

立法會

Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(4)506/19-20(06)

Ref: CB4/PL/PS

Panel on Public Service

Special meeting on 4 May 2020

Updated background brief on training and development for civil servants

Purpose

This paper provides background information on the provision of training and development opportunities for civil servants by the Civil Service Bureau ("CSB"), and summarizes the major views and concerns expressed by members when the subject was discussed at meetings of the Panel on Public Service ("the Panel").

Background

2. The Government provides civil servants with learning opportunities that would equip them with the skills, knowledge and mindset necessary for providing quality service to the public. Whilst individual bureaux/departments ("B/Ds") provide vocational training to meet job-specific needs, the Civil Service Training and Development Institute ("CSTDI") under CSB focuses on training programmes that fulfill the common training needs of civil servants, such as leadership and management, language and communication, national affairs and the Basic Law. CSTDI also formulates policies on training and performance management, provides consultancy services to B/Ds on human resource management and promotes a culture of continuous learning in the civil service.

3. Brief descriptions of the various training programmes and activities organized by CSTDI are set out in the Administration's paper (LC Paper No. CB(4)858/18-19(05)) for the Panel meeting on 20 May 2019. For the financial year 2020-2021, the estimated financial provision for CSB for its work on civil service training and development is \$170.4 million.¹

Establishing a new civil service college

¹ Source: <https://www.budget.gov.hk/2020/eng/pdf/head143.pdf>

4. In October 2018, the Chief Executive announced in her Policy Address that the Administration had identified a "Government, Institution or Community" site with an area of about 11 000 square metres near Kwun Tong MTR Station which was suitable for composite development. The new civil service college will be accommodated in this composite development with other government and social welfare facilities. The civil service college is expected to be completed in 2026. Besides, a civil service training advisory board ("the Board") comprising professionals and government officials will be set up to prepare for the development of the new civil service college and give guidance on training programmes for the civil service and its long-term development strategy.

Deliberations of the Panel

5. The major views and concerns expressed by Panel members in previous meetings and the Administration's responses are summarized below.

National studies and Basic Law training

6. Some members suggested enhancing civil servants' comprehensive knowledge of national studies and the Basic Law, including the principles behind the drafting and interpretation of the Basic Law, the relationship between the Constitution of the People's Republic of China and the Basic Law, the policy changes on the Mainland and the social and economic developments of the Mainland that might have impacts on Hong Kong.

7. The Administration pointed out that it had been devoting training resources to enhance civil servants' understanding of the Basic Law and the "one country, two systems" principle, and Basic Law formed an integral and important part of training for civil servants. The Administration would also arrange national studies training programmes and visits to the Mainland to deepen civil servants' understanding of the Mainland's development and the relationship between the Central Government and Hong Kong.

8. Concerns were raised by some members that civil servants attending the national studies courses conducted in the Mainland and the Basic Law training organized by CSTDI might be exposed to one-sided views only and brainwashed into a "One country, One system" mindset.

9. The Administration advised that there was a genuine operational need for civil servants to understand the systems and other aspects of the Mainland. The Administration highlighted that political neutrality was one of the core

values of the civil service. All civil servants were well aware of their responsibility, as set out in the Civil Service Code, to implement the policies and decisions of the Government of the day in a professional and impartial manner.

10. In response to some members' view that the Mainland programmes on national studies should only be arranged for those civil servants who had close working relationship with the Mainland authorities, the Administration advised that priority for these programmes would be given to civil servants who had more direct work contacts with the Mainland. In fact, only about 700 senior and middle ranking civil servants were selected each year to attend the Mainland programmes on national studies and thematic visits organized by CSTDI.

Training on the use of innovation and technology

11. Noting that it was the Administration's policy to build Hong Kong into a world-class smart city, many members had expressed concerns about the breadth and depth of the training relating to the use of innovation and technology ("IT") and big data, creativity and design thinking, smart city and new technological trends and application that would be provided to civil servants and whether the number of training places were sufficient.

12. The Administration responded that in designing the training programmes on the use of IT, CSB would consult the Innovation and Technology Bureau together with the Innovation and Technology Commission, both of which had a very close connection with the trade. Each year, CSTDI and the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer arranged training programmes in big data analytics/applications, innovative technology, artificial intelligence, design thinking, smart city, information technology security management, the use of social media and cloud computing etc., where experts, scholars, practitioners and government officials were invited to introduce the latest IT developments and share their experiences. The above IT elements were also incorporated in the leadership training programmes for middle-ranking to senior civil servants and national studies programmes held in the Mainland for different levels of civil servants. Participants would work on team assignments on IT-related topics during the programmes. Visits to organizations that adopted the latest IT practices and advanced IT facilities and enterprises would be arranged. In 2019-2020, it was expected that about 63 000 places on IT-related training would be provided for civil servants working in different B/Ds.

Training on communication

13. In view of increased number of public confrontations with frontline civil servants, question was also raised as to whether CSTDI would organize courses to equip civil servants with the necessary skills to manage conflicts, including abusive language, and to cope with stress arising from these conflicts. The Administration advised that CSTDI had organized courses for enhancing the quality of customer service, handling public complaints, managing conflicts, coping with stress and maintaining emotional well-being, and efforts in this regard would be stepped up.

New civil service college

14. Regarding member's enquiry about the mission of the new civil service college, the Administration advised that it aimed to further enhance training for civil servants with the upgraded training facilities and more training space to be provided in the new civil service college.

15. In response to the suggestion of inviting representatives of different civil service unions to join the Board so as to better understand the training needs and concerns of staff side, the Administration advised that it was preparing to set up the Board, and the Board would maintain close communication with different stakeholders

16. To ensure a smooth planning and implementation of the project, a member called on the Administration to gauge views from the Kwun Tong District Council and relevant stakeholders regarding the facilities to be provided in the composite development and the interface with the transport network in the area. The Administration assured members that it would consult Kwun Tong District Council on the composite development project during the planning process. The Administration consulted the Kwun Tong District Council on the proposed facilities to be included in the composite development in May 2019. District Council members attending the meeting generally supported the construction of the civil service college at the site concerned.

Overseas and continuous training

17. A member urged the Administration to encourage more civil servants, in particular senior civil servants working in the professional departments, to continuously participate in training programmes, including on-line or short courses, at renowned overseas institutions so as to broaden their perspectives and update their knowledge and techniques on the relevant discipline.

18. The Administration advised that while CSTDI offered training that fulfilled the common training needs of civil servants, vocational and professional training would be offered by relevant B/Ds to meet job-specific requirements. It would consider the provision of more overseas programmes, including on-line and short courses, for civil servants to broaden their perspectives. Individual B/Ds would also arrange attachments to international organizations that had direct working relationship with them.

19. Noting that the Administration had offered a Training Sponsorship Scheme to encourage civil servants to pursue learning through external courses, and the Administration had extended the Scheme starting from 2018 to cover all officers at Master Pay Scale Point 49 and below and raised the sponsorship ceiling from \$6,000 to \$10,000 per applicant each year, a member enquired about details of the Scheme.

20. The Administration advised that the Training Sponsorship Scheme was aimed at encouraging frontline civil servants to pursue continuous learning outside office hours. Civil servants could seek approval for attending job-related courses and then apply for reimbursement of fees after attending the courses in their own spare time. In the past, an average of \$2 million to \$2.5 million was incurred by B/Ds and about 600 applications were approved under the Scheme each year. In 2019-2020, there were about 810 approved applications by the end of February 2020. In 2020-2021, the estimated expenditure for the Training Sponsorship Scheme was about \$5 million. CSTDI would closely monitor the utilization trend and consider injecting additional funding based on actual requirements.

Training for non-civil service contract staff

21. Some members asked about the provision of training for non-civil service contract ("NCSC") staff. The Administration advised that relevant training programmes, including orientation programmes and job-related training, were provided to NCSC staff to better equip them to discharge their duties. Local training activities held in Hong Kong were generally open to NCSC staff. However, leadership and management training would generally be provided only to civil servants, who would have a life-long career in the civil service and who might be required to shoulder heavier responsibilities upon promotion in due course.

Evaluation of training programmes

22. On the mechanism for evaluating the effectiveness of various training programmes, the Administration advised that feedback from course providers, participants and departmental management would be collected systematically

for course evaluation with a view to further improving the training programmes. The Administration would seriously consider the views collected and fine tune the programme contents to meet the training needs of civil servants at different levels.

Relevant question raised/motion passed at Council meeting

23. A Council question on the national studies and the Basic Law training for civil servants was raised on 20 March 2019 and a motion was passed by the Council at the meeting on 5 June 2019 on, among other things, improving the continuing education and training of civil servants. The wording of the motion is in **Appendix I**. Hyperlinks to the question/motion and the Administration's responses are in **Appendix II**.

Latest position

24. The Administration will update the Panel on the training and development for civil servants at the Panel special meeting on 4 May 2020.

Relevant papers

25. A list of relevant papers is in the **Appendix II**.

(Translation)

**Motion on
“Improving the employment terms of civil servants,
enhancing the efficiency of policy implementation and
promoting creativity and innovation”
moved by Hon Tony TSE
at the Council meeting of 5 June 2019**

Motion as amended by Hon HO Kai-ming and Hon Charles Peter MOK

That as the civil service will face the peak period of civil servants' retirement, the problem of manpower shortage in the civil service will gradually surface; in this connection, this Council urges the Government to adopt effective measures to improve the employment terms, manpower, working environment and continuing education and training of civil servants, so as to attract and retain talents; raise the Government's efficiency of decision-making, decision execution and vetting and approval process, and strengthen inter-bureau and inter-departmental cooperation and coordination; and enhance middle and senior civil servants' creative mindset and capacity to manage changes, and promote the application and research and development of innovative technology in various government departments; specific measures to improve the employment terms and manpower problem of civil servants are as follows:

- (1) increasing the number of permanent posts to attract more people to join the civil service;
- (2) reviewing the deduction of payroll cost of increments arrangement under the pay adjustment mechanism of the civil service;
- (3) extending the option to extend service to civil servants under the old scheme, so that they can choose to retire at the age of 65 (for civilian grades) or 60 (for disciplined services grades);
- (4) comprehensively implementing five-day week to enable the remaining 20% of civil servants who have yet to work on a five-day week pattern to expeditiously benefit from the measure;
- (5) increasing the number of annual leave days of civil servants under the new scheme;
- (6) expeditiously providing Chinese medicine services for all civil servants;
and

- (7) providing post-retirement medical and dental benefits for civil servants under the new scheme and their eligible dependants;

Other specific measures include:

- (8) training civil servants to effectively use new technology to address the changes in the demand for and expectations of government services in the community, so as to deliver better public services to the people in a more efficient and innovative way;
- (9) improving the establishment of civil servants, including exploring the inclusion of the information technology ('IT') profession in the list of civil service professional grades and reviewing afresh the arrangement of employing IT staff through the 'body-shopping' contract (i.e.'T-contract'), so as to raise the professional status of IT staff; and
- (10) drawing reference from overseas places such as the United Kingdom and Singapore to provide courses for frontline civil servants on data analytics and science, artificial intelligence, user-oriented design, agile delivery, etc., so as to systematically train civil servants' capacity to use innovative technology.

List of relevant papers

Meeting	Date of meeting	Paper
Panel on Public Service	19 December 2016	<u>Administration's paper</u> <u>Updated background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat</u> <u>Minutes</u>
	21 May 2018	<u>Administration's paper</u> <u>Updated background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat</u> <u>Minutes</u>
	20 May 2019	<u>Administration's paper</u> <u>Updated background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat</u> <u>Minutes</u> <u>Administration's follow-up response to issues raised at the Panel meeting</u>
Council meeting	20 March 2019	<u>Question raised by Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG on "National studies and the Basic Law training for civil servants"</u>