

For discussion on
15 April 2019

Legislative Council Panel on Public Service

Employment of Non-ethnic Chinese in the Civil Service

Purpose

This paper provides an update on the implementation of the measures to facilitate the employment of non-ethnic Chinese (NEC) in the civil service.

Background

2. The Government, being the largest employer in Hong Kong, is a strong advocate for equal opportunities in employment. Appointment to the civil service is based on the principle of open and fair competition. All candidates in an open recruitment exercise are assessed on the basis of their ability, performance and character, and having regard to the stipulated entry requirements (including language proficiency) set according to the job requirements of the grade concerned. Race is not a relevant consideration in the selection process.

3. In order to maintain effective communication for delivering public service, Heads of Department / Grade (HoDs/HoGs), having regard to the job requirements of the grades under their respective purview, specify appropriate Chinese and English language proficiency requirements (LPRs) as part of the entry requirements for the grades concerned. This arrangement is in line with the guidance of the Equal Opportunities Commission as set out in its Code of Practice on Employment under the Race Discrimination Ordinance, which provides that an employer must ensure that any language requirement for a job is relevant to and should be commensurate with the satisfactory performance of a job. It is Government policy to ensure the Chinese and English LPRs for all the grades of the civil service are no more than necessary for performance of

the job, so that NEC, like other applicants, have equal access to government job opportunities.

Review of Chinese LPRs

4. We understand that Chinese language proficiency is a major hurdle for NEC in applying for government jobs. To increase government job opportunities for NEC, the Civil Service Bureau (CSB) completed in February 2018 a comprehensive review on the entry requirements relating to Chinese language proficiency for all the civil service grades, increasing the total number of grades that have lowered / will lower their Chinese LPRs by 22 to 53. CSB will continue to monitor the recruitment situation of these grades and remind HoDs/HoGs to keep on reviewing the Chinese LPRs of civil service grades under their respective purview on the basis that satisfactory performance of duties can be maintained.

5. With a view to publicising the aforesaid information, CSB has, from late 2018 onwards, regularly disseminated information on civil service vacancies with lowered Chinese LPRs or relatively lower Chinese LPRs through the Home Affairs Department's (HAD) support service centres for ethnic minorities, which are operated by non-profit-making organisations. Since early this year, CSB has also started providing such information to NEC job seekers through the Labour Department's (LD) job centres located across the territory.

Tapping the Talent Pool of NEC

6. Relevant bureaux/departments (B/Ds) have continued to undertake appropriate measures to tap into the pool of talents possessing knowledge in NEC languages and cultures, with a view to facilitating the efficient provision of public services for NEC communities. In addition to the Police Community Liaison Assistants employed by the Police Force to enhance liaison with NEC communities in Police Districts, the Immigration Department and Social Welfare Department have recruited additional Interpreters in the Removal Assessment and Litigation (Operations Support) Section and Welfare Support and Liaison Assistants

in the Integrated Family Service Centres respectively to strengthen communication with NEC. HAD has also continued to employ persons who can command South / Southeast Asian language(s) more widely spoken in Hong Kong in its Race Relations Unit to support its work on promotion of racial harmony. Moreover, LD has engaged employment assistants proficient in NEC languages at two job centres on a pilot basis since 2017 to provide NEC job seekers with appropriate employment support, including following up on their career needs, assisting the search for job search materials suitable for NEC and organising inclusive job fairs, etc. CSB will continue to liaise with other B/Ds which provide services for NEC to identify room for recruiting suitable candidates who possess NEC language skills for relevant jobs in the Government. CSB has also been encouraging B/Ds to place recruitment advertisements, where appropriate, with HAD's support service centres for ethnic minorities, so as to widen the trawl for NEC for the recruitment exercises concerned.

Promotional Efforts

7. At the same time, the Government's multi-faceted promotional efforts seek to encourage and help young NEC to equip themselves for future employment. For example, the Police Force has continued to launch the "Cross-disciplined Forces Training Programme for Ethnic Minority Youth" to provide disciplinary, physical and team building training to young NEC through various activities such as training camps and visits to facilities of the disciplined forces. Representatives of various disciplined forces have also shared with the young NEC participants about the work of the disciplined forces and the entry requirements for different disciplinary posts, with a view to helping these young NEC plan their career paths. In addition, LD continues implementing the "Employment Services Ambassador Programme for Ethnic Minorities" scheme, engaging trainees who can communicate in NEC languages to serve as service ambassadors at LD's job centres and job fairs. LD also provides on-the-job training for these trainees, and has extended the training period from six months to one year since September 2018. A total of around 130 NEC service ambassadors have been engaged by LD through 10 batches since the launch of the scheme in September 2014.

8. In collaboration with the Efficiency Office, CSB has launched a video on the Government Youth Portal earlier this year, introducing the Government's policy and related measures on promoting equal access to government job opportunities for NEC, and featuring a NEC civil servant who shared her experience in applying for government jobs. CSB also joined the Race Relations Unit of HAD in their racial harmony school talk, to share with NEC secondary school students the employment of NEC in the Government as well as the career stories of NEC working as civil servants.

Internship Programme for NEC University Students

9. The 2018 Policy Agenda mentioned that CSB will introduce an internship programme within the Government for NEC university students on a pilot basis to enable them to gain work experience and strengthen their competitiveness in job seeking. In this connection, we have invited the eight universities funded by the University Grants Committee to nominate NEC students to participate in the internship programme. Interns will be assigned to various government departments for an internship lasting about eight weeks this summer. We will conduct a review on the effectiveness of the pilot programme upon its completion and consider the way forward.

Advice Sought

10. Members are invited to note the content of this paper.

Civil Service Bureau
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