

For Discussion on
17 February 2021

Legislative Council Panel on Public Service

Efforts in Attracting Young People to Join the Government

Introduction

This paper briefs Members on the series of initiatives taken in promoting job opportunities for the youth and efforts in attracting young people to join the Government.

2. The Government attaches great importance to nurturing and developing the young generation. Our approach to attracting young people to join the Government is multi-pronged :

- (a) Providing short-term job opportunities and internship placements;
- (b) Upkeep of recruitment efforts in various civil service grades; and
- (c) Maintaining Government-wide efforts to promote civil service jobs to young job seekers.

Internship Schemes

3. The Government spares no effort in providing students with ample and diverse opportunities to work in the Government on a short-term basis, with a view to enabling them to gain valuable experience and knowledge, as well as broadening their perspectives and exposure to better equip them before their entering the job market upon graduation. Apart from on-the-job experience, interns are also provided with support through different means. On top of conducting familiarisation visits and induction training, some bureaux / departments (B/Ds) assign suitable officers to act as mentors for interns. In addition, interns concerned will be provided with cyber learning accounts under the Government's e-learning portal – Cyber Learning Centre Plus to facilitate their access to different learning resources and information.

4. In 2020-21, despite the outbreak of the coronavirus disease-2019 pandemic which has affected the implementation plans of various internship programmes, we offered a total of 3 600 intern placements, representing a marked increase of 25% compared to the previous year. Some of the internship programmes are centrally administered by the Civil Service Bureau (CSB) while individual B/Ds or public organisations under their purview also organise various internship schemes with specific objectives and target groups. Below are some examples of the internship schemes worthy of note :

(a) Administrative Service Internship Programme (ASIP)

5. Administrative Officers (AOs) are involved in the formulation of government policies, coordination and monitoring of the implementation of programmes, and management of the use of public resources. The ASIP offers eligible Hong Kong students an early opportunity to gain hands-on experience of working with serving AOs, thereby facilitating students' future career planning and attracting those with good potential to join the Administrative Service upon graduation.

6. There are two rounds of ASIP each year, one in the summer and the other in winter¹. Successful applicants studying locally or abroad in their antepenultimate or penultimate years would be offered placement of about two months in a policy bureau or a department including district offices. Response from institutions and students to ASIP has been encouraging. Take the summer programme as an example, we received a record high of around 260 applications in 2020 and appointed 85 students as AO interns. To date, a total of 719 and 34 participants have taken part in the summer and winter internship respectively.

(b) Internship programmes run by B/Ds for students with specific fields of study

7. Currently, B/Ds organise various internship schemes according to their respective objectives and needs. The placements, which cover a wide variety of fields and types of work, provide development opportunities for young people with different career interests. Below are a

¹ Since 2015, CSB has launched the winter round of ASIP between November and January to provide the same opportunity for those studying in the Southern Hemisphere (i.e. in Australia and New Zealand).

few examples of the schemes run by individual B/Ds which have engaged a relatively large number of interns and have a more prominent focus.

8. The Development Bureau (DEVB) and its works departments recruited 360 summer interns in 2020, with most of them being undergraduate students of architectural, landscape architectural, engineering or surveying disciplines. Under the programme, interns are engaged in a mix of different activities, such as conducting visits to project sites and undertaking short-term assignments related to work projects. Those interns who are interested in developing a civil service career may further pursue their professional training as graduate trainees under the Graduate Training Scheme offered by DEVB after graduation, during which they may acquire the professional qualification(s) required for further developing a career in the relevant professions.

9. The Department of Justice (DoJ) engaged some 120 summer interns in 2020, of which 50 were for performing law-related work in different divisions of the Department. The programme offers students studying law valuable experience in the specialised fields of law drafting, public prosecutions and international law which one could not easily come by in the private sector.

10. Internship opportunities in other professional fields are also available in the Government for students of relevant subject disciplines. For example, in 2020, the Inland Revenue Department recruited about 150 students who were studying undergraduate programme with major in Accountancy to provide support in handling taxation-related work. The Census and Statistics Department employed about 100 summer interns in 2020, who were deployed mainly in conducting researches on statistical methodologies and reviewing statistical computing systems, as well as in survey data collection, editing and validation work.

(c) Internship opportunities in disciplined services departments

11. In 2020-21, the six disciplined services departments offered about 180 internship placements for young people. Among them included over 100 interns engaged by the Hong Kong Police Force (“the Force”) under the Police Mentorship Programme and the Police Mentorship Programme Outreach. These two programmes which target local and non-local post-secondary students respectively are part of the Force’s proactive recruitment strategy in attracting young people to join the Force upon their graduation. The internship programmes involved conducting researches

and surveys, organisation of activities and assisting in IT-related projects which provided opportunities for interns to better understand the Force and police work.

(d) Internship schemes for students with diverse background

12. The Government is well aware of the need to provide job opportunities to those students, who because of their circumstances, may not come by internship opportunities as easily. In 2016, CSB launched the Internship Scheme for Students with Disabilities, which has the dual aims of allowing young persons with disabilities to gain hands-on work experience through short-term placements in the Government, thereby strengthening their competitiveness before they enter the work force, and enabling civil service colleagues to appreciate the talents and potential of persons with disabilities. We doubled the number of internship places under the Scheme in 2018 from an average of 50 a year to 100². Since its inception, more than 360 full-time students with disabilities from local tertiary institutes as well as the Shine Skills Centre³ of the Vocational Training Council participated in the Scheme. They were assigned to various B/Ds to perform administrative support, clerical or other duties of diversified nature.

13. Moreover, as an initiative to help young non-ethnic Chinese gain work experience and enhance their competitiveness for employment, CSB introduced an internship programme for non-ethnic Chinese students since 2019. Since then, universities and post-secondary institutes had nominated their students to participate in the internship. Some of the internship placements were relevant to the provision of public services to non-ethnic Chinese communities or required knowledge of non-ethnic Chinese languages or culture, allowing the interns to give play to their strengths and have a taste of delivery of public service to non-ethnic Chinese communities. So far, about 50 non-ethnic Chinese post-secondary students have taken part in the programme.

(e) Other efforts in providing internship opportunities

14. Apart from running schemes for interns to work in the

² As announced in the 2017 Policy Address.

³ The Shine Skills Centre offers vocational training programmes and support services for development of students with special education needs who are aged 15 or above.

Government or public organisations, there are also efforts in enabling students to intern in the private sector. The Innovation and Technology Commission launched the STEM Internship Scheme in June 2020 on a pilot basis in which companies / organisations were invited to provide internship places for undergraduates and postgraduates studying STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) programmes in local universities. The STEM Internship Scheme aims to encourage students concerned to gain work experience in innovation and technology (I&T) field during their studies and to foster their interest in pursuing a career in I&T after graduation, so as to enlarge the local I&T talent pool. The internship positions under the pilot scheme, with the majority of them being offered by small to medium-sized enterprises and start-ups in the business sector, covered various I&T elements, such as programme coding, web design, big data analytics, machine learning, robotics, artificial intelligence, electronic engineering, digital marketing, biotechnology and food technology. In view of the enthusiastic responses received and positive outcome achieved during the summer vacation, the STEM Scheme was continued during the winter break in 2020.

Time-limited Jobs for Young People

15. CSB is in charge of coordinating the implementation of the Job Creation Scheme under the Anti-epidemic Fund, which will create 30 000 time-limited jobs in the public and private sectors within two years for people of different skill sets and academic qualifications to relieve the worsening unemployment situation due to the epidemic. As graduates and young people lacking work experience have encountered great difficulties in finding job opportunities, many of the jobs under the “Job Creation Scheme” are created specifically for fresh graduates, or especially suitable for young people to apply. More than 9 000 jobs already created under the Job Creation Scheme belong to this type of positions. For example, in the government sector, there are around 570 time-limited Executive Service Assistant / Executive Assistant / Administrative Assistant positions (equivalent to civil service Executive Officer (EO) II post and do not require the applicants to possess any working experience) created for providing various executive support services in the government departments. Other jobs such as Legal Trainee positions in DoJ, Arts Administrator/Museum/Stage Management Trainee positions in the Leisure and Cultural Services Department and Graduate Trainee positions in DEVB and its works departments for graduates from the fields of engineering, architecture, surveying, town planning and landscape architecture are also

suitable for young people to apply as the jobs would provide them with on-the-job training in the relevant sectors and thus be conducive to their career development.

Upkeep of Recruitment Efforts in Various Civil Service Grades

16. Developing a career in the civil service remains an attractive option for young people and fresh graduates. Apart from offering a clear career ladder and abundant training opportunities, the civil service continues to offer a host of choices for young people with different career interests.

17. As the largest employer in Hong Kong, the Government makes continuous efforts to recruit new blood to the civil service to replenish vacancies arising from wastage, which apart from providing job opportunities to young people, also serve to ensure healthy turnover in the civil service. In the financial years from 2017-18 to 2019-20, a total of over 800 recruitment exercises have been launched and a total of over 34 000 new recruits joined the service during the same period, among which more than 60% were aged 30 or below. The new recruits were appointed to a wide array of civil service grades in different areas of public service and with various levels of entry requirements. Young job seekers could explore pursuing their career in civilian grades, which offer options with a range of career focus including that in the professional and degree grades, education grades, technical inspectorate or technical grades and also the disciplined services grades in the six disciplined services departments. Currently, some departments, like the Department of Health and the Force, conduct recruitment round the year for some of their grades.

18. In the financial year 2020-21, there are over 10 000 civil service job openings for replacing retirees and filling new posts to be created. These job openings, covering civilian and disciplined services grades, span across around 60 B/Ds.

Promoting Civil Service Jobs to Young Job Seekers

19. CSB holds regular meetings with local tertiary institutions to discuss matters relating to civil service recruitment and other relevant issues. Through these meetings, CSB and the institutions may share views on how students wish to develop their career interests, how employers may outreach to graduates, as well as information on

recruitment to civil service.

20. For more focused efforts in promoting the recruitment of general grades under CSB's charge, CSB has been maintaining close communication with the institutions in promoting a career in the AO and EO Grades. In collaboration with them, we organise career talks timely, at which interested students could gain a better grasp of the role and duties of the jobs through briefing and sharing by representatives of CSB and newly joined AOs and EOs. To ensure that possible candidates studying / living outside Hong Kong are equally informed, our Economic and Trade Offices have also proactively reached out in their respective jurisdiction to carry out promotions on AO recruitment.

21. The Efficiency Office also maintains a dedicated page on the Youth Portal (Youth.gov.hk) that has uploaded many short videos explaining the nature and contents of different civil service jobs. The page, which offers useful information on the recruitment in the civil service as well as perspectives from young civil servants budding in their career, serves as a meaningful platform for young job seekers to find out more about different civil service jobs.

Advice Sought

22. Members are invited to note this paper.

Civil Service Bureau
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