

Students with disabilities participate in internship scheme to better equip themselves to contribute to community (with photos)

The Secretary for the Civil Service, Mr Joshua Law, today (July 17) met post-secondary students with disabilities participating in a government summer internship scheme to learn about their internship experience at a tea gathering at the Central Government Offices. He said that the scheme aims to strengthen the students' competitiveness before entering the workforce, and encouraged them to work hard to equip themselves to contribute to the community.

Mr Law said, "The Civil Service Bureau (CSB) launched an internship scheme for students with disabilities in 2016 and about 250 students have taken part in this learning journey so far. I am pleased to note that some alumni of the scheme have been offered employment by private enterprises or government departments of their choice upon graduation. The scheme also enables civil service colleagues to appreciate the talents and potential of these students.

"The prominent feature of this internship scheme is that appropriate training and briefings are provided for the interns to enhance their understanding of the operation and work of their respective departments. Also, each intern has a mentor. The mentor, who is an experienced colleague, assists students to adapt to the work environment and cope with work challenges."

Miss Jennifer Shum, an alumna of the internship scheme in 2017 with visual disability, has become an Executive officer II, and she talked about her experience at the tea gathering.

Miss Shum said that apart from gaining practical work experience, the internship had also allowed her to personally experience the well-established work procedures and harmonious working atmosphere of the Government. She decided to join the challenging Executive Officer grade upon graduation. She said that the CSB had provided her with the necessary facilitating measures in the written test, such as provision of examination papers printed in a larger font size, which had given her an opportunity to compete in the recruitment exercise with other candidates on an equal footing. She added that her current department had also taken the initiative to provide her with a larger computer monitor and documents printed in a larger font size, allowing her to unleash her potential in the job alongside her colleagues.

Two of the interns, Miss Maggie Cheng and Miss Apple Fan, are providing administrative support at the Official Languages Division of the CSB and the

Housing Department respectively. Miss Cheng expressed her appreciation for the placement, which has provided her with a valuable learning experience and made her understand that despite her disability, she could display her capability at work. She added that she would encourage her peers with disabilities to join the scheme. Miss Fan said that the internship experience ignited her interest in administrative work and she believed that the experience acquired from the internship would strengthen her competitiveness when applying for relevant government jobs.

Another intern, Miss Priscilla Pang, has been tasked to assist in the work relating to barrier-free facilities and provide executive support to consultative committees in the Labour and Welfare Bureau. She thanked her supervisors for providing guidance and arranging assignments progressively according to her ability, which helped her better adapt.

Applauding the interns' proactive working attitude, mentors took the view that persons with disabilities are equally competent to work in different positions. One of the mentors, Mr Kelvin Cheng, said he hoped that, apart from accomplishing the duties assigned, the interns would be able to discover their own talent, gain job satisfaction and build self-confidence through the internship.

The CSB has doubled the number of internship places for students with disabilities from an average of 50 a year to 100 in 2018. This summer, more than 60 post-secondary students with disabilities were assigned to about 40 government bureaux and departments for an internship of about eight weeks to take up various duties including making preparations for setting up and updating databases and technical systems, editing departmental publications, event management, graphic design and production, developing teaching aids and providing support for enquiry counter services, so as to enable them to gain practical work experience.

