



Attractiveness of civil service jobs

Figure 1 – Number of civil servants

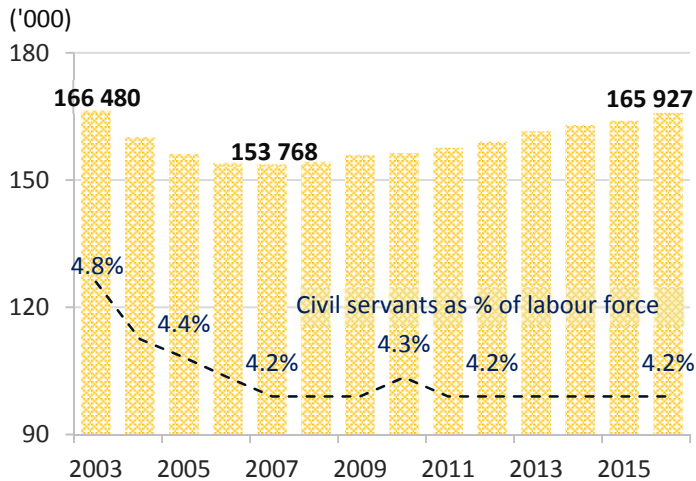


Figure 2 – Number of civil service vacancies

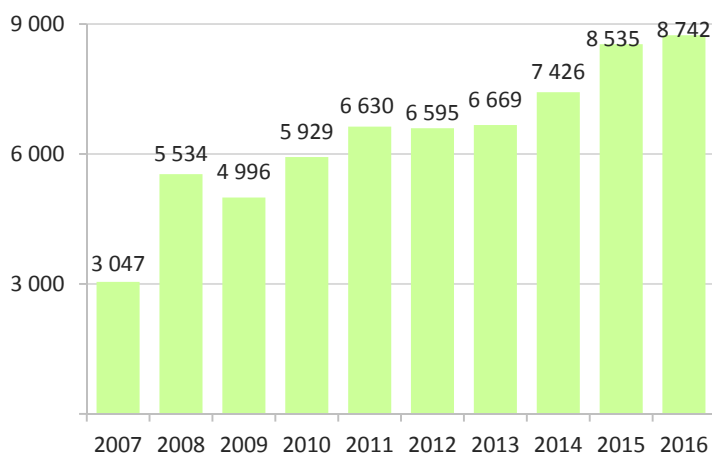
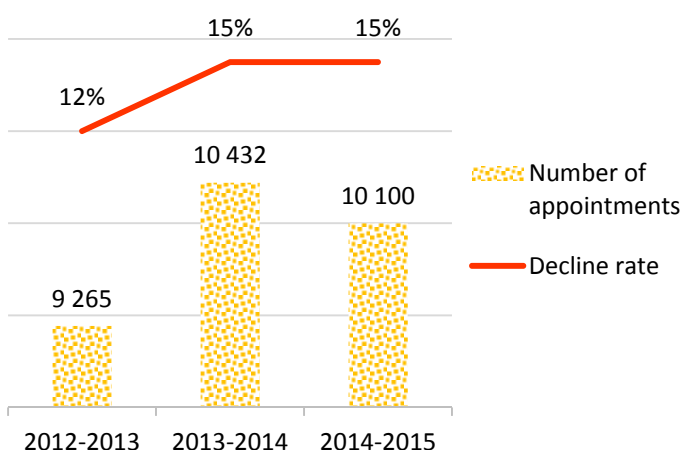


Figure 3 – Number of appointments and decline rate of appointments



Highlights

- In Hong Kong, the number of civil servants has grown steadily since 2007 (**Figure 1**). This was consequential to, among other things, the complete fade-out of open recruitment freezes that were imposed during 2003-2007, when the Government sought to reduce operating expenditure for addressing the budget deficits. As at end-September 2016, the number of serving civil servants stood at 165 927, representing an increase of 7.9% over September 2007 and accounting for 4.2% of the total labour force.
- Notwithstanding the increase in the number of civil servants recruited, unfilled job openings had also been on the increase over the past decade or so. According to the Census and Statistics Department, the number of civil service vacancies nearly tripled between the period of September 2007 and September 2016 (**Figure 2**). These vacancies excluded those vacancies arisen from posts pending deletion and posts held by temporary staff or reserved for other staff. In comparison, job vacancies in the private sector increased by a mere 32.6% over the same period.
- Against the increased number of job vacancies in civil service, the study of the recruitment and resignation situation of civil servants should help reflect whether the civil service jobs remains attractive, particularly the civil service has been facing increasing pressure with growing public demand for government services in both quantity and quality.
- According to the latest figure available, about 10 100 appointments were made in 2014-2015 and the decline rate was 15% (**Figure 3**). According to the feedback survey conducted by the Civil Service Bureau, 29% of respondents turned down the job offers because they had remained in their current job and another 6% decided to take up a job in the private sector.

Figure 4 – Number of candidates of civil service examinations for appointment purpose

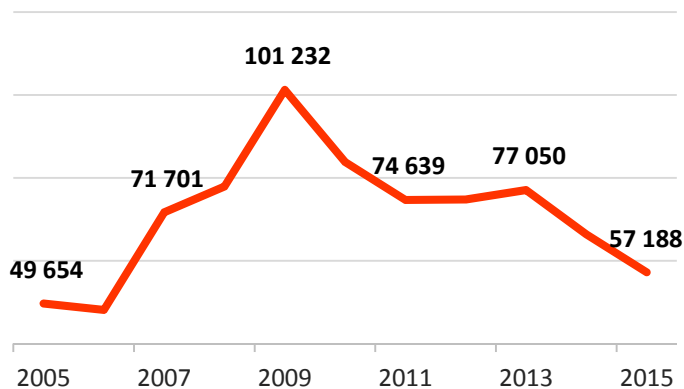


Figure 5 – Retirees and resignees as a percentage of number of civil servants

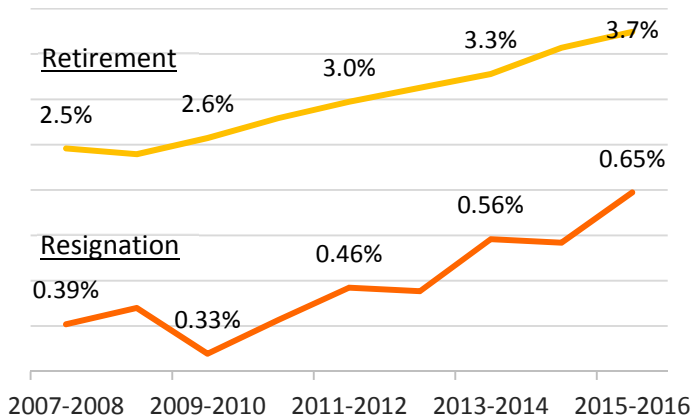
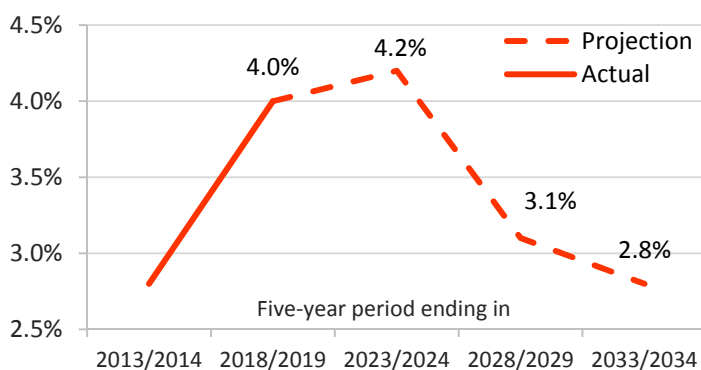


Figure 6 – Projection on civil servants retiring (as a percentage of number of civil servants)



Highlights

- Another indicator for the attractiveness of civil service jobs is the number of candidates sitting for the Common Recruitment Examination ("CRE") and other grade-specific recruitment examinations. A pass in the CRE is a prerequisite for all civil service posts at degree or professional level. In recent years, the number of exam candidates was generally on the decline, falling to 57 188 in 2015 from a peak of 101 232 in 2009 (**Figure 4**). In 2009, the Hong Kong economy contracted by 2.5% and the resulting reduced job opportunities in the private sector might have attracted more people to sit for the examinations.
- The resignation rate of civil servants has been on the increase recently, from 0.33% in 2009-2010 to 0.65% in 2015-2016 (**Figure 5**). While resignation accounts only for a small number of departure of civil servants, over half of the resignees left during their probation period and about one-third of them had taken jobs in the private sector.
- Looking forward, the retirement of civil servants adds to the concern over the strength of the civil service in the immediate years ahead. Retirement is the primary reason for departure of civil servants from the civil service, and the number of retirees as a percentage of the number of civil servants has been on the increase in recent years (**Figure 5**). According to the Government's projection, such a trend is expected to continue until the mid-2020s (**Figure 6**).

Data sources: Latest figures from the Civil Service Bureau and the Census and Statistics Department.

Research Office
Information Services Division
Legislative Council Secretariat
23 December 2016
Tel: 2871 2146

Statistical Highlights are compiled for Members and Committees of the Legislative Council. They are not legal or other professional advice and shall not be relied on as such. Statistical Highlights are subject to copyright owned by The Legislative Council Commission (The Commission). The Commission permits accurate reproduction of Statistical Highlights for non-commercial use in a manner not adversely affecting the Legislative Council, provided that acknowledgement is made stating the Research Office of the Legislative Council Secretariat as the source and one copy of the reproduction is sent to the Legislative Council Library. The paper number of this issue of Statistical Highlights is ISSH16/16-17.