

LCQ9: Providing civil servants with training outside Hong Kong

Following is a question by Professor the Hon Lau Chi-pang and a written reply by the Secretary for the Civil Service, Mrs Ingrid Yeung, in the Legislative Council today (January 31):

Question:

Regarding providing civil servants with training outside Hong Kong, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) as the Government indicated in reply to a question raised by a Member of this Council on June 14 last year that it was resuming various training courses outside Hong Kong in an orderly manner, of the latest progress of the relevant work;
- (2) of the respective estimated expenditures to be incurred in the provision of overseas and Mainland training for civil servants by the Government in each of the next five years, and whether it has established a ratio between the two in advance;
- (3) of the criteria adopted by the Government for selecting overseas and Mainland training institutes to provide training for civil servants; and
- (4) since April 2023, of the respective numbers of overseas and Mainland training courses that the Government (a) has organised, (b) will organise and (c) has yet to confirm, as well as the following information on each course: (i) the number and name of training institute, (ii) the type of course (i.e. degree and certificate course), (iii) the training target (i.e. Administrative Officers, Executive Officers and other grades) and (iv) the number of place?

Reply:

President,

The Civil Service Bureau (CSB) spares no effort in organising a variety of training activities to enhance civil servants' understanding of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR)'s constitutional order, national security, and the country's development, with the aim of strengthening their sense of national identity and patriotism, fostering their forming of holistic views and broadening their international perspective, thereby enabling them to support Hong Kong in leveraging its strengths to connect our country with the world.

The Government's consolidated reply to the various parts of the question is as follows:

With the resumption of normal travel across borders, the CSB is resuming various Mainland and overseas training courses in an orderly manner.

For training on the Mainland, the Civil Service College (CSC) under the CSB has, since June 2023, resumed arranging for middle and senior-ranking officers nominated by bureaux/departments to attend national studies programmes at nine Mainland institutions (including the National Academy of Governance (NAG), Tsinghua University, Peking University, China Foreign Affairs University, Zhejiang University, Nanjing University, Wuhan University, Jinan University and Sun Yat-sen University) that last for five to 12 days. By the end of 2023, 21 classes had been organised with about 800 civil servants participating in the programmes.

Besides, in 2023, the CSB also offered Mainland training for Permanent Secretaries and Heads of Departments, Administrative Officers (AOs) and Executive Officers (EOs) of the HKSAR Government, including (i) arranging for over 20 Permanent Secretaries and Heads of Departments of the HKSAR Government to attend a study programme and duty visit in Beijing and Zhejiang Province in June 2023. This study programme was organised again following the one in 2018 and has the largest number of participants ever; (ii) resuming the Designated Course for AOs at the NAG in August so as to strengthen their grasp of important national policies and development trends, and to foster their connection with the Mainland officials. Around 30 AOs participated in the course; (iii) launching the Mainland Training Programme for EOIIIs in partnership with the Sun Yat-sen University and the Mainland Study Tour for EOs in partnership with the Wuhan University. All EOIIIs who joined the civil service in or after June 2020 are required to attend the three-day Mainland Training Programme, which serves to further enhance the foundation training for the E0 grade. Since its introduction in September 2023, seven classes of the Mainland Training Programme for EOIIIs have been held and were attended by about 240 EOIIIs in total. As for the Mainland Study Tour for EOs, it is a five-day programme open to all ranks of E0 Grade members. About 40 EOs at different ranks joined the first class of the programme in October 2023.

In 2024, the CSB will continue to organise the above national studies training programmes. It is expected that about 1 500 civil servants will attend these programmes.

In respect of public administration training for senior civil servants, in 2023, the CSC has also arranged for the second batch of 20 senior civil servants with potential for advancement to join the 2-year Master's Degree in Public Policy Programme run by Peking University. The programme provides opportunities for civil servants to deepen their understanding of the country's system, the relationship between the Central Authorities and the HKSAR, and the country's development, and enrich their perspectives in public administration. The first year of study will take place on a full-time basis in Peking University, where participants will visit different areas on the Mainland to conduct research and studies and to gain first-hand experience of the country's development. The second year of study will take place in Hong Kong for the completion of a thesis while they resume work. The CSC will

continue to arrange for 15 to 20 senior civil servants with potential for advancement each year to participate in this programme, and will also continue to sponsor senior civil servants to attend the Executive Master of Public Administration Programme for the Project of Hong Kong Public Administrative Talents at Tsinghua University.

For overseas training, the CSB also arranges for middle and senior-ranking civil servants with potential to attend training overseas. After the pandemic, we have been resuming relevant training in an orderly manner, including arranging AOs on completion of probation to study abroad again. The first round of overseas training programmes was launched in mid-January this year, where about 10 AOs were arranged to attend training at Sciences Po for around eight weeks. The CSB will continue to arrange for more civil servants to pursue overseas training.

In 2024-25, the estimated expenditures to be incurred by the CSB on Mainland and overseas training (which mainly cover tuition fees, travel and accommodation expenses for participants, and study grants, etc) are about \$40 million and \$16 million respectively. The annual training budget is determined according to the training needs of departments and the government's fiscal position, among other factors.

Apart from the CSB, individual departments/grades also arrange for their staff to attend training on the Mainland and overseas to cater for the departments/grades' development needs, with the aim of enhancing their staff's understanding of the country's development, leadership, and their own professional fields. The related training expenses are borne by the respective departments. The CSB and departmental/grade management will continually assess the training needs of their staff and select suitable training institutes and courses, taking into account factors such as teaching quality, trainers' qualifications, relevant experience, programme content and delivery mode, and fees.