

LCQ15: Quality Migrant Admission Scheme

Following is a question by Dr the Hon Johnny Ng and a reply by the Secretary for Security, Mr Tang Ping-keung, in the Legislative Council today (January 19):

Question:

The Government launched the Quality Migrant Admission Scheme (QMAS) in June 2006 to attract highly skilled or talented persons globally to settle in Hong Kong, so as to enhance the international competitiveness of Hong Kong. In order to attract non-local talents more proactively to enrich Hong Kong's talent pool, the Chief Executive announced in the 2021 Policy Address that the Government would further increase the annual quota of QMAS to 4 000. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the total number of talents granted approval to come to Hong Kong under QMAS last year, with a tabulated breakdown by (i) the country/place from which they came, and (ii) the industry in which they were engaged/the sector to which they belonged before coming to Hong Kong;

(2) whether it has assessed (i) if the talents admitted under QMAS meet the talent needs of various industries, and (ii) their effectiveness in promoting local economic and social development; and

(3) whether it will (i) step up the publicity and recruitment work on QMAS, so as to cater for the development needs of Hong Kong's economy and industries, and (ii) review the implementation of QMAS, so as to complement the National 14th Five-Year Plan and the development strategies of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area?

Reply:

President,

Human capital is an important driving force for enhancing Hong Kong's competitiveness and promoting economic development. Against the backdrop of an ageing population and a declining labour force, Hong Kong needs sufficient quality talents to meet the needs of a knowledge-based economy and its diversified development of industries.

Having consulted the Labour and Welfare Bureau, the Immigration Department (ImmD) and other relevant bureaux and departments, my consolidated reply to the question raised by Dr the Hon Johnny Ng is as follows:

(1) The Hong Kong SAR Government launched the Quality Migrant Admission Scheme (QMAS) in June 2006. As of end 2021, a total of 36 689 applications from close to 100 countries/regions had been received. Among them, 9 131

applicants were allotted with quotas.

The breakdowns of the applications received under the QMAS by year of application received, and the quotas allotted by year of approval, the industry/sector to which the applicants belonged and the places from which they came are tabulated as follows:

Year	Applications Received (note)	Quotas Allotted (note)
2006 (June to December)	587	83
2007	627	239
2008	1 358	564
2009	1 296	593
2010	1 177	329
2011	1 674	286
2012	1 965	298
2013	1 787	332
2014	2 341	373
2015	1 829	208
2016	1 575	273
2017	1 932	411
2018	3 314	555
2019	5 896	874
2020*	3 966	1 709
2021**	5 365	2 004
Total	36 689	9 131

Note: The applications with quotas allotted in a year may not correspond with the applications received in the same year.

* In 2020, the annual quota for QMAS was increased from 1 000 to 2 000.

** In 2021, the annual quota for QMAS was increased from 2 000 to 4 000.

Industry	Quotas Allotted
Financial and Accounting Services	2 264
Information Technology and Telecommunications	2 188
Architecture, Surveying, Engineering and Construction	704
Academic Research and Education	579
Commerce and Trade	573
Manufacturing Industries	554

Business Support and Human Resources	383
Legal Services	342
Arts and Culture	329
Human Health and Veterinary Services	288
Broadcasting and Entertainment	211
Sports	195
Logistics and Transportation	178
Catering and Tourism	53
Others	290
Total	9 131

Country/Region	Quotas Allotted
The mainland of China	8 039
The United States of America	183
Canada	160
Australia	157
The United Kingdom	95
India	71
Singapore	65
Malaysia	63
Taiwan, China	45
New Zealand	44
Others	209
Total	9 131

Talents allotted with quotas need to complete the relevant procedures before they settle in Hong Kong. The COVID-19 epidemic in the past two years has slowed down the pace of talents coming to settle in Hong Kong. The ImmD will continue to maintain contact with the talents allotted with quotas and provide possible facilitation arrangements for their early settlement in Hong Kong.

(2) The QMAS is always an important channel to attract highly skilled or talented persons globally to settle in Hong Kong, thereby enhancing the city's international competitiveness. With their international and Mainland perspectives, the talents who have settled in Hong Kong under the QMAS help the city fully capitalise on its advantages in closely connecting places around the world and the mainland of China, and strengthen Hong Kong's status as Asia's World City.

The QMAS is not sector-specific. Eligible applications will be short-listed for further assessment by the Advisory Committee on Admission of

Quality Migrants and Professionals (the Advisory Committee). The Advisory Committee comprises official members and non-official members from different sectors of the community appointed by the Chief Executive. Through a rigorous selection process, the Advisory Committee allots quotas under the QMAS to highly skilled or talented persons who meet Hong Kong's development needs. The Advisory Committee will consider the socio-economic needs of Hong Kong, the backgrounds of the candidates (such as academic attainment, professional training/qualification, work experience, international perspective, language proficiency and future development plan in Hong Kong) and other relevant factors, and make recommendations to the Director of Immigration on the best approach to allocate the quotas.

The Government will continue to review the arrangement and effectiveness of the QMAS to attract more highly skilled or talented persons to develop their careers and settle in Hong Kong with a view to enlarging Hong Kong's talent pool.

(3) Attracting talents is one of the priority policy areas of the Government. Further to the Government's initiative to increase the annual quota of the QMAS from 1 000 to 2 000 in 2020, the Chief Executive announced in her Policy Address in October 2021 that the annual quota would be doubled to 4 000 to attract talents from all over the world to work in Hong Kong. Besides, under the QMAS, eligible applicants who meet the professional specifications of the Talent List of Hong Kong will be awarded bonus points under the "General Points Test" of QMAS. Upon the completion of a review on the Talent List in 2021, the Labour and Welfare Bureau added to the list the professions of "financial professionals in compliance in asset management" and "professionals in Environmental, Social and Governance". The scope of some existing professions has been expanded to cover experts of "medical and healthcare sciences", "microelectronics", "integrated circuit design" and "arts technology", and the requirements on legal and dispute resolution professionals have been refined, with a view to complementing Hong Kong's future policy direction to develop the key areas of finance, innovation and technology, arts and culture, as well as dispute resolution services.

The HKSAR Government has been actively promoting the QMAS and various talent admission schemes through the network of the Economic and Trade Offices (ETOs) overseas and on the Mainland and Invest Hong Kong's (InvestHK) offices overseas and on the Mainland to attract talents from around the world to come to Hong Kong. Through different means and channels, such as meetings, online platforms, social media and electronic communications, the ETOs have been actively promoting the various talent admission schemes and introducing the development opportunities in Hong Kong to the key stakeholders in political, business and professional sectors. The ETOs have also hosted or participated in different events to this end. For example, they have promoted Hong Kong's advantages and encouraged talents to come to Hong Kong in business seminars, and organised talks at universities to introduce to students and graduates the employment opportunities in Hong Kong.

InvestHK has been actively working with relevant bureaux, the ImmD, the ETOs, the Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation, the Hong Kong

Cyberport Management Company Limited, foreign chambers of commerce and human resources consultancies to showcase to global talents the opportunities in Hong Kong and the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area by organising different kinds of global promotional events (including webinars) and through social media and other digital promotional platforms. InvestHK has rolled out promotional initiatives, including a thematic website on talent attraction (www.liveworkhongkong.gov.hk), flyers, presentation decks and promotional videos. Arrangements have also been made for the overseas and Mainland talents in Hong Kong to share their stories at different events for reference by those interested in coming to Hong Kong for career development.

While pursuing its efforts to nurture local talents, the HKSAR Government will continue to adopt an open talent attraction policy and step up publicity and promotion to attract the high-quality talents needed for Hong Kong's future economic development, with a view to seizing the tremendous opportunities brought about by the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, the National 14th Five-Year Plan and the Belt and Road Initiative, and supporting the long-term economic development of Hong Kong.