

For information

## **Legislative Council Panel on Public Service**

### **Promotion System of the Civil Service**

#### **Purpose**

This paper provides information on the promotion system of the Civil Service.

#### **Guiding Principles**

2. The Civil Service comprises different grades according to job categories and each grade normally comprises different ranks according to job levels. The civil service appointment system provides the framework of how civil service posts in different grades and ranks should normally be filled, through either recruitment or promotion.

3. The guiding principle on civil service appointment, including recruitment and promotion, is to select qualified and suitable persons through an open, fair and competitive process. Such principle is important in ensuring that civil service posts are filled by candidates of merit, proven ability and integrity. The appointment system also provides pathways or potential avenues for staff to aspire for higher ranks, so as to maintain a clear and stable career development structure that would facilitate the recruitment and retention of quality staff.

4. Promotion is the process of selecting officers in a grade for advancement and filling higher rank positions with persons of the right qualities and competencies. Vacancies in promotion ranks of a civil service grade are normally filled by promoting suitable officers from the immediate lower rank of the same grade. The Civil Service Bureau attaches great importance to maintaining an effective promotion system that selects the most suitable and meritorious candidates through a fair and open process. There are established rules and guidelines governing the proper conduct of promotion exercises to ensure impartiality and fairness.

## **Promotion System and Procedures**

5. Selection for promotion is based on objective criteria, including performance, character, ability, experience and qualifications prescribed of the promotion rank (if any). The objective is to select the most meritorious officers who are able and ready to perform the more demanding duties in a higher rank.

6. Selection for promotion is conducted by promotion boards comprising at least three officers (excluding the secretary) of appropriate seniority who are generally familiar with the duties and responsibilities of the promotion rank. To ensure transparency, eligible candidates are notified of the holding of a promotion exercise and the eligibility criteria, including any qualifications and/or experience required. The promotion board may devise shortlisting criteria if necessary. It will select meritorious officers for filling higher rank posts by assessing the relative merits of all eligible officers with respect to the objective criteria set, including performance, character, ability, experience and qualifications.

7. Where an officer is considered capable and suitable in all respects to perform the duties in the higher rank immediately, he may be recommended for substantive promotion. On the other hand, where an officer is not yet ready for immediate promotion or is yet to be tested on his/her abilities to perform duties in the higher rank, he/she may be recommended for an acting appointment in the higher rank.

## **Public Service Commission (PSC)**

8. Promotion to relevant ranks at middle and senior levels is subject to the advice of PSC. The Commission, which is set up under the PSC Ordinance (Cap. 93), is an independent statutory body responsible for advising the Chief Executive on appointment, promotion and discipline matters of the Civil Service.

9. In scrutinising promotion submissions from bureaux/departments (B/Ds), PSC will examine whether the claims of all eligible officers are fully considered on an equal basis and the most meritorious and deserving officers are selected on the basis of merit and performance. PSC may raise questions where necessary to ensure that the recommendations are sound and the related process is carried out fairly and thoroughly. B/Ds are required to clarify or justify their recommendations in response to PSC's observations and queries.

In some cases, PSC is satisfied with the propriety of the recommendations after seeking further clarifications and additional justifications whilst in others, the B/Ds concerned have modified their recommendations in the light of PSC's comments.

**Advice sought**

10. Members are invited to note the above for information.

Civil Service Bureau  
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