisation structure of OLA and rationalising service delivery to achieve savings, and at the same time providing a foundation for CLOs to take up the enhanced role as language experts.

Organisational change

Incorporation of OLA into CSB

8. To tie in with the streamlining of operations and the rationalisation of service delivery, we propose to institute the following changes to the organisation structure of OLA –

- (a) to subsume OLA under CSB with effect from 1 July 2003. To underline the great importance the Government continues to attach to improving the language standard of civil servants, the office will be placed under a D4 officer in CSB, namely the existing Deputy Secretary (Civil Service)¹. This senior directorate officer will assist SCS in assuming the overall responsibility for both the formulation and implementation of Government's language policies in the civil service, and in overseeing all relevant policy matters. The officer will also be the Head of Grade of the Chinese Language Officer and Interpreter (Simultaneous Interpretation) (I(SI)) Grades. The Principal Chinese Language Officer will be the Head of Grade of the Calligraphist Grade; and
- (b) to streamline OLA's structure by deleting 25 posts, including two directorate posts, namely one post of COL (AOSGB) (D3) and one post of CCI (D1) which has been left vacant at present, and 23 non-directorate posts.

9. Upon the reorganisation, the OLA will maintain its role as the Government's primary service provider of high-level translation, vetting and

interpretation services. At the same time, it will strengthen its provision of other high-level language-related services with a more streamlined structure. For example, it will act as the language advisor in the civil service; serve as the language research and support centre for the Government; assume an active role in facilitating the use of Chinese on computing systems and network; and provide support services to facilitate the outsourcing of translation assignments, etc.

Redeployment to Secretary for the Civil Service (SCS)'s private office

10. Under the accountability system introduced on 1 July 2002, each Director of Bureau is to have his/her own private office, comprising an administrative assistant (equivalent to AOSGC rank), and other non-directorate support staff. The financial provisions for these posts in the Director of Bureau's private office are to be made available through redeployment of existing resources by the bureau concerned. To provide administrative support to SCS, we have, since 1 July 2002, temporarily redeployed an AOSGC (D2) post within CSB to assume duty as Administrative Assistant to SCS (AA/SCS). The redeployment was made possible by combining the original duties of the AOSGC post (in appointments matters) with those of another supernumerary AOSGC posts (which has been created up to end 2003 to oversee the preparatory work for the implementation of the new Civil Service Provident Fund (CSPF)).

11. We now propose to formalise the arrangement by creating an AOSGC/non-civil service position at D2-equivalent post upon the incorporation of OLA into CSB to accommodate AA/SCS. The job description of the AA/SCS post is at **Enclosure 3**. Upon creation of the AA/SCS post, the permanent AOSGC post redeployed so far to undertake the duty of AA/SCS may then be released to take up its original duties as well as the duties of the supernumerary AOSGC post mentioned above. The supernumerary AOSGC post can also be deleted concurrently in advance of its expiry on 31 December 2003.

Proposed structure of the new CSB

12. The proposed new organisation chart of CSB following the proposed incorporation of OLA into CSB on 1 July 2003 is at **Enclosure 4**. There will be a net deletion of one directorate post arising from the deletion of one AOSGB (D3) post and one CCI (D1) post and the creation of one AOSGC (D2)/non-civil service

position at D2-equivalent post. In addition, a supernumerary AOSGC (D2) post will also be deleted on 1 July 2003 in advance of its expiry on 31 December 2003. The total directorate establishment of CSB and OLA will then be reduced from 21 to 19 posts.

Staff consultation

13. Members of the CLO, I(SI) and Calligraphist Grades and other staff representatives are being consulted on the proposed incorporation of OLA into CSB. They have put forward a number of suggestions on nomenclature and details of implementation which we will further study.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

14. The proposed changes involving directorate posts will bring about the following net savings in notional annual salary cost at mid-point –

	<u>\$</u>	<u>No. of posts</u>
Deletion of posts		
AOSGB (D3)	1,585,680	1
CCI (D1)	1,217,520	1
Less New permanent post		
AOSGC (D2)/non-civil service position at D2-equivalent	<u>1,448,040</u>	<u>1</u>
Net savings	<u>1,355,160</u>	<u>1</u>

The net savings in full annual average staff cost, including salaries and staff on cost, is about \$2.15m. In addition there will be an one-off saving of \$1.24m (in full annual average staff cost) arising from the deletion of a supernumerary AOSGC post six months in advance.

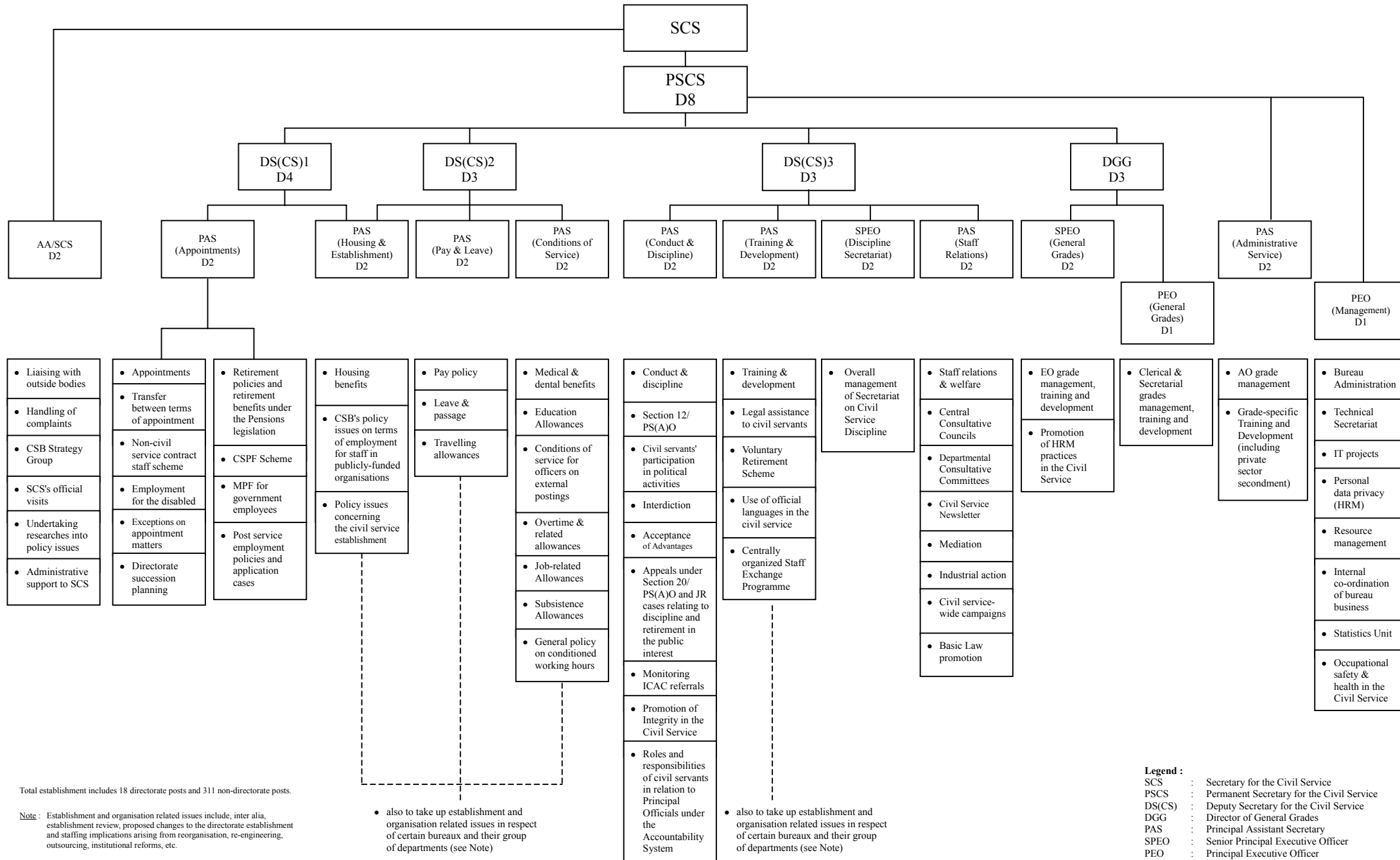
15. In addition, following rationalisation of service delivery, it is anticipated there will be an additional saving of \$10.57m (in full annual average staff cost) arising from the deletion of 23 non-directorate posts in OLA. The total savings in full annual average staff cost of the proposal may amount to \$12.72m.

WAY FORWARD

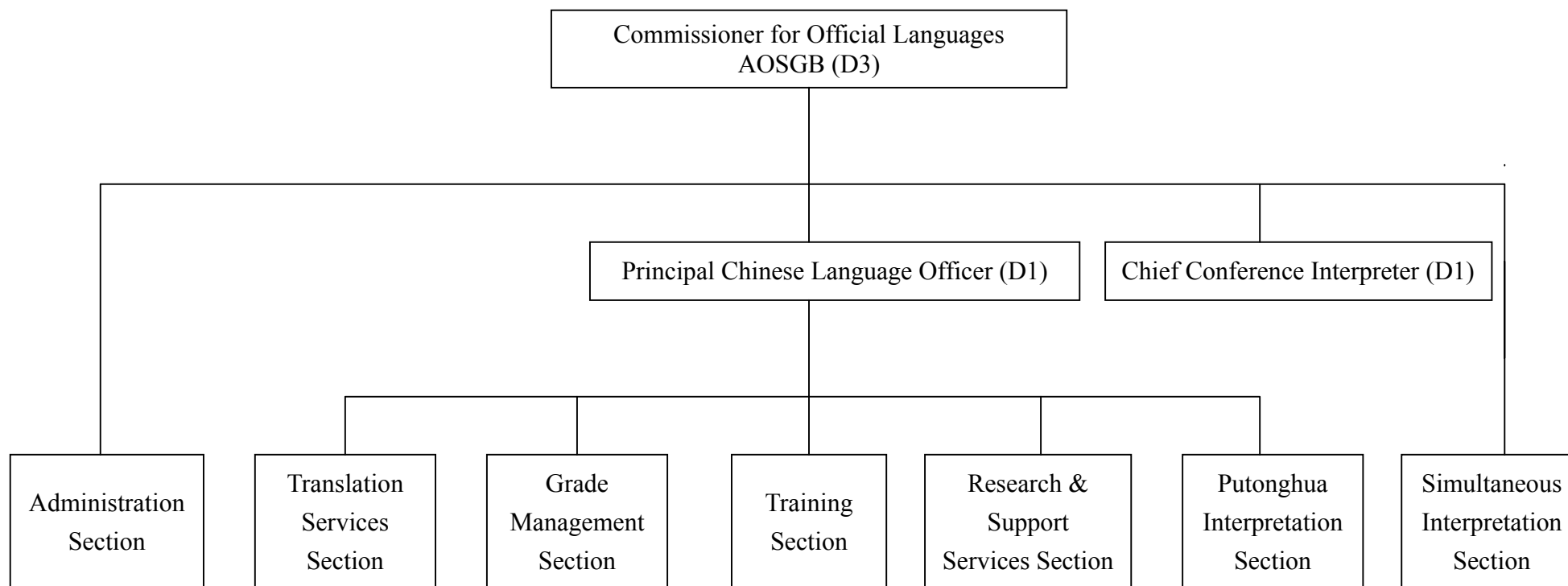
16. We intend to seek endorsement from the Legislative Council Establishment Subcommittee on 16 April 2003 and subsequently the Finance Committee on 16 May 2003 with a view to implementing the proposal on 1 July 2003.

Civil Service Bureau
March 2003

Existing Organisation Chart of Civil Service Bureau



Existing Organisation Chart of the Official Languages Agency, (OLA)



Note: Total establishment includes 3 directorate posts and 217 non-directorate posts

Job Description

**Administrative Assistant to the
Secretary for the Civil Service**

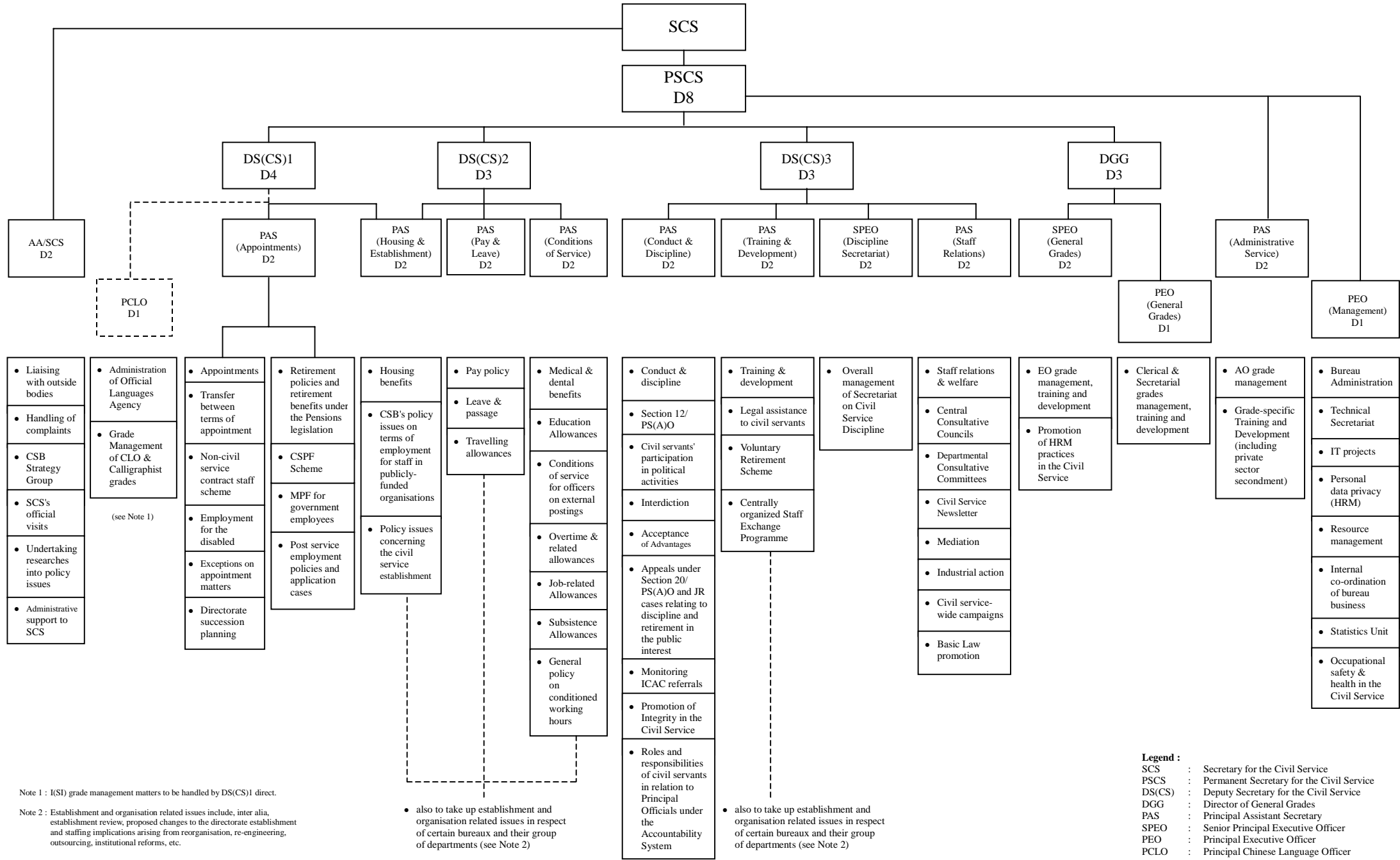
Rank : Administrative Officer Staff Grade C (D2)/
non-civil service position at D2-equivalent

Responsible to : Secretary for the Civil Service (SCS)

Main Duties and Responsibilities –

1. provide general administrative support to SCS;
2. coordinate submissions to SCS;
3. coordinate and handle replies to correspondence, including complaints, addressed to SCS;
4. in co-ordination with the Press Secretary to SCS, prepare speeches and statements to be delivered by SCS;
5. plan SCS's programme of official visits and duty trips, both locally and overseas, coordinate the preparation of briefs for such visits and follow-up action as required;
6. plan meetings on various subjects, prepare briefs, and service meetings chaired by SCS; and
7. perform such other administrative duties as SCS may from time to time direct.

**Proposed Organisation Chart of Civil Service Bureau
(w.e.f. 1 July 2003)**



Note 1 : (IS) grade management matters to be handled by DS(CS)1 direct.

Note 2 : Establishment and organisation related issues include, inter alia, establishment review, proposed changes to the directorate establishment and staffing implications arising from reorganisation, re-engineering, outsourcing, institutional reforms, etc.

• also to take up establishment and organisation related issues in respect of certain bureaux and their group of departments (see Note 2)

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- Legend :**
- SCS : Secretary for the Civil Service
 - PSCS : Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service
 - DS(CS) : Deputy Secretary for the Civil Service
 - DGG : Director of General Grades
 - PAS : Principal Assistant Secretary
 - SPEO : Senior Principal Executive Officer
 - PEO : Principal Executive Officer
 - PCLO : Principal Chinese Language Officer