

Standing Commission on Civil Service Salaries and Conditions of Service Report No. 61: Grade Structure Review for VLT and MLT Grades

The following is issued on behalf of the Standing Commission on Civil Service Salaries and Conditions of Service:

The Standing Commission on Civil Service Salaries and Conditions of Service today (July 26) submitted its report on the Grade Structure Review (GSR) for the Veterinary Laboratory Technician (VLT) and Medical Laboratory Technician (MLT) grades to the Chief Executive.

At the invitation of the Secretary for the Civil Service, the Standing Commission carried out a GSR for the VLT grade in the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) and the MLT grade in the Department of Health (DH). The report sets out the Standing Commission's findings and recommendations.

"We conducted the GSR through a combination of fact-finding exercise and engagement of the stakeholders. We invited and examined written submissions from the two departmental managements, staff bodies and the staff concerned and conducted an in-depth analysis of the change in scope and complexity of duties of the two grades over time and their respective manpower situations. We also visited the laboratory facilities of the two departments and met the departmental managements, the staff associations and staff concerned," the Chairman of the Standing Commission, Dr Pang Yiu-kai, said.

Having examined the manpower statistics of the two grades, the Standing Commission is of the view that the VLT grade has been facing persistent and serious recruitment and retention difficulties, while the MLT grade, which has identical entry requirements as the VLT grade, has been experiencing slight turnover problems. The GSR has focused on adjusting the entry requirements, qualification grouping, pay scales and structures of the two grades to help resolve these problems.

"We recommend re-classifying the two grades from Qualification Group 3 Group II: Diploma Grades to Qualification Group 3 Group I: Higher Diploma or Associate Degree Grades and raising the entry requirement from Diploma level to Higher Diploma level to reflect the minimum level of qualification required for competent performance of the jobs, as well as to bring the qualification grouping of the two grades in line with that of the other Supplementary Medical Professions grades," Dr Pang said.

The Standing Commission also recommends merging the two ranks of VLT II and VLT I to form a new entry rank of Associate Veterinary Technologist and merging the two ranks of MLT II and MLT I to form a new entry rank of

Associate Medical Technologist.

"The pay scales of the entry ranks of the two grades after the proposed mergers will be improved from Master Pay Scale (MPS) Points 8-21 to MPS Points 14-24. This should help enhance the attractiveness of the two grades to potential candidates and alleviate recruitment difficulties. It should also help boost the morale of existing staff and help retain them," Dr Pang said.

The Standing Commission recommends raising the maximum pay of the Veterinary Technologist rank of the VLT grade and the Medical Technologist rank of the MLT grade by one pay point. The adjustment is to recognise the increase in responsibility and the higher level of expertise required of these ranks.

Having regard to the functional need of the VLT grade, the Standing Commission further recommends the creation of a new promotion rank of Senior Veterinary Technologist, which will also improve the career path and hence the attractiveness of the grade. The rank of Senior Medical Technologist already exists for the MLT grade.

"We trust that our recommendations, if accepted and implemented, will help improve the manpower situation of the two grades. This should in turn enhance the delivery of services to the public," Dr Pang supplemented.

"We would like to express our sincere gratitude to the departmental managements of the AFCD and the DH, the staff associations and staff members concerned for their support during the review," Dr Pang said.

Standing Commission Report No. 61 can be viewed on the website of the Joint Secretariat for the Advisory Bodies on Civil Service and Judicial Salaries and Conditions of Service at www.jsscs.gov.hk/reports/en/61/61.pdf.

The Standing Commission advises the Chief Executive on the structure, salaries and conditions of service of the non-directorate civilian grades in the civil service. The Standing Commission is chaired by Dr Pang Yiu-kai. Its members are Mrs Edith Chan Ngan Man-ling, Mr Chan Tze-ching, Ms Christina Maisenne Lee, Mr Lee Luen-fai, Mr Lee Ming-kwai, Ms Angela Lee Wai-yin, Ms Elaine Lo Yuen-man, Dr Miranda Lou Lai-wah, Mr Joseph Luc Ngai and Mr Tony Tse Wai-chuen.