

Unemployment and underemployment statistics for March – May 2025

According to the latest labour force statistics (i.e. provisional figures for March – May 2025) released today (June 17) by the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD), the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate increased from 3.4% in February – April 2025 to 3.5% in March – May 2025. The underemployment rate also increased from 1.3% in February – April 2025 to 1.4% in March – May 2025.

Comparing March – May 2025 with February – April 2025, the unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted) increased across most major economic sectors, with more distinct increases observed in the construction sector, retail sector and real estate sector. As to the underemployment rate, increases were mainly seen in the construction sector and transportation sector.

Total employment decreased by around 12 400 from 3 677 100 in February – April 2025 to 3 664 700 in March – May 2025. Over the same period, the labour force also decreased by around 6 000 from 3 806 500 to 3 800 500.

The number of unemployed persons (not seasonally adjusted) increased by around 6 400 from 129 400 in February – April 2025 to 135 800 in March – May 2025. Over the same period, the number of underemployed persons also increased by around 6 000 from 47 600 to 53 600.

Commentary

Commenting on the latest unemployment figures, the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Mr Chris Sun, said, "Compared with the preceding three-month period, the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate posted a modest uptick of 0.1 percentage point to 3.5% in March – May 2025. The underemployment rate also edged up by 0.1 percentage point to 1.4%. The labour force and total employment decreased further to 3 800 500 and 3 664 700 respectively."

Looking ahead, Mr Chris Sun said, "The pace of job creation will continue to be affected by the evolvement of different industries amidst the continuing uncertain external environment and the changing consumption patterns of locals and visitors. Besides, the entry of fresh graduates and school leavers in the coming few months may further impact the overall employment situation. That said, we are delighted to see the steady expansion of the Hong Kong economy with real Gross Domestic Product in 2025 forecast to grow by 2% to 3%, and the injection of new impetus to the market by local and non-local operators as reflected by the numbers of registered local and foreign companies having reached new heights in recent months. These positive developments should render support to the labour market and sustain the momentum of Hong Kong's economic development."

Further information

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

In the survey, the definitions used in measuring unemployment and underemployment follow closely those recommended by the International Labour Organization. The employed population covers all employers, self-employed persons, employees (including full-time, part-time, casual workers, etc.) and unpaid family workers. Unemployed persons by industry (or occupation) are classified according to their previous industry (or occupation).

The survey for March – May 2025 covered a sample of some 26 000 households or 68 000 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 three-month period of March to May 2025.

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

Statistical tables on the latest labour force statistics can be downloaded at the website of the C&SD (www.censtatd.gov.hk/en/scode200.html). 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 report contains statistics for the quarter January – March 2025 while the next issue covering the quarter April – June 2025 will be available by end August 2025. Users can also browse and 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 General Household Survey Section (3) of the C&SD (Tel: 2887 5508 or email: ghs@censtatd.gov.hk).