

**Replies to supplementary questions raised by Finance Committee Members in
examining the Estimates of Expenditure 2007-08**

**Director of Bureau : Secretary for the Civil Service
Session No. : 1**

Reply Serial No.	Question Serial No.	Name of Member	Head	Programme
S-CSB01	S016	KWONG Chi-kin	143	Civil Service Training and Development
S-CSB02	S003	WONG Kwok-hing	143	Human Resource Management
S-CSB03	S004	WONG Kwok-hing	143	Human Resource Management
S-CSB04	S006	WONG Kwok-hing	143	Human Resource Management
S-CSB05	S014	WONG Kwok-hing	143	Human Resource Management
S-CSB06	S015	WONG Kwok-hing	143	Human Resource Management

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION**

S-CSB01

Question Serial No.

S016

Head: 143 – Government Secretariat: Civil Service Bureau Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (4) Civil Service Training and Development

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service

Director of Bureau: Secretary for the Civil Service

Question:

According to the reply under serial no. CSB006 0862, the civil service exchange programme with the Mainland only provides about 20 places each year. All bureaux and departments can participate and nominate suitable staff members to the programme. Will the Administration inform this Committee of the following:

1. Has the Government run any special exchange programmes for departments responsible for policy areas, such as food safety inspection or control and management of infectious diseases, where there is an urgent need for better communication with mainland departments due to economic developments?
2. If yes, what are the details and related expenses? If not, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon. KWONG Chi-kin

Reply:

- 1) The staff exchange programme run by the Civil Service Bureau is a general exchange programme that aims to help HKSAR civil servants widen their exposure, and deepen their understanding of the mainland systems and the operation of their counterparts. It covers a wide range of general topics, from health and welfare, environmental protection, infrastructure development, traffic management, city planning, port administration, landscape architecture, to management and training of civil servants, trade and information technology. On the other hand, individual departments/bureaux organize their own special staff exchange programmes, meetings, conferences, visits, etc. with their Mainland counterparts to tackle specific issues, special projects or urgent matters under their policy areas as and when appropriate.
- 2) Under the exchange programme run by the Civil Service Bureau, we have so far received 6 Mainland officials relating to the portfolio of food safety inspection or control and management of infectious diseases. They came from Beijing, Hangzhou, Guangzhou and Shenzhen. They were attached to our Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health and the Centre for Food Safety of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department. A medical consultant from the Centre for Health Protection had also been attached to the Beijing Municipal Health Bureau. In accordance with the exchange agreements, the participating officers' salaries, employee benefits and travel expenses were paid by the home organizations. The direct expenditure for the above exchange was about \$35,000, which included mainly the traveling expenses and study grant for our HKSAR participant.

Signature _____

Name in block letters Andrew H Y WONG

Post Title Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service

Date 22 March 2007

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

S-CSB02

Question Serial No.

S003

Head: 143 - Government Secretariat: Civil Service Bureau Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (2) Human Resource Management

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service

Director of Bureau: Secretary for the Civil Service

Question:

As Reply CSB003 to Question 0857 has indicated, the Government aims to provide a family-friendly working environment and the vast majority of civil servants are provided with full-pay annual leave, ranging from 22 to 40.5 days.

Should the Government take the lead by granting paid paternity leave in the civil service? Has the Government assessed the feasibility and time-table of implementing paid paternity leave in the civil service? If yes, what are the details?

Asked by: Hon. WONG Kwok-hing

Reply:

The vast majority of civil servants under Government's employment are provided with full-pay annual leave ranging from 22 to 40.5 days, depending on their ranks, terms of appointment and years of service. Annual leave is provided for the purpose of recuperation from the pressure of work, betterment of health and attending to personal matters. To allow more flexibility in taking leave, the annual leave of civil servants can be accumulated up to a stipulated ceiling. Our record indicates that most civil servants have indeed accumulated a considerable balance of untaken leave which can be drawn for meeting personal needs that may arise during the year, including taking care of family members. At present, we have no plan to provide paid paternity leave in addition to the existing annual leave benefits of civil servants.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____

Andrew H Y WONG

Post Title _____

Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service

Date _____

21 March 2007

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

S-CSB03

Question Serial No.

S004

Head: 143 - Government Secretariat: Civil Service Bureau Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (2) Human Resource Management

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service

Director of Bureau: Secretary for the Civil Service

Question:

As Reply CSB003 to Question 0857 has indicated, the Government aims to provide a family-friendly working environment and the vast majority of civil servants are provided with full-pay annual leave, ranging from 22 to 40.5 days.

At present, there are over 160 000 civil servants. Among them, how many are of marriageable age and how many are of childbearing age? How many of them are male and how many of them are female?

Asked by: Hon. WONG Kwok-hing

Reply:

The number of civil servants by sex and age group is shown in the following table:

Age	Male	Female
18 – 24	1 707	476
25 – 34	18 075	9 472
35 – 44	32 101	19 111
45 – 54	41 209	19 600
55 and above	8 582	3 146

(as at 28.2.2007)

Since there are no commonly accepted definitions of “marriageable age” and “childbearing age”, we are unable to provide the requested information with respect to these two aspects.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____

Andrew H Y WONG

Post Title _____

Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service

Date _____

22 March 2007

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION**

S-CSB04

S006

Head: 143 - Government Secretariat: Civil Service Bureau Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (2) Human Resource Management

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service

Director of Bureau: Secretary for the Civil Service

Question: As indicated in Reply CSB002 to Question 0856, Heads of Departments/Grades can resume open recruitment of civil servants based on operational needs from 1 April 2007. Would the Administration tell us

- (a) whether their relevant working experience will be considered when non-civil service contract (NCSC) staff apply for the posts?
- (b) whether it is possible to put in place an open, fair and impartial marking scheme to assess and consider the relevant working experience of candidates from NCSC staff?
- (c) what percentage of the relevant working experience of candidates from NCSC staff will be under the marking scheme if it has been put in place?

Asked by: Hon. WONG Kwok-hing

Reply:

- (a) The entry requirements for civil service grades and ranks are normally set with reference to academic or professional qualifications, technical skills, working experience, language proficiency and other qualities or attributes as required on the basis of the operational need of the grades/ranks concerned. While all candidates are assessed on the basis of their overall merits in an open recruitment exercise, generally speaking, NCSC staff who meet the basic entry requirements and have relevant working experience in the Government may enjoy a competitive edge over other candidates in the selection process if their experience is relevant to the post being applied.
- (b)&(c) Appointments to the Civil Service are based on the principle of open and fair competition. As explained above, the entry requirements for each grade/rank are set on the basis of the operational need of the grade/rank concerned. All applicants must meet the basic entry requirements in order to be considered for appointment. Applicants who meet the basic entry requirements are required to go through a competitive selection process, including interviews and written examinations (as necessary). The appointment authority would, having regard to the job requirements, determine assessment standards and weights given to individual qualities, and select candidates on the basis of their ability, working experience and performance in written examinations and interviews, etc.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

Andrew H Y WONG

Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service

22 March 2007

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION**

S-CSB05

S014

Head: 143 - Government Secretariat: Civil Service Bureau Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (2) Human Resource Management

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service

Director of Bureau: Secretary for the Civil Service

Question:

According to the reply under serial no. CSB002 0856, existing vacancies will be filled only when there are operational needs and alternative modes of service delivery (e.g. outsourcing) are considered unfeasible. Will the administration advise on the following:

In cases where duties of existing vacancies have already been taken up by non-civil service contract (NCSC) staff, will CSB still consider exploring the feasibility of outsourcing first before considering filling the vacancies?

Asked by: Hon. WONG Kwok-hing

Reply:

It is our established policy that the Government should use the private sector to deliver public services where appropriate, and this is in keeping with our objective of maintaining a small and efficient government, containing the size of the civil service and promoting business opportunities and jobs in the private sector. If a bureau/department considers that a particular service is appropriate to be delivered by the private sector, irrespective of whether or not NCSC staff are being engaged to deliver the service, the bureau/department concerned should look into such mode of service delivery first before considering filling the vacancies.

Signature _____

Name in block letters Andrew H Y WONG

Post Title Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service

Date 22 March 2007

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION**

S-CSB06

S015

Head: 143 - Government Secretariat: Civil Service Bureau Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (2) Human Resource Management

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service

Director of Bureau: Secretary for the Civil Service

Question:

According to the reply under serial no. CSB002 0856, existing vacancies will be filled only when there are operational needs and alternative modes of service delivery (e.g. outsourcing) are considered unfeasible. Will the administration advise on the following:

What are the criteria for outsourcing or filling of vacancies? What is the difference in expenditure incurred by outsourcing and filling of vacancies? Apart from the difference in expenditure, what are the other criteria for outsourcing?

Asked by: Hon. WONG Kwok-hing

Reply:

In considering whether civil service vacancies should be filled, bureaux/departments (B/Ds) will have regard to whether there are operational needs to fill the vacancies and whether alternative modes of service delivery (including outsourcing) are considered unfeasible. In assessing the feasibility to outsource a particular public service to the private sector, B/Ds need to consider a range of factors including the availability of qualified and experienced private sector service providers, whether outsourcing will bring about effective use of government resources and value for money, etc. Given the large number and diversity of outsourcing contracts, we do not have readily available statistics concerning difference in expenditure incurred by outsourcing and filling of vacancies. Generally speaking, outsourcing enables the Administration to get services of equal or better quality at lower cost.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____

Andrew H Y WONG

Post Title _____

Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service

Date _____

21 March 2007