

Arrangements for admission of professionals of specified skilled trades announced

The Government announced today (May 30) the introduction of a new channel under the General Employment Policy (GEP) and the Admission Scheme for Mainland Talents and Professionals (ASMP) from June 30 to allow outside individuals to apply for entry into Hong Kong to join eight skilled trades facing acute manpower shortage. Applicants are required to be non-degree professionals meeting the relevant qualifications as specified in the Technical Professional List and aged between 18 and 40. This new arrangement will be piloted for three years with an overall quota of 10 000, and the quota for each skilled trade is limited to 3 000.

The Technical Professional List covers eight specified skilled trades, namely new industrialisation technicians, nurses, aircraft maintenance technicians, marine services technicians (for local vessels), information technology technicians, lift/escalator technicians, building information modeling coordinators and electrical technicians. Applicants are to meet the requirements on qualifications, work experience, professional skills (e.g. registration or license to practice), etc, of the specific skilled trade as listed on the List. In addition, according to the prevailing requirements under the GEP and the ASMP, the relevant professionals are required to have secured an employment offer from a local enterprise before application, and the remuneration package should be commensurate with the market level for similar jobs.

Depending on the skilled trade and the applicant's qualifications, the first entry visa will be valid for 24 or 36 months. When applying for visa renewal, a technical professional must continue to be employed in the same skilled trade in Hong Kong. If his/her visa renewal application is approved, an extension of stay of not more than 36 months, or in accordance with the validity period of his/her employment contract (whichever is shorter), may be granted.

A Government spokesperson said, "According to the 2023 Manpower Projection published last year, Hong Kong is expected to face an overall manpower shortage of 180 000 by 2028, over one-third of which will be skilled technical workers. As such, the 2024 Policy Address announced that a new channel would be introduced to attract young and experienced non-degree professionals to join skilled trades facing acute manpower shortage. The Technical Professional List was compiled by relevant bureaux and departments after careful consideration and in consultation with stakeholders of various industries and sectors. The eight skilled trades identified are all critical to sustaining Hong Kong's city operation, facing acute manpower shortage at least in the next five years, and in need of manpower that cannot be replenished by local training in good time."

"The new channel targets mid-level qualified and experienced non-degree technical professionals of specified trades and attracts them to settle in Hong Kong in the long run. This is distinct from and does not overlap with the existing Enhanced Supplementary Labour Scheme and sector-specific labour importation schemes. The new arrangement will be on a pilot basis for three years, subject to a review after the first year. Meanwhile, the Government will continue its commitment to training for local workers," the spokesman added.

Under the employment-tied GEP and the ASMTP, employers may apply to employ outside talent, normally with a bachelor's degree or higher qualifications, to fill job vacancies that could not be readily taken up by locals. For vacancies falling under the professions in the Talent List, the enterprises are not required to conduct a market availability test to prove difficulties in local recruitment before making applications. Employers submitting applications in future through the new technical professional stream under the two schemes will also enjoy such exemption from conducting a market availability test.

Details of the skilled trades of the Technical Professional List, the respective description of tasks and qualification requirements have been uploaded to the website of the Immigration Department (ImmD) (www.immd.gov.hk/eng/services/visas/TPStream.html), as well as the website of Hong Kong Talent Engage (www.hkengage.gov.hk). Enquiries can be made to the ImmD through its hotline (2824 6111), by fax (2877 7711) or by email (enquiry@immd.gov.hk).