

LCQ15: Overseas training for civil servants

Following is a question by the Hon Maggie Chan and a written reply by the Secretary for the Civil Service, Mrs Ingrid Yeung, in the Legislative Council today (May 28):

Question:

In the reply to my question on the Estimates of Expenditure 2025-2026, the Government has indicated that the revised estimate of expenditure of the Civil Service College (CSC) for various training and development areas in 2024-2025 is \$81.6 million. In addition, apart from the Civil Service Bureau (CSB), individual departments or grades will also arrange for their staff to attend overseas training, duty visits, and conferences. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the estimated expenditure of the CSB on overseas training, other than exchanges in the Mainland, in the past year; and among which, the respective percentages of spending on tuition fees, round-trip travel and accommodation, as well as study grants;

(2) regarding the arrangements for civil servants to attend overseas training, duty visits, and conferences, whether the CSB has formulated detailed selection criteria in respect of the countries, institutions, courses or nature of training concerned; if so, of the details;

(3) given that individual departments or grades will arrange for civil servants to attend overseas training, of the respective percentages of the expenditure of these departments on the relevant overseas training in their total expenditure in the past year; whether various departments have adopted consistent criteria for selecting overseas training programmes, and whether the CSB has issued the relevant selection criteria to the departments;

(4) given that in reply to my question on the Estimates of Expenditure 2025-2026, the Government has indicated that the CSB does not have the relevant expenditure and participant figures in respect of the arrangements made by individual departments or grades for their staff to attend overseas training, duty visits, and conferences, whether the CSB has plans to collect or consolidate the aforesaid information and make public the information as appropriate to enable the public to have a full picture of the situation of civil service training as well as the detailed expenditure; and

(5) given that in reply to my question on the Estimates of Expenditure 2025-2026, the Government has indicated that the CSC collects feedback from the participating civil servants through questionnaires or interviews upon completion of the overseas training, and requires them to submit a study report to evaluate the effectiveness of the training, of the standards adopted for such evaluation methods; how to ensure that the outcome of the

evaluation can objectively reflect the long-term effectiveness of overseas training?

Reply:

President,

The Civil Service Bureau (CSB) spares no effort in strengthening civil service training through a variety of activities to enhance civil servants' international perspectives and leadership capabilities, enabling them to support the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government in leveraging Hong Kong's strengths to connect our country with the world.

The replies to the respective parts of the question are as follows:

(1) Regarding overseas training, the CSB arranges for promising middle and senior-ranking civil servants to attend training at overseas institutions. In 2024, the CSB arranged for 29 civil servants to attend programmes on public administration, international relations, AI, and leadership in France, the United Kingdom, Germany, Switzerland, and Singapore. In 2024-25, the actual expenditure on overseas training incurred by the CSB was about \$9 million, with expenses for tuition fees, travel and accommodation expenses, and study grants accounting for 79 per cent, 19 per cent, and two per cent respectively.

(2) to (4) Apart from the CSB, individual departments/grades also arrange for their civil servants to attend training overseas. The business and staff development needs vary among departments/grades. Departmental/grade management will take into account the operation and development of the organisation in assessing their staff training needs, and consider factors such as teaching quality, trainers' qualifications, relevant experience, programme content and delivery mode, and fees, in order to select suitable training institutes and courses. Therefore, it would be inappropriate to impose uniform standards in this regard. The related training expenses are borne by the respective departments.

The CSB maintains close communication with departments/grades for an overall view of their staff training plans and implementation, providing timely advice to assist departments in continually enhancing their work on human resource development. The current approach is considered appropriate. The CSB will continue to keep the public informed of the overall situation and latest developments in civil service training through various channels, such as updates to the relevant Legislative Council Panel, websites, and social media platforms. As for overseas duty visits and conferences arranged by individual departments, since these fall within their own business scope, they have to be handled by the respective departments.

(5) Following the completion of overseas training, the Civil Service College (CSC) will collect feedback from participants through questionnaires and interviews, focusing on aspects such as course design and content, teaching methods, speakers' performance, and interactions among participants. The CSC will also require participants to submit individual study reports for a

deeper understanding of their learning insights and reflections, and the application of the learning to their work. Additionally, the CSC will require participants to share their learning insights with colleagues, with a view to benefitting more civil servants and fostering a culture of continuous learning in the civil service. Furthermore, the CSC will communicate with the departmental management to understand the learning outcomes of participants in areas such as perspectives, service mindset, and work performance. Departments will also continually assess the participants' work performance, development potential, and the need for further training.