

LCQ19: Immigration Arrangements for Non-local Graduates

Following is a question by Dr the Hon Dennis Lam and a written reply by the Secretary for Education, Dr Choi Yuk-lin, in the Legislative Council today (June 11):

Question:

At present, the Immigration Arrangements for Non-local Graduates (IANG) adopt a "2+3+3" year mode of stay. It is learnt that earlier this year, some of those who were admitted to Hong Kong for employment through IANG (e.g. those whose employment contracts were about to expire) were unable to obtain three-year visa renewals smoothly when extending their stay. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the respective numbers of first applications for IANG and applications for extension of stay under IANG received, approved and rejected by the Immigration Department (ImmD), as well as the number of persons who were admitted to Hong Kong as dependants under IANG in the past three years;
- (2) of the following information on the full-time employment of the persons who have been granted IANG visas and their dependants mentioned in (1): (i) the major industries and job types in which they are engaged, and (ii) the highest, lowest and median amounts of monthly salaries;
- (3) whether it has assessed the long-term effectiveness of IANG in attracting and retaining talent; if it has assessed, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;
- (4) whether ImmD has made any adjustment to the vetting and approval of applications for extension of stay by IANG visa holders at present; if so, of the details; if not, why some IANG visa holders have relayed that their applications for extension of stay have only been granted for a few months; and
- (5) whether it has considered providing transitional support (e.g. arranging short-term accommodation and setting up a dedicated recruitment website, etc) for persons who have just been granted IANG visas in the future, so as to assist them in adapting the live in Hong Kong; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

Applicants who are/were non-local students and have obtained an undergraduate or higher qualification in a full-time and locally-accredited programme in Hong Kong may apply to stay/return and work in Hong Kong under the Immigration Arrangements for Non-local Graduates (IANG). The Government

has extended the IANG on a pilot basis to cover graduates with a bachelor's degree or higher qualification from Hong Kong universities' campuses in Mainland cities of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA).

After consultation with the Immigration Department and the Labour and Welfare Bureau, our consolidated replies to Dr the Hon Dennis Lam's questions are as follows:

(1) The numbers of applications received, approved and refused under the IANG in the past three years are tabulated below:

Type of Applications		2022	2023	2024
New applications	Number of applications received	10 936	27 295	26 973
	Number of applications approved	10 391	26 089	25 475
	Number of applications refused	21	16	24
Extension of stay applications	Number of applications received	11 032	11 637	6 985
	Number of applications approved	10 619	11 189	6 592
	Number of applications refused	6	20	53
Dependant application	Number of applications approved	1 851	4 702	6 600

Note: Applications approved/refused in a year may not all be received in the same year.

(2) At present, over 90 per cent of those coming to or staying in Hong Kong under the IANG are fresh graduates. They are not required to have secured offers of employment in Hong Kong upon application. However, when applying for an extension of stay, they are required to have taken up employment in Hong Kong that are at the levels commonly taken up by degree holders and the remuneration packages are on par with the market level. For those who have established or joined in business in Hong Kong, they are required to produce proof of their business upon application for an extension of stay.

The breakdown of the numbers of approved applications for an extension of stay under the IANG by industry/sector is tabulated below:

Industry/sector	2022	2023	2024
Financial services	4 298	4 338	2 834
Academic research and education	1 407	1 873	863
Commerce and trade	1 611	1 312	818

Information technology	495	477	241
Telecommunications	209	351	194
Engineering and construction	211	264	173
Legal services	164	196	111
Medical and healthcare services	124	136	104
Architecture/Surveying	97	112	60
Manufacturing industries	29	70	52
Tourism	25	47	39
Catering services	34	41	24
Arts/Culture	46	49	20
Recreation and sports	26	21	14
Traditional Chinese medicine	8	16	10
Biotechnology	32	40	8
Others	1 803	1 846	1 027
Total	10 619	11 189	6 592

The Immigration Department does not maintain other breakdowns of statistics mentioned in the question.

(3) Since its launch in 2008, the IANG has received positive response and helped Hong Kong attract and retain talent as well as expanding the talent pool. As at the end of April 2025, a total of 177 567 applications have been received. Among them, 172 043 applications have been approved, with over 90 per cent being recent non-local graduates and 2 825 applications coming from the graduates of the GBA campuses of Hong Kong universities. The statistics on entrants admitted to Hong Kong under the IANG who eventually acquired the right of abode in the past five years are tabulated as follows:

Admission policy/scheme	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
IANG	3 117	3 449	3 495	4 441	4 128

Note: The figures are based on the applicants' status in Hong Kong at the time of application for the right of abode.

With the development of the GBA, it has become a trend for Hong Kong universities to set up campuses in Mainland cities of the GBA through joint ventures, and their graduates will become an important source of talent in the GBA. Starting from the end of 2022, the Government has extended the IANG

on a pilot basis to cover graduates with a bachelor's degree or higher qualification from Hong Kong universities' campuses in Mainland cities of the GBA, so as to attract outstanding talent from these institutions to come to Hong Kong for employment and further boost Hong Kong's human resources and competitiveness. The Chief Executive announced in his Policy Address 2024 to extend the pilot arrangement for two years. This measure not only fosters the exchange of talents in the GBA, but also meets the needs of economic development in the GBA. We will continue to monitor the implementation of the IANG, particularly the response to the inclusion of graduates of Hong Kong universities' GBA campuses under the IANG, and review its effectiveness in due course.

(4) Upon applying for an extension of stay by persons admitted under the IANG, non-local graduates/GBA campus graduates are required to have taken up employment in Hong Kong which is at a level commonly taken up by degree holders and the remuneration package is at the market level. For those who have established or joined in a business in Hong Kong, they are required to produce proof of their business. When assessing an application for an extension of stay, various factors related to the applicant's employment or business conditions will be considered, including but not limited to the remuneration package or the operation and development of the business, the economic benefits brought by the employment or business, and the duration of stay in Hong Kong, etc. Successful applicants will normally be granted an extension of stay on time limitation only without other conditions of stay for not more than three years, or until the expiry of their employment contract in Hong Kong, whichever is the shorter. For those who have established or joined in a business in Hong Kong, the length of their extension of stay to be granted will be determined based on the comprehensive consideration of the operating conditions of the relevant business.

(5) Since its establishment on October 30, 2023, the Hong Kong Talent Engage (HKTE) has been providing comprehensive one-stop support to talents coming to or staying in Hong Kong under various talent admission schemes (including the IANG) through both online and offline means. Apart from providing comprehensive information on living and working in Hong Kong as well as handling enquiries from outside talent through its online platform (www.hkengage.gov.hk), the HKTE organises with working partners a variety of online and offline activities such as job fairs, themed seminars, workshops (including Cantonese learning classes) and social integration activities (including the Talent+ Volunteer Programme) to share information on entrepreneurship, employment as well as other living tips and to facilitate the incoming talent to settle in Hong Kong and integrate into the city as soon as possible. The online platform features about 5 000 real-time quality job opportunities daily for which talent can apply directly through the platform. Moreover, the online platform is connected to about 90 designated working partners of the HKTE to provide recommendations and services in areas such as job seeking, accommodation, education, integrated settlement, banking and insurance, business and corporate as well as networking and community, etc through online matching tools.