

Results of Language Proficiency Assessment for Teachers released

The Education Bureau (EDB) today (May 20) announced that candidates of the Language Proficiency Assessment for Teachers (LPAT) 2021 (written and speaking papers), held in January and March this year, will receive results notices by post from the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA) starting from tomorrow (May 21).

A total of 1 326 candidates sat for the English Language papers, while 1 356 sat for the Putonghua papers this year.

The results of the assessment are as follows:

English Language papers:

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Putonghua papers:

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Applications for re-checking of results will be accepted on or before May 26. Candidates will be informed individually of their appeal results by June 25.

The Assessment Reports, which provide the chief examiners' observations on candidates' performance, including their strengths and areas for improvement, will be released in October through the websites of the HKEAA (www.hkeaa.edu.hk) and the EDB (www.edb.gov.hk) for the reference of candidates, schools and teacher education institutions. The question papers, together with a CD for the listening papers, suggested answers and Assessment Reports, will be available for sale in October.

Those who intend to attain the LPR in future can do so through assessment and/or exemption. The next call for online applications to sit for the LPAT will be made in September 2021, while applications for exemption from the LPR are accepted all year round and processed in two batches. The EDB will announce details in a circular memorandum in the 2021/22 school year.

The spokesman added, "Concerning the Classroom Language Assessment (CLA), teachers holding a permanent post have to meet the LPR within the first year of teaching the two languages. Due to the impact of COVID-19 and suspension of face-to-face classes, the EDB has already extended the deadline in the 2020/21 school year for one year. All the results notices for the CLA will be issued in August this year at the earliest, if feasible."

[HAD to open temporary night heat shelters](#)

The Home Affairs Department will open 19 temporary night heat shelters tonight (May 20) for people in need of the service.

The shelters will be open from 10.30pm until 8am tomorrow.

For further information, please call the department's hotline before midnight on 2572 8427.

The 19 night heat shelters are located at:

Hong Kong Districts:

Central and Western –
Sai Ying Pun Community Complex Community Hall
3/F, Sai Ying Pun Community Complex

2 High Street, Sai Ying Pun

Eastern –

Causeway Bay Community Centre
3/F, 7 Fook Yum Road, Causeway Bay

Southern –

Wah Kwai Community Centre
Wah Kwai Estate, Kellett Bay

Wan Chai –

Wan Chai Activities Centre
LG/F, Wan Chai Market, 258 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai

Kowloon Districts:

Kowloon City –

Hung Hom Community Hall
1/F, Kowloon City Government Offices
42 Bailey Street, Hung Hom

Kwun Tong –

Lam Tin (West) Estate Community Centre
71 Kai Tin Road, Lam Tin

Sham Shui Po –

Shek Kip Mei Community Hall
G/F, Block 42, Shek Kip Mei Estate, Sham Shui Po

Wong Tai Sin –

Tsz Wan Shan (South) Estate Community Centre
45 Wan Wah Street, Tsz Wan Shan

Yau Tsim Mong –

Henry G Leong Yaumatei Community Centre
60 Public Square Street, Yau Ma Tei

New Territories Districts:

Islands –

Tung Chung North Park (Zone B) Activity Room
29 Man Tung Road, Tung Chung

Kwai Tsing –

Kwai Shing Community Hall
Podium, Block 6, Kwai Shing West Estate, Kwai Chung

North –

Cheung Wah Community Hall

Cheung Wah Estate, Fanling

Sai Kung –
King Lam Neighbourhood Community Centre
King Lam Estate, Tseung Kwan O

Sha Tin –
Lung Hang Estate Community Centre
Lung Hang Estate, Sha Tin

Tai Po –
Tai Po Community Centre
2 Heung Sze Wui Street, Tai Po

Tsuen Wan –
Lei Muk Shue Community Hall
G/F, Hong Shue House, Lei Muk Shue Estate, Tsuen Wan

Tuen Mun –
Butterfly Bay Community Centre
Butterfly Estate (near Tip Sum House), Tuen Mun

Yuen Long –
Long Ping Community Hall
Long Ping Estate, Yuen Long

Yuen Long –
Tin Yiu Community Centre
Tin Yiu Estate, Tin Shui Wai

The temporary night heat shelters will resume their functions as either community centres or community halls in the daytime for hire by the local community and cannot continue to be open as heat shelters. People may choose to take refuge from the heat during the daytime in the common areas in any of the 22 designated community centres or community halls. Their opening hours are from 9am to 10pm. For the addresses of the community centres and community halls, please browse the following document: www.had.gov.hk/file_manager/en/documents/public_services/emergency_services/List_CH_CC_Day_E.pdf.

CSSA caseload for April 2021

The overall Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) caseload in April showed a drop of 638 cases, representing a decrease of 0.3 per cent compared with that of March, according to the latest CSSA caseload statistics released by the Social Welfare Department today (May 20).

The total CSSA caseload at the end of April stood at 223 154 (see attached table), with a total of 318 964 recipients.

Analysed by case nature, low-earnings cases registered a month-to-month decrease of 1.0 per cent to 2 398 cases. Old age cases were down by 0.5 per cent to 128 163 cases.

Unemployment cases remained steady at 19 801 cases. The figure represented an increase of about 57.3 per cent in comparison with that of January 2020 when Hong Kong just started to fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. The average number of applications for unemployment cases in February to April 2021 was 789 per month, representing a reduction of 7.8 per cent from that in January to March, or a reduction of 63.6 per cent from that in February to April 2020.

Ill-health cases rose by 0.3 per cent to 26 360 cases. Both permanent disability cases and single parent cases increased by 0.1 per cent to 17 523 cases and 24 851 cases respectively.

BFAC appreciates Government's efforts in protecting environment and facilitating development of local circular economy

The following is issued on behalf of the Business Facilitation Advisory Committee Secretariat:

The Business Facilitation Advisory Committee held its 45th meeting today (May 20). At the meeting, members were briefed by the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) on the proposed Producer Responsibility Scheme on Plastic Beverage Containers (PPRS) for the proper and effective management of waste plastic beverage containers.

The EPD has launched a three-month public consultation which will end tomorrow (May 21). Members were briefed on the content and key elements of the proposed PPRS, including the appropriate application of reverse vending machines to enhance the recovery efficiency and facilitate the provision of rebates, having certain retail stores selling pre-packaged beverages serve as designated return points, a rebate arrangement to be set up to encourage the public to return plastic beverage containers, a levy to be imposed at the beverage supplier level to fund the operations of the PPRS, and licensing control on the operation of recycling facilities to ensure proper recycling

and treatment of waste plastic beverage containers.

The Committee noted the EPD's proposal of introducing the PPRS to minimise the impacts caused by plastic beverage containers on the environment and appreciated its efforts in protecting the environment and facilitating the development of the local circular economy.

The Committee also received the work report of its three task forces:

Wholesale and Retail Task Force (WRTF)

- The Government published a public consultation document in December 2020 on the proposed amendments to the Harmful Substances in Food Regulations (Cap. 132AF) for strengthening the regulation of harmful substances such as industrially produced trans fats and mycotoxins. The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) sought views of the WRTF on the proposed amendments and subsequently discussed the subject with relevant parties and provided supplementary information.
- The EPD briefed members on the Voluntary Scheme for Phasing Out Personal Care and Cosmetic Products Containing Microbeads. The WRTF welcomed the Scheme and appreciated the Government's efforts in environmental protection and enhancing the public's understanding of microbead-related subjects.

Food Business and Related Services Task Force (FRSTF)

- Apart from the WRTF, the FRSTF also consulted its members on the proposed amendments to the Harmful Substances in Food Regulations (Cap. 132AF) and their views were forwarded to the CFS accordingly.
- The FEHD briefed the FRSTF on the ventilation requirement in seating areas of catering premises and the action required of the licensees in complying with the Prevention and Control of Disease (Requirements and Directions) (Business and Premises) Regulation (Cap. 599F). The FRSTF thanked the FEHD for the briefing and assistance in addressing the trade's concern.
- To tie in with the Government's measures to support enterprises and safeguard jobs under the epidemic, the Employees Retraining Board (ERB) briefed the FRSTF on the Love Upgrading Special Scheme 3, which renders assistance to the underemployed or employees on no-pay leave in skills upgrading. The FRSTF expressed appreciation to the ERB for the briefing and its work on supporting the employees affected by the economic

downturn.

Task Force on Business Liaison Groups (BLGTF)

- The Office of the Communications Authority briefed the BLGTF on the Subsidy Scheme for Encouraging Early Deployment of 5G. The BLGTF welcomed the Scheme, which will foster innovation and smart city development and contribute to enhancing Hong Kong's overall competitiveness.
- The Buildings Department (BD) briefed the BLGTF on the main features of the Building (Minor Works) (Amendment) Regulation 2020 (Amendment Regulation). The BLGTF acknowledged the BD's work to introduce the Amendment Regulation to extend the scope of minor works to facilitate business operations.
- Further to the measure introduced by the Fire Services Department to streamline the renewal of Temporary Places of Public Entertainment Licences in theme parks and attractions, the FEHD and the BD have devised similar measures to dovetail with the renewal process. The BLGTF welcomed the measures, which will help the trades to save operational costs and administrative burden.

The Committee also expressed appreciation for the commitment and achievements of the bureaux and departments in continuously enhancing their business licensing services under the "Be the Smart Regulator" Programme.

Papers for the Committee meeting are available at www.gov.hk/en/business/supportenterprises/bf/advisory/index.htm for public access.

Unemployment and underemployment statistics for February – April 2021

According to the latest labour force statistics (i.e. provisional figures for February – April 2021) released today (May 20) by the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD), the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate decreased from 6.8% in January – March 2021 to 6.4% in February – April 2021. The underemployment rate also decreased from 3.8% in January – March 2021 to 3.3% in February – April 2021.

Comparing February – April 2021 with January – March 2021, the unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted) decreased across almost all the major economic sectors, with more distinct decreases observed in the construction sector; and retail, accommodation and food services sector. As to the underemployment rate, decreases were mainly seen in the construction sector; retail, accommodation and food services sector; transportation sector; and arts, entertainment and recreation sector.

Total employment increased by around 7 900 from 3 614 100 in January – March 2021 to 3 622 000 in February – April 2021. Over the same period, the labour force decreased by around 4 400 from 3 873 900 to 3 869 500.

The number of unemployed persons (not seasonally adjusted) decreased by around 12 300 from 259 800 in January – March 2021 to 247 500 in February – April 2021. Over the same period, the number of underemployed persons also decreased by around 21 800 from 148 400 to 126 600.

Commentary

Commenting on the latest unemployment figures, the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Dr Law Chi-kwong said, "The labour market saw some improvement lately as the local epidemic receded. The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate fell by 0.4 percentage point from January – March 2021 to 6.4% in February – April 2021, and the underemployment rate decreased by 0.5 percentage point to 3.3%. Meanwhile, total employment rose by 7 900 over the preceding three-month period to 3 622 000, and the number of unemployed persons went down by 12 300 to 247 500."

Analysed by sector, the unemployment rates of most economic sectors fell in February – April 2021 as compared with the preceding three-month period. In particular, the combined unemployment rate of the consumption- and tourism-related sectors (viz. retail, accommodation and food services sectors) fell by 0.8 percentage point to 9.9%. Among these sectors, the unemployment rate of food and beverage service activities declined from 13.3% to 12.1%. Meanwhile, the unemployment rate of the construction sector declined by 0.6 percentage point to 10.9%.

Looking ahead, Dr Law said, "Considering that the business receipts of many labour-intensive sectors are still far below the pre-recession levels, the labour market will take time to attain a more visible recovery. Nonetheless, if the local epidemic remains well-contained, the pressure on the labour market will gradually ease in the period ahead. To create more favourable conditions for the revival of consumer-facing and tourism-related activities, it is essential for the community to work together to keep the epidemic under control and actively participate in the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme. The Government will continue to monitor the situation closely."

He pointed out that in order to assist secondary school leavers of this year to enter the labour market, the Labour Department (LD) launched a special programme – Career Let's Go, from May to August 2021. Youth Employment Start will organise various training courses, including those that

enhance the job-hunting and interviewing skills of graduates, as well as provide school leavers with career assessment and career consultation services etc. Moreover, the LD will canvass job vacancies suitable for secondary school leavers and organise a number of large-scale and district-based job fairs where job-seekers can have job interviews with the recruiting employers on the spot. A dedicated webpage (www.jobs.gov.hk/careerletsgo) has already been set up to provide information on the activities of the special programme as well as other employment market information, including listing out job vacancies suitable for persons with secondary school education.

On large-scale job fairs, the LD will organise the Creating New Opportunities Job Fair on June 1 and 2, 2021 at the MacPherson Stadium, with a virtual job fair launched in parallel. Over 45 employers will participate, offering a large amount of job vacancies from various industries. Meanwhile, the LD will continue to receive and release information on job vacancies from various industries. In February – April 2021, the LD recorded an average of 72 472 vacancies from the private sector, representing an increase of 17.8% over the average figure in January – March 2021 and a year-on-year increase of 71.1%. Job-seekers may make use of the LD's online platforms such as the Interactive Employment Service website for obtaining such vacancy information.

Further Information

The unemployment and underemployment statistics were compiled from the findings of the continuous General Household Survey.

The survey for February – April 2021 covered a sample of some 26 000 households or 73 000 persons, selected in accordance with a scientifically designed sampling scheme to represent the population of Hong Kong. Labour force statistics compiled from this sample represented the situation in the moving 3-month period of February to April 2021.

Data on labour force characteristics were obtained from the survey by interviewing each member aged 15 or over in the sampled households.

In the survey, the definitions used in measuring unemployment and underemployment follow closely those recommended by the International Labour Organization.

Statistical tables on the latest labour force statistics can be downloaded at the website of the C&SD (www.censtatd.gov.hk/en/EIndexbySubject.html?pcode=D5250021&scode=200). More detailed analysis of the labour force characteristics is given in the "Quarterly Report on General Household Survey" which is published four times a year. The latest issue of the publication contains statistics for the quarter October – December 2020 while the next issue covering the quarter January – March 2021 will be available by end May 2021. Users can also download this publication at the website of the C&SD (www.censtatd.gov.hk/en/EIndexbySubject.html?pcode=B1050001&scode=200).

For enquiries about labour force statistics, please contact the Household Statistics Analysis Section of the C&SD (Tel: 2887 5508 or email: ghs@censtatd.gov.hk).