

**Replies to supplementary questions raised by Finance Committee Members in
examining the Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09**

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

Reply Serial No.	Question Serial No.	Name of Member	Head	Programme
S-CSB01	S012	LAU Wai-hing, Emily	143	Civil Service Training and Development
S-CSB02	SV001	TAM Yiu-chung	143	
S-CSB03	S001	LAM Wai-keung, Daniel	46	General Expenses of the Civil Service
S-CSB04	S002	LAM Wai-keung, Daniel	46	General Expenses of the Civil Service
S-CSB05	S003	LAM Wai-keung, Daniel	46	General Expenses of the Civil Service
S-CSB06	S004	LAM Wai-keung, Daniel	46	General Expenses of the Civil Service
S-CSB07	S005	LAM Wai-keung, Daniel	46	General Expenses of the Civil Service
S-CSB08	S006	WONG Kwok-hing	46	General Expenses of the Civil Service
S-CSB09	S007	WONG Kwok-hing	46	General Expenses of the Civil Service
S-CSB10	S009	WONG Kwok-hing	46	General Expenses of the Civil Service
S-CSB11	S010	WONG Kwok-hing	46	General Expenses of the Civil Service
S-CSB12	S011	WONG Kwok-hing	46	General Expenses of the Civil Service
S-CSB13	S013	WONG Kwok-hing	46	General Expenses of the Civil Service

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

Reply Serial No.

S-CSB01

Question Serial No.

S012

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:

In 2008-09, \$8.5m will be deployed for national studies and Basic Law Training. National studies take the form of residential courses in the Mainland, theme-based visits to the Mainland, local seminars, etc. Have arrangements been made to ensure that the civil servants under training are presented with independent and objective analysis instead of receiving information from one single source? If so, what are the details? If not, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon. LAU Wai-hing, Emily

Reply:

We provide different modes of national studies programmes and Basic Law training to enable civil servants to acquire knowledge of national affairs and the Basic Law from different perspectives. These include courses and thematic study tours in the Mainland, local courses and seminars, as well as e-learning.

For Mainland residential courses and thematic study tours, apart from exchanging views with officials, the trainees will have the opportunities to hold discussion with university academics, visit local enterprises and residents, and meet and exchange with other trainees/students of the organising institutions. After classes, the trainees will also have the opportunities to experience the local culture and appreciate the lives of the general public.

For local thematic seminars, we will invite different speakers including local and Mainland academics and officials. We also encourage our trainees to visit the National Studies Portal especially created for civil servants. The Portal hosts reference materials sourced from different channels and facilitates civil servants to consider and analyse national affairs and topical issues from different perspectives. The areas covered by the Portal include the political, economic, legal and social aspects of the Mainland and Mainland's major policies, etc.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____

Andrew H Y WONG

Post Title _____

Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service

Date _____

3 April 2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

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

Reply Serial No.

S-CSB02

Question Serial No.

SV001

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

Programme:

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service

Director of Bureau: Secretary for the Civil Service

Question:

At the request of the Chairman, the Administration was asked to provide following information:

- (a) the number of non-civil service contract (NCSC) positions which have been converted into civil service posts as at end of October 2007;
- (b) the number of NCSC staff affected by the conversion who were able to join the civil service through open recruitment;
- (c) the number of NCSC staff affected by the conversion who were offered other NCSC positions in the civil service;
- (d) the number of NCSC staff affected by the conversion who resigned from the civil service before completion of the contract, or did not seek a renewal of contract;
- (e) the number of NCSC staff affected by the conversion who were not offered a new contract because of under-performance; and
- (f) the number of NCSC staff affected by the conversion who failed in the open recruitment exercise for the converted posts.

Asked by: Hon. TAM Yiu-chung

Reply:

- (a) Of the some 4 000 NCSC positions identified to be replaced by civil service posts, 930 were phased out as at end October 2007;
- (b) Among them, some 480 (about 51%) were selected for appointment as civil servants in comparable civil service ranks through open recruitment;
- (c) Some 30 (about 3%) were accommodated in other NCSC positions;
- (d)&(e) Some 360 (about 39%) left the Government on their own accord (e.g. resignation, declining contract renewal) or on account of unsatisfactory performance;

(f) Some 20 (about 3%) were not selected for civil service appointment and they left the Government upon contract expiry.

The remaining some 40 (about 4%) did not apply for the concerned civil service posts and they left the Government upon contract expiry.

Signature _____

Name in block letters Andrew H Y WONG

Post Title Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service

Date 8 April 2008

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

Reply Serial No.

S-CSB03

Question Serial No.

S001

Head: 46 – General Expenses of the Civil Service

Subhead (No. & title): 024 Staff relief
and welfare

Programme: General Expenses of the Civil Service

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service

Director of Bureau: Secretary for the Civil Service

Question:

Please advise why there was a substantial increase of provision for staff relief and welfare in the 2007-08 revised estimate over the 2006-07 actual expenditure.

Asked by: Hon. LAM Wai-keung, Daniel

Reply:

The revised estimate of \$2,475,000 for 2007-08 under Subhead 024 Staff relief and welfare is for the relief and welfare of eligible officers, the purchase of retirement souvenirs, and the purchase of commemorative awards for long and meritorious service. The increase of \$533,000 (27%) over the actual expenditure of \$1,942,000 for 2006-07 is mainly due to an anticipated increase of 37% in the cost of 18k gold pins for eligible officers with 30 years of meritorious service (from an average of \$530 per unit in 2006-07 to an average of \$728 per unit in 2007-08) and an anticipated slight increase in the number of recipients of the gold pins (from 2 020 to 2 180 staff members with 30 years of meritorious service).

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____

Andrew H Y WONG

Post Title _____

Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service

Date _____

7 April 2008

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

Reply Serial No.

S-CSB04

Question Serial No.

S002

Head: 46 – General Expenses of the Civil Service

Subhead (No. & title): 024 Staff relief
and welfare

Programme: General Expenses of the Civil Service

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service

Director of Bureau: Secretary for the Civil Service

Question:

What are the reasons for the substantial increase of provision for staff relief and welfare in the estimate of 2008-09 over the revised estimate for 2007-08?

Asked by: Hon. LAM Wai-keung, Daniel

Reply:

The estimate of \$3,218,000 for 2008-09 under Subhead 024 Staff relief and welfare is for the relief and welfare of eligible officers, the purchase of retirement souvenirs, and the purchase of commemorative awards for long and meritorious service. The increase of \$743,000 (30%) over the revised estimate of \$2,475,000 for 2007-08 is mainly due to an anticipated increase of 10% in the cost of 18k gold pins for eligible officers with 30 years of meritorious service (from an average of \$728 per unit in 2007-08 to \$803 per unit) and an anticipated increase of 38% in the number of recipients of the gold pins (from 2 180 to 3 000 staff members with 30 years of meritorious service), and is partly offset by slight decrease in the estimates for other items under this Subhead.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____

Andrew H Y WONG

Post Title _____

Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service

Date _____

7 April 2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

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

Reply Serial No.

S-CSB05

Question Serial No.

S003

Head: 46 – General Expenses of the Civil Service Subhead (No. & title): 013 Personal allowances

Programme: General Expenses of the Civil Service

Controlling Officer: Director of Accounting Services

Director of Bureau: Secretary for the Civil Service

Question:

Please inform this Committee of the reason why the revised estimate for personal allowances in 2007-08 is lower than the approved estimate for the same year.

Asked by: Hon. LAM Wai-keung, Daniel

Reply:

The decrease in the 2007-08 revised estimate of personal allowances is mainly due to a decrease in the expected number of recipients of overseas education allowance.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____

Mrs Lucia LI

Post Title _____

Director of Accounting Services

Date _____

7 April 2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

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

Reply Serial No.

S-CSB06

Question Serial No.

S004

Head: 46 – General Expenses of the Civil Service Subhead (No. & title): 013 Personal allowances

Programme: General Expenses of the Civil Service

Controlling Officer: Director of Accounting Services

Director of Bureau: Secretary for the Civil Service

Question:

What special reasons are there for the substantial increase in the estimated personal allowances for 2008-09 over the revised estimate for 2007-08?

Asked by: Hon. LAM Wai-keung, Daniel

Reply:

The increase in the 2008-09 estimate of personal allowances is mainly due to a projected increase in the number of recipients of local education allowance (LEA) and overseas education allowance. Besides, there has been an increase in the exchange rate of pound sterling and the number of recipients claiming higher rates of LEA is projected to increase.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____

Mrs Lucia LI

Post Title _____

Director of Accounting Services

Date _____

7 April 2008

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

Reply Serial No.

S-CSB07

Question Serial No.

S005

Head: 46 – General Expenses of the Civil Service Subhead (No. & title): 011 Civil service examinations

Programme: General Expenses of the Civil Service

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service

Director of Bureau: Secretary for the Civil Service

Question:

Please give the reasons for the substantial increase in the expense for civil service examinations in the revised estimate when compared with the approved estimate for 2007-08. From which item was the shortfall met?

Asked by: Hon. LAM Wai-keung, Daniel

Reply:

The revised estimate for 2007-08 is \$1,123,000 (23.0%) higher than the approved estimate. The increase is mainly due to: (i) the difference between the actual number of candidates (57 090) and the estimated number of candidates (49 400) taking part in civil service examinations conducted in the 2007-08 financial year, resulting in an increase of 7 690 candidates (15.6%); and (ii) increase in cost of other expenses required, including rental charges for examination venues and the required facilities, examination materials, remuneration for examiners/moderators/invigilators, etc. The shortfall was met by savings from other subheads under Head 46 General Expenses of the Civil Service.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____

Andrew H Y WONG

Post Title _____

Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service

Date _____

3 April 2008

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

Reply Serial No.

S-CSB08

Question Serial No.

S006

Head: 46 – General Expenses of the Civil Service

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: General Expenses of the Civil Service

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service

Director of Bureau: Secretary for the Civil Service

Question:

According to the Reply Serial No. CSB029 2671, the Bureau is not in a position to ascertain whether there will be adjustment to civil service pay in 2008-09, and Heads of Departments have the discretion to decide on the pay adjustment of non-civil service contract (NCSC) staff as the employment packages for NCSC staff are distinct from those applicable to civil servants. Please advise:

In view of the fact that the current pay level of NCSC staff is already lower than that of civil servants, whether the Bureau has earmarked any provision in the estimate for next year to narrow the gap.

Asked by: Hon. WONG Kwok-hing

Reply:

Civil service and NCSC appointments are two distinct types of employment and their purposes of employment are entirely different. Civil servants provide a stable workforce to meet long-term service needs which should be met by civil servants, whereas NCSC staff are engaged to meet service needs which are time-limited, short term, seasonal or which do not require keeping staff on a long-term basis. It is therefore not appropriate to directly compare their pay and employment packages.

Since Heads of Departments have the authority to employ NCSC staff and determine their pay level, all the expenses arising from engaging NCSC staff, including expenses for pay rise, are met by deployment of resources within their own operating expenditure envelopes.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____

Andrew H Y WONG

Post Title _____

Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service

Date _____

9 April 2008

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

Reply Serial No.

S-CSB09

Question Serial No.

S007

Head: 46 – General Expenses of the Civil Service

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: General Expenses of the Civil Service

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service

Director of Bureau: Secretary for the Civil Service

Question:

According to the Reply Serial No. CSB029 2671, the Bureau is not in a position to ascertain whether there will be adjustment to civil service pay in 2008-09, and Heads of Departments have the discretion to decide on the pay adjustment of non-civil service contract (NCSC) staff as the employment packages for NCSC staff are distinct from those applicable to civil servants. Please advise:

Whether the Bureau will promise that, on the principle of fairness, it will offer NCSC staff equal arrangements when considering adjusting civil service pay level.

Asked by: Hon. WONG Kwok-hing

Reply:

NCSC staff are not officers on the permanent establishment. Employment packages and pay adjustment mechanism for NCSC staff are distinct from those applicable to civil servants. As such, the civil service pay adjustment does not automatically apply to NCSC staff. However, in determining whether pay adjustments should be made for their NCSC staff in 2008-09 and the level of adjustments, Heads of Departments will have regard to a host of considerations, including condition of the employment market, recruitment results, staff retention needs, cost of living, civil service pay adjustment, etc.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____

Andrew H Y WONG

Post Title _____

Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service

Date _____

7 April 2008

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

Reply Serial No.

S-CSB10

Question Serial No.

S009

Head: 46 – General Expenses of the Civil Service

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: General Expenses of the Civil Service

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service

Director of Bureau: Secretary for the Civil Service

Question:

In regard to paragraph 4 of the speech of the Secretary for the Civil Service, please provide the number and percentage of contract staff employed.

Asked by: Hon. WONG Kwok-hing

Reply:

With regard to the open recruitment exercises mentioned in paragraph 4 of the speech of the Secretary for the Civil Service, the Civil Service Bureau has not collected detailed information from the concerned bureaux/departments (B/Ds) about the number of non-civil service contract (NCSC) staff selected for appointment. We have however sought the concerned information from the relevant B/Ds in respect of the some 4 000 NCSC positions identified to be replaced by civil service posts.

As at 31 October 2007, out of the above-mentioned 4 000 NCSC positions, a total of 930 positions have already been phased out and their work undertaken by civil servants. Some 480 (about 51%) of the NCSC staff involved were selected for appointment as civil servants in comparable civil service ranks.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____

Andrew H Y WONG

Post Title _____

Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service

Date _____

8 April 2008

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

Reply Serial No.

S-CSB11

Question Serial No.

S010

Head: 46 – General Expenses of the Civil Service

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: General Expenses of the Civil Service

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service

Director of Bureau: Secretary for the Civil Service

Question:

In regard to paragraph 4 of the speech of the Secretary for the Civil Service, please explain the reasons why some contract staff are not employed. Please provide their number and percentage.

Asked by: Hon. WONG Kwok-hing

Reply:

With regard to the open recruitment exercises mentioned in paragraph 4 of the speech of the Secretary for the Civil Service, the Civil Service Bureau has not collected detailed information from the concerned bureaux/departments (B/Ds) about the number of non-civil service contract (NCSC) staff selected for appointment. We have however sought the concerned information from the relevant B/Ds in respect of the some 4 000 NCSC positions identified to be replaced by civil service posts.

As at 31 October 2007, out of the above-mentioned 4 000 NCSC positions, a total of 930 positions have already been phased out and their work undertaken by civil servants. Some 450 (about 49%) of the NCSC staff involved were not selected for appointment as civil servants and the reasons and percentage are as follows:

- (a) some 360 (about 39%) left the Government on their own accord (e.g. resignation, declining contract renewal) or on account of unsatisfactory performance;
- (b) some 40 (about 4%) did not apply for the concerned civil service posts and they left the Government upon contract expiry;
- (c) some 30 (about 3%) were accommodated in other NCSC positions; and
- (d) some 20 (about 3%) were not selected for civil service appointment and they left the Government upon contract expiry.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____

Andrew H Y WONG

Post Title _____

Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service

Date _____

8 April 2008

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

Reply Serial No.

S-CSB12

Question Serial No.

S011

Head: 46 – General Expenses of the Civil Service

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: General Expenses of the Civil Service

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service

Director of Bureau: Secretary for the Civil Service

Question:

In regard to paragraph 4 of the speech of the Secretary for the Civil Service, please advise of the following:

For those contract staff who have applied for civil service posts in the open recruitment exercise but not offered appointments, would there be any measure to continuously employ them on contract terms in order to avoid causing panic among these staff over losing their jobs and undermining their morale? If so, please provide details.

Asked by: Hon. WONG Kwok-hing

Reply:

Bureaux and departments (B/Ds), in considering whether to recruit any staff, whether on civil service or non-civil service contract (NCSC) terms, have to be satisfied that the manpower need is fully justified on operational ground, that the need has to be met by government-employed permanent or temporary staff, and that re-deployment of existing government-employed staff is not possible. In compliance with this principle, B/Ds review their manpower position on a regular basis and adjust their staff requirement as necessary to dovetail with changes in their operational needs.

With regard to NCSC staff, B/Ds employ them for work that is seasonal or time-limited or part-time in nature, or work that is subject to market fluctuation, or work whose mode of delivery is under review or likely to be changed (for example, through outsourcing). Accordingly, the number and type of NCSC positions are not static, they vary from time to time having regard to individual B/Ds' operational requirements and circumstances. NCSC staff are therefore employed on a time-specific contract basis. When the work a NCSC staff is employed to do is completed or is phased out or is to be undertaken by a civil servant, his employment contract will not be renewed. When new work of a temporary nature needs to be undertaken, the B/D concerned will recruit staff on NCSC terms and on a time-specific contract basis.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____

Andrew H Y WONG

Post Title _____

Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service

Date _____

9 April 2008

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

S-CSB13

S013

Head: 46 – General Expenses of the Civil Service

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: General Expenses of the Civil Service

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service

Director of Bureau: Secretary for the Civil Service

Question:

In respect of the implementation of hardship allowance (or obnoxious duties allowance) for non-civil service contract (NCSC) staff in accordance with the principles set out in the Employment Ordinance as shown in Reply Serial No. CSB005 2629, please advise:

- (1) if the eligibility criteria for payment are the same for both civil servants and NCSC staff? If not, will the Civil Service Bureau put in place such a payment mechanism for NCSC staff for the sake of fairness?
- (2) if there are departments that have changed the payment criteria unilaterally under the existing mechanism? Is this a contravention of the relevant verbal or written agreement under the Employment Ordinance? If so, how would the Administration rectify it?

Asked by: Hon. WONG Kwok-hing

Reply:

NCSC staff are not officers on the permanent establishment. Employment packages offered to NCSC staff are also distinct from those for civil servants. The remuneration offered to NCSC staff is an all-inclusive one. On top of the all-inclusive remuneration, recruiting departments do not provide hardship allowance separately.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____

Andrew H Y WONG

Post Title _____

Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service

Date _____

8 April 2008