

## LCQ8: Admission schemes for employment of non-local professionals and non-local graduates in Hong Kong

Following is a question by the Hon Alvin Yeung and a written reply by the Secretary for Security, Mr John Lee, in the Legislative Council today (July 11):

Question:

Some employers have relayed to me that the applications they made in recent years for employing foreign nationals to come to work in Hong Kong under the General Employment Policy (GEP) have been rejected. Such employers wondered if the reason for their applications being rejected was that the salaries offered to the prospective employees were too low. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the (i) range and (ii) median value, of the monthly salaries offered by employers to persons who were admitted to work in Hong Kong under the Admission Scheme for Mainland Talents and Professionals in each of the past five years;

(2) of the (i) range and (ii) median value, of the monthly salaries offered by employers to persons who were admitted to work in Hong Kong under the Immigration Arrangement for Non-local Graduates in each of the past five years (with a breakdown by Mainland graduates and non-Mainland graduates);

(3) of the (i) range and (ii) median value, of the monthly salaries offered by prospective employers to persons who applied to work in Hong Kong under GEP in each of the past five years (with a breakdown by whether the applications were approved);

(4) among the applications made under GEP in the past five years, of the number of applications rejected by the authorities on the grounds that the monthly salaries offered to the prospective employees were too low; and

(5) of the five most common reasons for applications made under GEP being rejected in the past five years, and the number of cases in relation to each reason?

Reply:

President,

At present, the Immigration Department (ImmD) implements the General Employment Policy (GEP) and Admission Scheme for Mainland Talents and Professionals (ASMTTP) for non-local professionals who wish to work in Hong

Kong. The GEP is for admitting overseas, Taiwan and Macao professionals and the ASMP for Mainland professionals. The objectives of the two entry arrangements are to allow local employers to recruit professionals not readily available in Hong Kong to meet their manpower needs. Professionals seeking to work in Hong Kong have to meet three main criteria:

- (i) having a good education background, normally a first degree in the relevant field;
- (ii) having a confirmed offer of employment and being employed in a job relevant to their academic qualifications or work experience that local professionals cannot be recruited to take up; and
- (iii) the remuneration package being broadly commensurate with and not inferior to the local prevailing market level.

Moreover, applicants who are/were non-local students and have obtained an undergraduate or higher qualification in a full-time and locally-accredited programme in Hong Kong (non-local graduates) may apply to stay/return and work here under the Immigration Arrangements for Non-local Graduates (IANG). Non-local graduates who submit applications to ImmD within six months after the date of their graduation (i.e. the date shown on their graduation certificates) are classified as non-local fresh graduates. They are not required to secure an offer of employment upon application. They may be granted 12 months' stay on time limitation without other conditions of stay provided that normal immigration requirements are met. On the other hand, non-local graduates who submit applications beyond six months of the date of their graduation are classified as returning non-local graduates. Non-local graduates who wish to return to work here are required to secure an offer of employment upon application. The applications will be considered so long as the job is at a level commonly taken up by degree holders and the remuneration package is at market level. They may be granted 12 months' stay on time limitation without other conditions of stay provided that normal immigration requirements are met. If they wish to apply for an extension of stay upon the expiry of their limit of stay, their applications will be considered as long as they have secured an offer of local employment which is at a level commonly taken up by degree holders and the remuneration package is at market level. For applicants who have established or joined in business in Hong Kong and are able to produce proof of their business, their applications will also be considered.

In assessing whether the remuneration package of an applicant is broadly commensurate with the prevailing market level, ImmD will take into account a series of relevant factors in a holistic manner, including his/her experience, length of service, prevailing market situation for the industry concerned, etc., while making reference to market information of various sources, as well as seeking advice from relevant professional bodies as necessary. In addition, where circumstances of individual cases warrant, ImmD shall request the employing company to provide evidence to show that the remuneration package offered is commensurate with an applicant's situation, such as his/her length of service and market situation for the industry concerned.

In response to Hon Alvin Yeung's question, our reply is as follows:

(1) to (3) ImmD does not maintain statistics on median salaries of the approved applicants of ASMTP, IANG and GEP. ImmD also does not maintain statistics on monthly remuneration and median salaries to be paid to the refused applicants of GEP.

The breakdown statistics on applicants approved for admission to Hong Kong under the above admission schemes by monthly remuneration in the past five years are tabulated as follows:

#### ASMTP

Monthly Remuneration	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018 (January-June)
Below \$20,000	4 239	5 062	3 318	3 620	3 711	2 111
\$20,000 – \$39,999	2 334	2 515	3 328	3 723	4 839	2 197
\$40,000 – \$79,999	1 041	1 225	1 739	2 115	2 604	1 297
\$80,000 or above	403	511	844	946	1 227	680
Total	8 017	9 313	9 229	10 404	12 381	6 285

#### Applicants who are approved for extension of stay under IANG^

Monthly Remuneration	2015 (April-December)#	2016	2017	2018 (January-June)
Below \$20,000	5 441	5 614	5 157	1 091
\$20,000 – \$39,999	2 624	3 785	4 345	1 488
\$40,000 – \$79,999	528	767	926	440
\$80,000 or above	100	202	325	143
Total	8 693	10 368	10 753	3 162

^ ImmD does not maintain breakdown statistics on approved applicants of IANG by monthly remuneration. ImmD also does not maintain breakdown statistics by region of applicants.

# ImmD does not maintain statistics before April 2015.

#### GEP

Monthly Remuneration	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018 (January-June)
Below \$20,000	6 244	7 390	5 976	7 017	8 431	4 139
\$20,000 – \$39,999	9 081	9 825	10 714	10 717	11 493	7 110

\$40,000 – \$79,999	13 055	14 461#	9 637	10 110	10 669	5 619
\$80,000 or above			8 076	8 153	9 359	3 446
Total	28 380	31 676	34 403	35 997	39 952	20 314

# ImmD does not maintain the relevant breakdown statistics before 2014.

(4) to (5) ImmD does not maintain breakdown statistics on the refusal reasons under GEP. The common reasons for refusal include:

- (i) The employer is not able to demonstrate that the position cannot be readily taken up by local professional;
- (ii) The remuneration package offered is not commensurate with the prevailing market level;
- (iii) The applicant does not have adequate relevant academic qualifications or experience;
- (iv) Doubtful operating or financial situation of the employing company; or
- (v) Doubtful purpose of application.