

Legislative Council Panel on Public Service

**Resumption of open recruitment for grades included
in the Second Voluntary Retirement Scheme**

Purpose

This paper outlines the arrangements in relation to resumption of open recruitment for grades included in the Second Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VR II).

Background

2. In 2003, the Government set the target to reduce the civil service establishment to around 160 000 by the end of 2006-07. Aside from natural wastage, the target was met through the implementation of the VR II Scheme, imposition of a general civil service open recruitment freeze, and continuous efforts by bureaux/departments (B/Ds) to streamline and re-engineer their operations and to explore alternative modes of service delivery.

3. The VR II Scheme was launched in March 2003 and covered a total of 229 designated grades with identified or anticipated surplus staff. About 5 300 civil servants were approved to retire under the Scheme. All of them have retired and a corresponding number of posts have been deleted. To safeguard the integrity of the Scheme, a five-year open recruitment freeze has been imposed on the VR II grades from March 2003.

4. To meet new service needs that were not foreseen when the VR II Scheme was launched and to alleviate the manpower shortage problem in certain VR grades arising from unexpected wastage, we have allowed, since April 2006, a very limited number of VR grades to resume open recruitment before the expiry of the five-year open recruitment freeze. To ensure that only the most justified cases would be granted exemption, Heads of Department/Grade (HoDs/HoGs) have to apply to a Panel co-chaired by the

Chief Secretary and the Financial Secretary with the Secretary for the Civil Service as member (the CS/FS Panel). We informed Members in March 2007 that the CS/FS Panel had given approval for 15 VR grades to conduct open recruitment to fill a total of 688 vacancies in 2006-07 and 2007-08.

Lifting of open recruitment freeze for VR II grades

5. We have recently conducted a review on the recruitment need of all the VR grades. To enable B/Ds to meet their service needs, and to facilitate the phasing out of Non-Civil Service Contract (NCSC) positions identified to be replaced by civil service posts in the special review we conducted jointly with B/Ds in 2006, we have decided not to extend the open recruitment freeze imposed on VR II grades after its scheduled expiry on 21 March 2008.

6. Taking into account the lead time of an open recruitment exercise and to facilitate timely intake of new recruits by B/Ds, we informed B/Ds in July 2007 that they can initiate open recruitment process for VR grades under their management following prevailing procedures and regulations, including the posting of vacancy advertisements. To maintain the integrity of the VR II Scheme, no offer of appointment should be made before the scheduled expiry of the open recruitment freeze. B/Ds seeking to fill vacancies in VR II grades through open recruitment before that date would need to get the prior approval of the CS/FS Panel in accordance with established procedures.

7. In keeping with our policy to contain the size of the civil service, we have reminded HoDs/HoGs that, before initiating an open recruitment exercise, they have to be satisfied that there is an operational need to fill the vacancies concerned, that the work involved cannot be undertaken by existing staff through re-deployment, and that alternative modes of service delivery are not feasible.

8. In the course of the review, we noted that there are some VR grades with existing/anticipated surplus staff, or are in a state of obsolescence, or where new intakes normally come from in-service recruitment, etc. A total of 76 such grades have been identified and are set out in the **Annex**. For these grades, the HoDs/HoGs concerned may conduct in-service recruitment if they consider there is an operational need to fill any existing vacancies. If they

consider the conduct of open recruitment is necessary, they may do so with the prior agreement of the Civil Service Bureau (CSB). In deciding whether or not to allow open recruitment for these grades, CSB will consider a host of factors, including whether there will be surplus staff in the grade in the next five years, whether the operational need to fill the vacancies is justified, whether the operational need must be met by civil servants, whether re-deployment of staff from other grades or alternative modes of service delivery is feasible, whether in-service recruitment may identify sufficient suitable candidates, etc. CSB will keep these grades under regular review to take account of changing circumstances.

Advice sought

9. Members are invited to note the arrangements in relation to the lifting of open recruitment freeze for VR II grades.

Civil Service Bureau
December 2007

List of Controlled Grades

1.	Aeronautical Communications Officer	39.	Launch Master
2.	Analyst/Programmer	40.	Launch Mechanic
3.	Archivist	41.	Law Translation Officer
4.	Artisan	42.	Leading Sewerman
5.	Calligraphist	43.	Machine Operator
6.	Car Park Attendant I	44.	Midwife
7.	Car Park Attendant II	45.	Office Assistant
8.	Cartographer	46.	Orthoptist
9.	Certificated Master/Mistress	47.	Personal Secretary
10.	Chauffeur	48.	Photographer
11.	Clerical Assistant	49.	Photoprinter
12.	Clerical Officer	50.	Police Communications Assistant
13.	Communications Controller	51.	Police Communications Computer Operator
14.	Computer Operator	52.	Primary School Master/Mistress
15.	Confidential Assistant	53.	Programme Officer
16.	Cook	54.	Projectionist
17.	Cultural Services Assistant	55.	Proof Reader
18.	Data Processor	56.	Property Attendant
19.	Dental Inspector	57.	Quarry Manager
20.	Domestic Servant	58.	Shift Charge Engineer
21.	Drain Chargeman	59.	Shipping Safety Officer
22.	Draughtsman	60.	Special Driver
23.	Driving Instructor	61.	Supervisor of Typing Services
24.	Education Assistant	62.	Supplies Assistant
25.	Education Officer	63.	Supplies Attendant
26.	Enrolled Nurse	64.	Tailor
27.	Explosives Supervisor	65.	Telephone Operator
28.	Fireman (Workshop)	66.	Timekeeper/Checker
29.	Forest Guard	67.	Tracer
30.	Ganger	68.	Typist
31.	Gardener	69.	Valuation Assistant
32.	Head Property Attendant	70.	Valuation Referencer
33.	Hospital Foreman	71.	Ward Attendant
34.	Hostel Manager/Manageress	72.	Welfare Worker
35.	Inoculator	73.	Workman I
36.	Inspector (Non-Graduate)	74.	Workman II
37.	Laboratory Assistant	75.	Workshop Attendant
38.	Laboratory Technician	76.	Workshop Instructor