

公務員敍用委員會

# Public Service Commission

Annual Report  
2024 年報





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## CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD

“

**Without fear or favour, the Commission is committed to upholding impartiality and integrity, fostering a capable Civil Service ready for future challenges.**

”



It is my privilege to present the second Annual Report since I have assumed the role of Chairman of the Public Service Commission in May 2023. This report highlights the Commission's unwavering commitment to upholding impartiality and integrity of the appointment, promotion and disciplinary systems in the Civil Service.

The year 2024 was both busy and productive for the Commission. In terms of workload, the Commission provided advice on a total of 1 188 submissions, with cases on recruitment and promotion forming the bulk of our work as in the past. While the number of candidates considered is far greater than the past few years, we are pleased that Bureaux/Departments (B/Ds) have generally conducted recruitment and promotion exercises in an effective manner, aligning with the established rules and procedures.

I am particularly encouraged to see that many B/Ds have taken heed of the Commission's advice and made promising progress in rectifying the inadequacies identified by us. Their receptiveness and commitment to improvement strengthen a merit-driven Civil Service as well as demonstrate their resolve to uphold high standards. These positive outcomes reaffirm the Commission's indispensable mandate in safeguarding the principles of fairness and integrity.

Nevertheless, certain practices that for want of improvement were still observed in some submissions. This Report includes case studies highlighting these instances, along with key observations and recommendations for further improvement. By sharing these insights, we aim to provide practical reference for personnel involved in human resource management in the Civil Service and shed light on the importance for the senior management to drive continuous improvement.

In the realm of disciplinary cases, the Commission is encouraged by the consistently low number of civil servants subject to formal disciplinary punishments, reflecting the generally high standard of conduct and probity maintained in the Civil Service. Appreciating that there is no room for complacency, we fully support the Government's proposals to review the Public Service (Administration) Order and Public Service (Disciplinary) Regulation, as announced in the Chief Executive's 2024 Policy Address. We look forward to contributing to this essential initiative with a view to enhancing the civil service disciplinary mechanism.

In tandem with our advisory role on individual submissions, the Commission works closely with the Administration for the betterment of the Civil Service. The promulgation of the updated Civil Service Code in 2024 marks a significant step forward in reinforcing the core values and standards expected of civil servants. We are also pleased to note that the implementation of the streamlined mechanism for retiring civil servants in the public interest on grounds of persistent sub-standard performance has significantly accelerated the case processing time, ensuring efficiency and effectiveness of the mechanism.

The Commission also continues to advocate for a forward-looking approach to human resource management. In scrutinising the submissions in 2024, we continued to provide advice on human resource practices, encouraging B/Ds to adopt a strategic and far-sighted way in formulating their staff development, training, and succession plans to build a resilient, high-performing, and sustainable workforce dedicated to public service.

As the development of Hong Kong becomes increasingly complex and dynamic, the Civil Service has to be well-prepared to rise to challenges ahead so as to meet growing public expectations. Since the Government is committed to trimming the civil service establishment by 2% each in 2026-27 and 2027-28 as announced in the 2025 Budget, building a leaner yet highly capable Civil Service is more critical than ever. It is an opportune moment for B/Ds to think out of the box to achieve streamlining and resources optimisation. The Commission is looking forward to holding hands with B/Ds to meet such challenges.

I would like to take this opportunity to extend my heartfelt gratitude to my fellow Commission Members for their unfailing support and invaluable counsel. In particular, I wish to pay special tribute to Mrs Margaret Leung and Mr Tim Lui, who retired from the Commission after having served as Members for six years. At the same time, I warmly welcome Mr Ivan Chu and Mr Stephen Yiu, who joined the Commission in July 2024.

My gratitude is extended to the Secretary for the Civil Service and her colleagues for their strong support and assistance in taking forward the Commission's recommendations and advice. Last but not least, my appreciation also goes to the Secretary of the Commission and all staff of the Commission Secretariat for their dedication and hard work over the past year.

Ms Maisie Cheng  
Chairman



## CHAPTER 1

### AN OVERVIEW OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

1.1 The Public Service Commission is an independent statutory body which advises the Chief Executive (CE) on civil service appointments, promotions and discipline. Its mission is to safeguard the impartiality and integrity of the appointment and promotion systems in the Civil Service and to ensure that a high standard of discipline is maintained. The Commission's remit is stipulated in the Public Service Commission Ordinance (PSCO) and its subsidiary regulations (Chapter 93 of the Laws of Hong Kong).

#### Membership

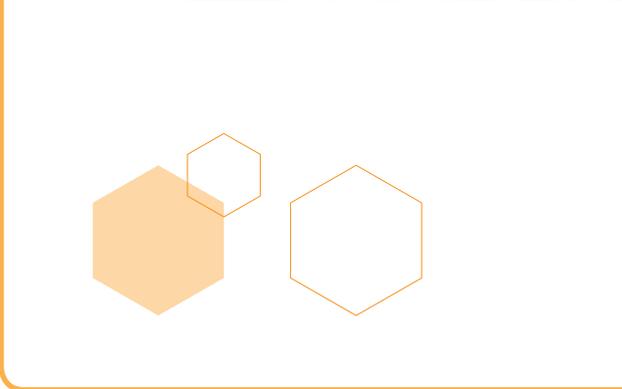
1.2 In accordance with the PSCO, the Commission comprises a Chairman and not less than two but not more than eight Members. All of them are appointed by the CE and have a record of public or community service. The membership of the Commission during 2024 was as follows –



Chairman and Members of the Public Service Commission with the Secretary for the Civil Service and Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service.

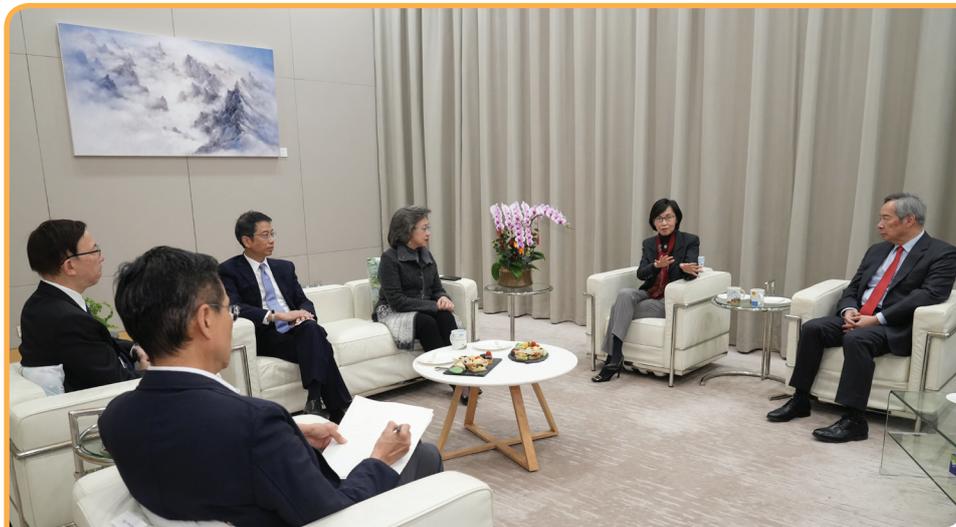


The Public Service Commission at a meeting.

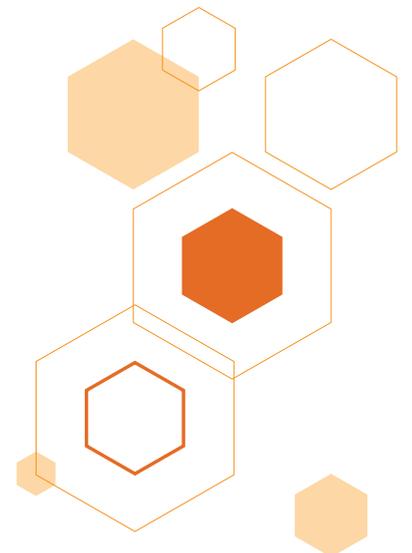




Farewell to former Members of the Public Service Commission, Mr Lester HUANG, Mrs Ava NG, Mrs Margaret LEUNG and Mr Tim LUI.



The Public Service Commission in a tea gathering hosted by the Secretary for the Civil Service.



### Chairman

Ms Maisie CHENG Mei-sze, GBS, JP since May 2023

### Members

Mr Lester Garson HUANG, SBS, JP February 2018 to January 2024

Mrs Ava NG TSE Suk-ying, SBS February 2018 to January 2024

The Honourable Mrs Margaret LEUNG KO  
May-yee, SBS, JP July 2018 to June 2024

Mr Tim LUI Tim-leung, GBS, JP July 2018 to June 2024

Dr Clement CHEN Cheng-jen, GBS, JP since December 2019

Prof Francis LUI Ting-ming, BBS, JP since June 2021

Ms Agnes CHAN Sui-kuen, BBS since May 2022

Mrs Ann KUNG YEUNG Yun-chi, BBS, JP since May 2022

Mr Victor LAM Wai-kiu, SBS since February 2024

Mr Adrian WONG Koon-man, BBS, MH, JP since February 2024

Mr Ivan CHU Kwok-leung since July 2024

Mr Stephen YIU Kin-wah, JP since July 2024

### Secretary

Ms Fontaine CHENG Fung-ying, JP since October 2018

Curricula vitae of the Chairman and Members are at **Appendix I**.

## Secretariat

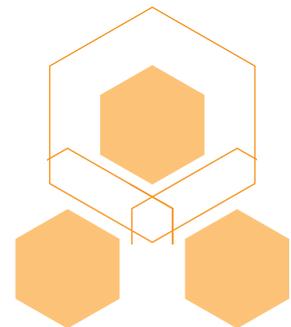
1.3 The Commission is supported by a small team of civil servants from the Executive Officer, Secretarial and Clerical grades. At the end of 2024, the number of established posts in the Commission Secretariat was 34. An organisation chart of the Commission Secretariat is at **Appendix II**.

## Role and Functions

1.4 The Commission's role is advisory. With a few exceptions specified in section (s.) 6(2) of the PSCO<sup>1</sup>, the Commission advises on the appointments and promotions of civil servants to posts with a maximum monthly salary at Master Pay Scale Point 26 (\$59,110 as at end of 2024) or above, up to and including Permanent Secretaries and Heads of Department (HoDs). The appointment of the Principal Officials of the executive authorities of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) as stipulated under the Basic Law of the HKSAR of the People's Republic of China does not fall under the purview of the Commission. At the end of June 2024, the number of established civil service posts falling under the Commission's purview was about 55 000

out of a total of about 192 000. However, irrespective of rank, the following categories of cases are required to be referred to the Commission for advice. They are –

- (a) cases involving termination (including non-renewal) of agreement and further appointment on agreement terms or new permanent terms under the circumstances as specified in Civil Service Bureau (CSB) Circular No. 8/2003 and the relevant supplementary guidelines issued by CSB;
- (b) termination or extension of probationary or trial service, except for certain extension cases which involve sick leave and light duty as prescribed and promulgated by CSB in November 2023;
- (c) refusal of passage of probation or trial bar; and
- (d) retirement in the public interest under s.12 of the Public Service (Administration) Order (PS(A)O)<sup>2</sup>.



1 In accordance with s.6(2) of the PSCO, the post of the Director of Audit as well as posts in the judicial service of the Judiciary, the Independent Commission Against Corruption and the disciplined ranks of the Hong Kong Police Force are outside the Commission's purview. In addition, the Director of Immigration and the Commissioner of Customs and Excise are civil servant Principal Official posts, to which the appointment does not require the Commission's advice.

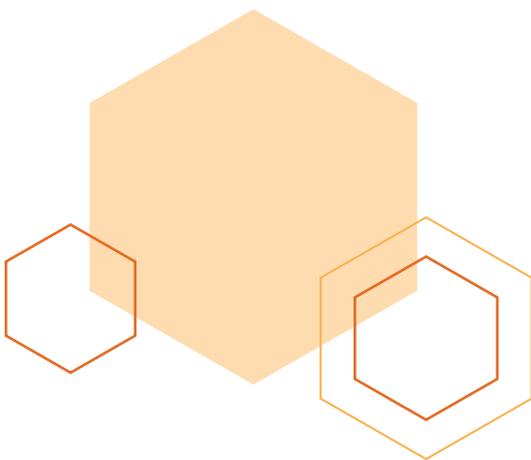
2 The PS(A)O is an executive order made by the CE under Article 48(4) of the Basic Law. It sets out the CE's authority in regard to the management of the Civil Service, including discipline matters.

1.5 As regards disciplinary cases, the Administration is required under s.18 of the PS(A)O<sup>3</sup> to consult the Commission before inflicting any punishment under s.9, s.10 or s.11 of the PS(A)O upon Category A officers with the exception of the exclusions specified in the PSCO. Category A officers refer to those who are appointed to and confirmed in an established office or are members of the Civil Service Provident Fund (CSPF) Scheme<sup>4</sup>. They include virtually all officers except those on probation, agreement and some who are remunerated on the Model Scale 1 Pay Scale. At the end of June 2024, the number of Category A officers falling under the Commission's purview for disciplinary matters was about 123 800.

1.6 The Commission also handles representations from officers on matters falling within its statutory purview and in which the officers have a direct and definable interest. In addition, the Commission is required to advise on any matter relating to the Civil Service that may be referred to it by the CE. The Commission also advises the Secretary for the Civil Service on policy and procedural issues pertaining to appointments, promotions and discipline as well as on a wide range of subjects relating to human resource management.

### Mode of Operation

1.7 The business of the Commission is normally conducted through circulation of papers. Meetings are held to discuss major policy issues or cases which are complex or involve important points of principle. At such meetings, representatives of CSB and senior managements of Bureaux/Departments (B/Ds) may be invited to apprise the Commission of the background of the issue or case but the Commission forms its views independently.



3 Generally speaking, with the exception of middle-ranking officers or below in disciplined services grades who are subject to the respective disciplined services legislation, civil servants are governed by disciplinary provisions in the PS(A)O. For disciplinary cases processed under the respective disciplined services legislation of which the punishment authority is the CE (or his delegate), the Government will, subject to the exclusions specified in s.6(2) of the PSCO, consult the Commission on the disciplinary punishment under s.6(1)(d) of the PSCO.

4 The CSPF Scheme is the retirement benefits system for civil servants appointed on or after 1 June 2000 and on New Permanent Terms of appointment.

1.8 In examining submissions from B/Ds, the Commission's primary aim is to ensure that the recommendations are well justified and are arrived at following the laid down procedures and stipulated guidelines. To achieve this, the Commission has devised a meticulous vetting system and, in the process, may require B/Ds to provide clarifications and supplementary information. In some cases, B/Ds would revise their recommendations after taking into account the Commission's observations. In other cases, the Commission is able to be satisfied with the propriety of the recommendations after examining the elaborations provided. The Commission also tenders suggestions or reminders to B/Ds on areas worthy of management attention. The ultimate objective is to facilitate the pursuit of excellence in the administration of the appointment, promotion and disciplinary systems in the Civil Service.

## Confidentiality and Impartiality

1.9 In accordance with s.12(1) of the PSCO, the Chairman or any member of the Commission or any other person is prohibited from publishing or disclosing to any unauthorised person any information which has come to his knowledge in respect of any matter referred to the Commission under the Ordinance. Under s.13 of the PSCO, every person is prohibited from influencing or attempting to influence any decision of the Commission or the Chairman or any member of the Commission. These provisions serve to provide a clear and firm legal basis for safeguarding the confidentiality and impartial conduct of the Commission's business.



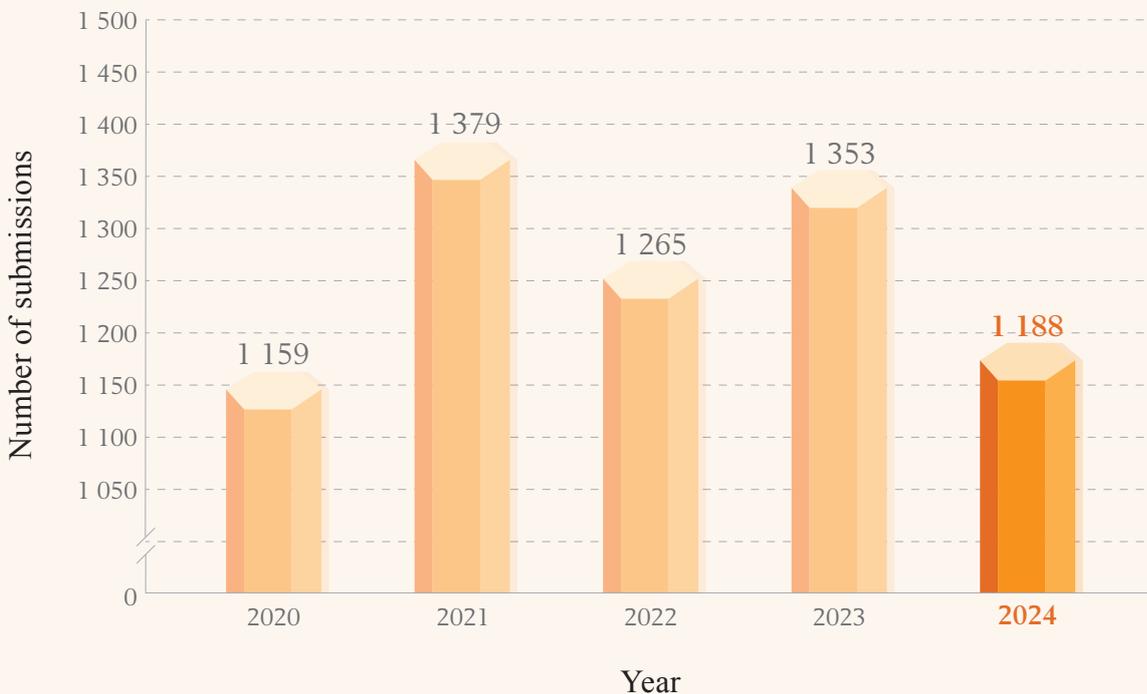
## Work in 2024

1.10 In 2024, the Commission advised on 1 188 submissions covering recruitment, promotions and disciplinary cases as well as other appointment-related subjects. Queries were raised in respect of 735 submissions, resulting in 125 re-submissions (17%) with recommendations revised by B/Ds in the light of the Commission’s comments. All submissions in 2024 were completed within the pledged processing time<sup>5</sup>. A statistical breakdown of these cases and a comparison with those in the past four years are provided in **Appendix III**.

1.11 Separately, the Commission handled a total of 36 representations and complaints in 2024. We deal with representations and complaints seriously as follows –

- (a) all representations under the Commission’s purview are replied to following thorough examination. Should inadequacies or irregularities in B/Ds’ work be identified in the process, the Commission will provide advice to B/Ds concerned for rectification; and

**Number of Submissions advised by the Commission from 2020 to 2024**

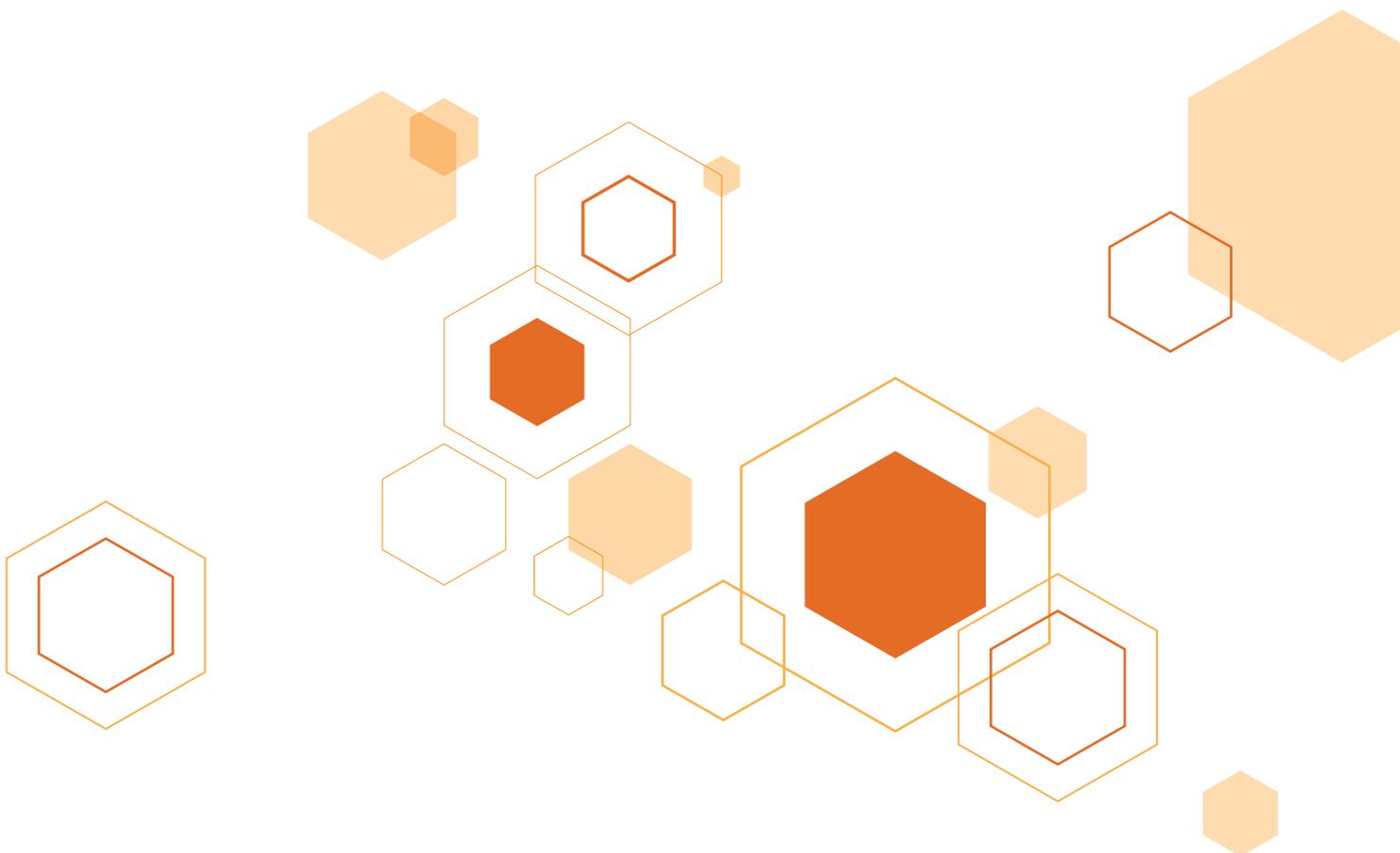


5 In dealing with promotions and disciplinary cases, the Commission’s target is to tender its advice or respond formally within six weeks upon receipt of the submissions. As for recruitment cases, the Commission’s target is to tender advice or respond within four weeks upon receipt of such submissions.

(b) for complaints, which vary in nature, the Commission will deliberate on the substance of the complaints upon obtaining the facts and information from the relevant B/Ds, and give replies after careful examination. Where the matters raised fall outside the Commission's purview, we will re-direct them to the relevant B/Ds for follow-up and reply.

1.12 The Commission has a key role to ensure compliance and uniformity in the application of policies and procedures pertaining to appointments, promotions and discipline in the Civil Service.

While staff training and development are the fundamental responsibilities of departmental and grade managements (GMs), the Commission has been working with CSB to promote a holistic approach in developing a comprehensive Human Resource Management strategy which best serves the interest of the Civil Service. Specifically, we would like to see B/Ds create and engender an optimum environment to manage, develop and motivate staff, thus enabling them to embrace the opportunities and challenges of developing Hong Kong and upkeeping our good governance.



1.13 In 2024, the Commission continued to field officers from the Commission Secretariat to participate in training sessions and workshops organised for officers of the Executive Officer Grade and GMs. Equipping them with the necessary knowledge and expertise to discharge their human resource management function is imperative in ensuring that the recruitment, management of probationers, promotion and performance management systems are administered properly and in full compliance with civil service policies and rules. Through these interactive training sessions and workshops, the officers concerned actively engaged in discussions, exchanged experiences, which helped deepen their understanding of human resource management practices. We were delighted with the positive feedback gauged. These forums also fostered communication between the Commission and B/Ds. As such training enables officers responsible for preparing submissions to the Commission be better acquainted with the Commission's standard and requirements, it in turn has helped enhance our mutual efficiency.

1.14 Last year, the Commission advised B/Ds, where necessary, to arrange for supervising officers to attend the relevant management courses organised by the Civil Service College (CSC), particularly

to strengthen their competencies in appraisal management. The Commission will continue to work closely with CSB and CSC in this regard. Separately, the Commission will continue to visit B/Ds to discuss areas and matters of mutual interest.

### Homepage on the Internet

1.15 The Commission's homepage can be accessed at the following address –

<https://www.psc.gov.hk>

The homepage provides information on the Commission's role and functions, its current membership, the way the Commission conducts its business and the organisation of the Commission Secretariat. Our Annual Reports (from 2001 onwards) can also be viewed on the homepage and can be downloaded.

1.16 An Index of the advice and observations of the Commission on civil service recruitment, appointment, discipline and other human resource management issues cited in the Commission's Annual Reports since 2001 is provided on the homepage. The objective is to provide human resource management practitioners in B/Ds and general readers with a ready guide for quick searches of the required information.



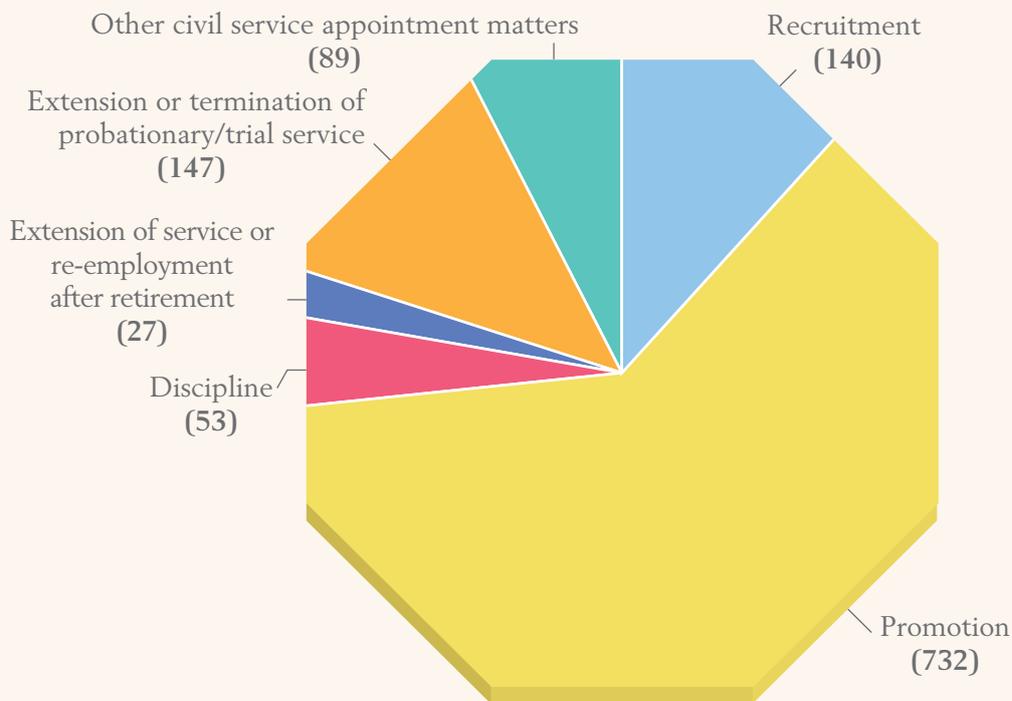
## CHAPTER 2 CIVIL SERVICE APPOINTMENTS

2.1 Civil servants, who are the backbone of the HKSAR Government, are duty-bound to observe and implement the principle of “One Country, Two Systems”, safeguard national security as well as uphold the Basic Law and the rule of law. Maintaining a workforce of civil servants, who are loyal to the Government, dedicated to their duties, committed to serving the community and at the same time objective and impartial in the discharge of duties,

is of vital importance to the effective governance of the Government. In view of the foregoing, civil service appointment has to be highly selective to ensure that only the most suitable and meritorious are recruited and appointed into the Civil Service.

2.2 In 2024, the Commission considered and tendered advice on 1 188 case-specific submissions with breakdown below –

**Breakdown of 1 188 Submissions advised by the Commission in 2024**

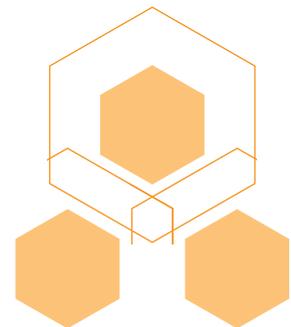


2.3 Apart from tendering advice and observations on case-specific submissions, the Commission also works closely with CSB to provide views on new appointment policies, improve and streamline appointment procedures as well as propose subjects for review, where appropriate, for a better and more efficient appointment system. An overall account of the Commission's work is detailed in this Chapter.



## Civil Service Recruitment

2.4 Recruitment to the Civil Service is undertaken by CSB and individual B/Ds which may take the form of an open recruitment or in-service appointment or both. Where submissions are required to be made to the Commission<sup>6</sup>, we need to be satisfied that objective selection standards and proper procedures are adopted in the process. B/Ds are required to consult the Commission in advance on the introduction of any new shortlisting criteria in a recruitment exercise to ensure that they are appropriate and fair. We also advise B/Ds on measures to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the recruitment process so that offers can be made to successful candidates as early as possible.



<sup>6</sup> They refer, for the purpose of recruitment, to ranks attracting a maximum monthly salary not less than the amount specified at Master Pay Scale Point 26 (\$59,110 as at end-2024) or equivalent, but exclude (a) the basic ranks of non-degree entry and non-professional grades; and (b) judicial service, the Independent Commission Against Corruption and the disciplined ranks of the Hong Kong Police Force which are specifically outside the purview of the Commission.

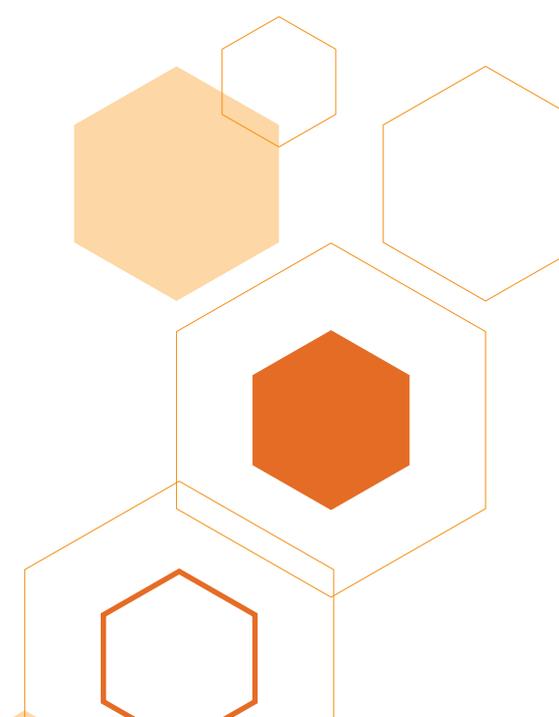
2.5 In 2024, the Commission advised on 140 recruitment submissions involving the filling of 1 845 posts, of which 1 774 posts (in 135 submissions) were through open recruitment and 71 posts (in five submissions) by

in-service appointment. A statistical breakdown of these appointments is provided at **Appendix IV**. The number of recruitment submissions advised by the Commission in the past five years is shown below –

**Number of Recruitment Submissions advised by the Commission from 2020 to 2024**



More observations made by the Commission in the year relating to recruitment are provided in Chapter 3.



## Civil Service Promotion

2.6 The role of the Commission in advising the Government on promotions<sup>7</sup> in the Civil Service is to ensure that only the most suitable and meritorious officers are selected to undertake the higher rank responsibilities through a fair and equitable promotion system. In examining promotion submissions from B/Ds, the Commission will need to be satisfied that proper procedures have been followed and that the fair claims of all eligible officers have been considered on an equal basis, regardless of their terms of appointment, against the objective criteria of ability, experience, performance, character and prescribed

qualifications, if any. The Commission also makes observations on the conduct of promotion exercises and matters relating to performance management with a view to bringing about improvements where inadequacies are identified as well as enhancing the efficiency and quality of the overall civil service promotion system as a whole.

2.7 In 2024, the Commission advised on 732 promotion submissions involving the recommendations of 10 462 officers for promotion or acting appointment. The number of promotion submissions advised by the Commission in the past five years is shown below –

**Number of Promotion Submissions advised by the Commission from 2020 to 2024**



<sup>7</sup> Under the purview of the Commission, recommendations on promotion to middle and senior ranks, i.e. those attracting a maximum monthly salary not less than the amount specified at Master Pay Scale Point 26 or equivalent, are required to be submitted to the Commission for scrutiny and advice. The judicial service, the Independent Commission Against Corruption and the disciplined ranks of the Hong Kong Police Force are outside the purview of the Commission.

2.8 Promotions have to be earned on the basis of merits, and hence are competitive. The recommendations of a promotion board have to stand up to scrutiny and the relevant board has to answer the queries raised by the Commission and provide justifications and objective evidence to support them. A numerical breakdown of these submissions and a comparison with those in the past four years are provided at **Appendix V**. Some specific observations made by the Commission on these submissions are provided in Chapter 4.

### Extension of Service of Civil Servants

2.9 Pursuant to the Government's policy decision announced in January 2015 to extend the service of civil servants, an adjusted mechanism for further employment beyond retirement age for a longer duration than final extension of service<sup>8</sup> (hereafter referred to as "FE") was fully implemented from June 2017 after consulting the Commission.

### The FE scheme

2.10 Under the FE scheme, eligible officers may be considered for FE through a selection process, which has been institutionalised by making reference to the modus operandi of promotion and recruitment boards. The Commission's advice is required for FE if the posts concerned are under our purview. In 2024, the Commission considered 27 FE submissions and supported the extension of service of 65 officers. A breakdown of the number of submissions involving extension of service or re-employment after retirement advised by the Commission in 2024 and a comparison with those in the past four years are provided at **Appendix VI**.



8 A civil servant on permanent terms may apply for a final extension of service for a maximum period of 120 days on operational or personal grounds beyond his prescribed retirement age subject to any applicable arrangements and criteria prevailing at the time of the application as may be promulgated from time to time by the Government.

## Management of Officers on Probation/Trial

2.11 Requiring an appointee to undergo a probationary/trial period serves manifold purposes, including –

- (a) providing an opportunity for the officer to demonstrate his suitability for further appointment in the Civil Service;
- (b) allowing the appointment authority to assess the performance and conduct of the appointee and be satisfied that he/she is fit for continuous employment; and
- (c) giving the appointee time to acquire the necessary qualifications or pass the prescribed tests for further appointment in respect of specific civil service jobs.

To uphold the proper administration of the probation/trial system, HoDs/ Heads of Grade (HoGs) have the overall responsibility of overseeing the management of officers on probation/trial including the provision of necessary training, coaching and counselling to help them fit into their jobs. Continual monitoring and regular feedback on their performance aside, B/Ds have to be mindful and be prepared to take decisive action to address any problems that may surface during the probationary or trial period.

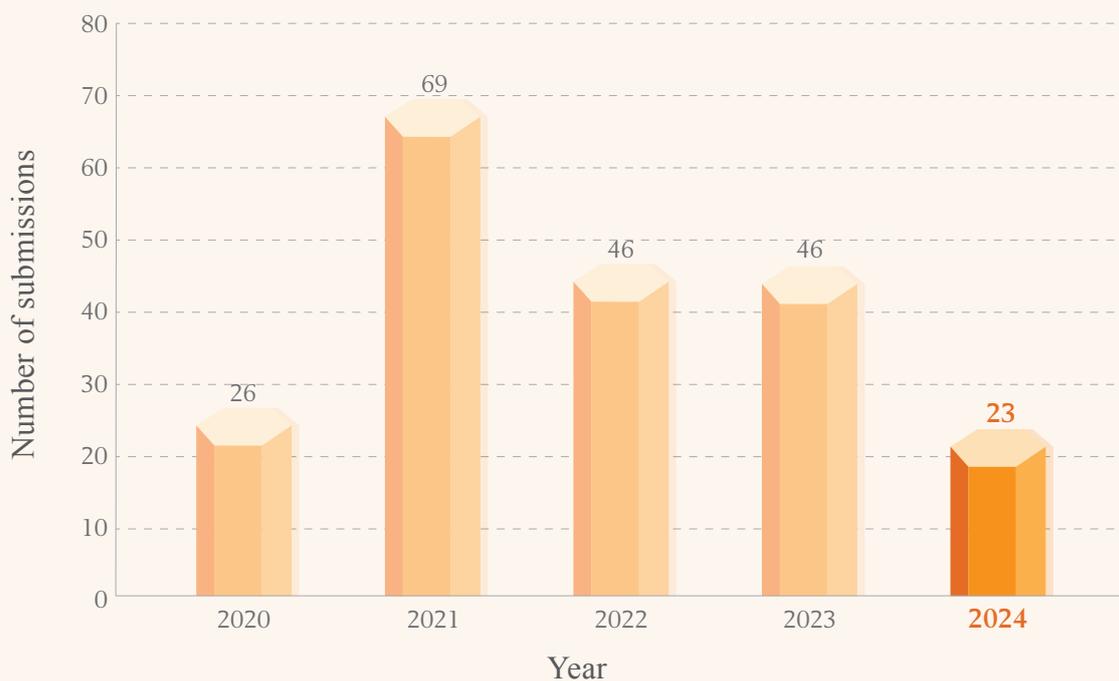
2.12 To maintain a high quality Civil Service, it is vital for HoDs/HoGs to adopt stringent suitability standards in assessing the performance and conduct of officers on probation/trial to ensure that only those who are suitable in all respects are allowed to pass the probation/trial bar for continued appointment. According to the guidelines promulgated by CSB and as provided for under Civil Service Regulations (CSRs), termination of an officer's probationary/trial service is not a punishment. If at any time during the probationary/trial period, an officer on probation/trial is found to have failed to measure up to the required standards of performance/conduct or has shown attitude problems and displayed little progress despite having been given guidance and advice by their supervising officers and/or GMs, the HoD/HoG concerned should take early and resolute action to terminate his service under CSR 186/200 without the need to wait until the end of the probationary/trial period or recourse to disciplinary proceedings.

2.13 While fair opportunities should be given to new appointees to pursue a long-term career in the Government, extension of probationary/trial period should not be used as a substitute for termination of service or solely for the purpose of giving an appointee more time to prove his suitability. In accordance with CSR 183(5)/199(3), a probationary/trial period should normally be extended only when there have not been adequate opportunities to assess the officer's suitability for passage of the probation/trial bar because of his absence from duty, usually for a prolonged period, on account of, for example, illness; or when there is a temporary setback on the part of the officer in attaining the suitability standards or acquiring the prescribed qualifications for passage of the probation/trial bar beyond his control. It is only in very exceptional circumstances

where the officer, though not yet fully meeting the suitability standards, has shown positive and strong indication to be able to achieve the standards within the extension period that an extension of his probationary/trial period should be granted. Besides, the period of an extension should not be decided arbitrarily. Rather, B/Ds should fully consider the circumstances and merits of each case and assess the time required by the management to come to a view on whether the officer concerned should be allowed to pass the probation/trial bar.

2.14 In 2024, the Commission advised on a total of 23 submissions requiring the termination of probationary/trial service of the officers concerned. Most of these submissions were related to unsatisfactory performance and/or conduct.

**Number of Submissions of Termination of Probationary/Trial Service advised by the Commission from 2020 to 2024**



2.15 There were another 124 submissions involving extension of probationary/trial service in the year. Most of these extensions were needed to allow time for the officers concerned to demonstrate their suitability for permanent appointment/passage of trial bar on grounds of a temporary setback in performance, minor lapses in conduct, or pending the acquisition of requisite qualifications prescribed for continued appointment. A statistical breakdown of these submissions and a comparison with those in the past four years are provided at **Appendix VII**.

**Regularised scheme on strengthening B/Ds' monitoring of summary disciplinary action against officers on probationary or trial terms**

2.16 Summary disciplinary actions<sup>9</sup> taken by B/Ds are outside the purview of the Commission (i.e. the Commission's advice is not required before a verbal or written warning is administered). However, the Commission is concerned about the inconsistency in standards adopted by B/Ds in

the issue of the warnings to some officers on probation/trial who have misconducted themselves. At the request of the Commission, CSB launched a one-year pilot scheme in April 2023<sup>10</sup> to strengthen the monitoring of summary disciplinary actions against officers on probationary or trial terms, particularly the standards applied by the departments. Based on positive feedback from the pilot departments after a year of implementation, and with the Commission's support for its continuation, CSB regularised the pilot scheme across all B/Ds starting from 1 October 2024. The regularised scheme ensures that minor misconduct by government officers on probationary or trial terms can be handled in time by appropriate summary disciplinary action before their confirmation to the permanent establishment. The Commission appreciates CSB's efforts in extending the pilot scheme to all B/Ds following its review, as well as its on-going efforts to monitor progress and ensure consistency in disciplinary standards.

9 Summary disciplinary actions which comprise verbal and written warnings are aimed at enabling departmental managers and frontline supervisors to correct and deter minor acts of misconduct swiftly to achieve the desired deterrent effect. A verbal or written warning will normally debar an officer from promotion and appointment for six months or one year respectively from the date of the issue of the warning. During the debarring period, the officer should not normally be considered for promotion and appointment.

10 The relevant Pilot Scheme was launched in four departments, including the Department of Health, the Fire Services Department, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, and the Leisure and Cultural Services Department.

## Other Civil Service Appointment Matters

2.17 In 2024, the Commission advised on 89 other appointment submissions. They cover cases of non-renewal or extension of agreement; secondment<sup>11</sup>; retirement in the public interest under s.12 of the PS(A)O; review of acting appointment and updating of Guide to Appointment (G/A)<sup>12</sup>. A statistical breakdown of these submissions and a comparison with those in the past four years are provided at **Appendix VIII**.

### Retirement in the public interest under s.12 of the PS(A)O

2.18 Retirement in the public interest under s.12 of the PS(A)O is not a form of disciplinary action or punishment but pursued as an administrative measure in the public interest on the grounds of –

- (a) persistent sub-standard performance when an officer fails to reach the requisite level of performance despite having been given an opportunity to demonstrate his worth; or

- (b) loss of confidence when the management has lost confidence in an officer and cannot entrust him with public duties.

An officer who is required to retire in the public interest may be granted retirement benefits. In the case of a pensionable officer, a deferred pension may be granted when he reaches his statutory retirement age. In the case of an officer under the CSPF Scheme, the accrued benefits attributable to the Government's Voluntary Contributions will be payable in accordance with the rules of the relevant scheme.

2.19 As an initiative to strengthen the management of persistent sub-standard performers and expedite the process for taking the necessary actions, CSB, having consulted the Commission and collected views from the management and staff sides, promulgated the streamlined mechanism in September 2023.

11 Secondment is an arrangement to temporarily relieve an officer from the duties of his substantive appointment and appoint him to fill another office not in his grade on a time-limited and non-substantive basis. Normally, a department will consider a secondment to fill an office under its charge if it needs skills or expertise for a short period of time and such skills or expertise are only available from another civil service grade.

12 The G/A is an official document prepared by departments for individual ranks to specify the qualification, requirements and the terms of appointment for recruitment or promotion to respective ranks. B/Ds are required to update the entry requirements, terms of appointment, and job description of grades under their purview in the respective G/As on an on-going basis for CSB's approval.



*Key measures under the streamlined s. 12 mechanism include –*

- (a) cutting down multiple representations to be sought from the officer concerned;*
- (b) waiving the requirement for establishing an independent panel to advise HoD on a s.12 case;*
- (c) simplifying the procedures for the observation period; and*
- (d) making it mandatory to stop/defer increment for the officer concerned in accordance with the prevailing procedures and practices.*



2.20 The Commission is pleased to note that CSB has organised briefings and devised a procedural guide to facilitate effective implementation. We fully support CSB's continuous efforts to remind –

- (a) supervising officers of B/Ds to adopt honest reporting with zero tolerance towards persistent sub-standard performers and to make good use of the streamlined mechanism; and
- (b) HoDs/HoGs to pay personal attention to potential and on-going s.12 cases to ensure that these cases are handled under the streamlined procedures with reasonable progress.

2.21 To facilitate the enforcement of s.12 action and to achieve consistency in performance assessment within the Government, CSB has taken on board the Commission's suggestion in urging those B/Ds, which have yet to use the standard six-tier rating scale for overall grading, to adopt it in their appraisal forms. The Commission is pleased to note the encouraging progress made, with all B/Ds having already adopted the standard six-tier rating scale for major grades and ranks.

2.22 During the year, the Commission advised on four cases of retirement in the public interest under s.12 of the PS(A)O. Except for one case invoked on the ground of loss of confidence arising from the officer's presence near the scene of suspected unlawful activities, all the other three cases were invoked on the ground of persistent substandard performance. Insofar as cases involving persistent substandard performance are concerned, a total of 12 officers from nine B/Ds were put under close observation in 2024 due to their persistent sub-standard performance<sup>13</sup>. Two officers were ordered to retire in October and November 2024 respectively, and one officer resigned out of his own accord after he was notified of the support by the Commission to retire him in the public interest. For the remaining nine officers, two had improved their performance during the observation period and the s.12 cases were suspended, and seven officers remained under

close observation or being processed as at the end of 2024. Following the implementation of the streamlined mechanism, the processing time of s.12 cases has been expedited notably, from approximately 31 months to around 10.5 months.

2.23 With the streamlined mechanism smoothly implemented last year, it is imperative for the Government to sustain its efforts in this regard. Apart from CSB's commitment to collaborating closely with the departmental managements to enhance the monitoring of potential and on-going cases of s.12 action, the Commission will continue to draw B/Ds' attention to potential s.12 cases during the processing of promotion submissions. We are confident that our concerted efforts will help uphold the high standards of the Civil Service and ensure that cases involving persistent sub-standard performers are addressed appropriately and effectively.

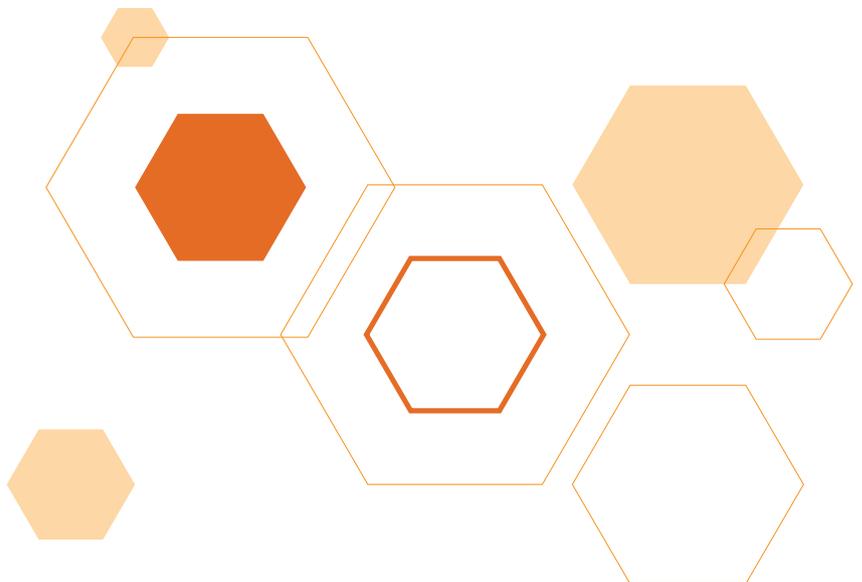
13 Of these 12 cases, one was processed under the mechanism for handling civil servants with persistent sub-standard performance under s.12 of the PS(A)O modified in 2005, and 11 under the streamlined mechanism promulgated in 2024.

## Enhancing the civil service disciplinary mechanism

2.24 The Commission appreciates CSB's commitment to enhancing the civil service disciplinary mechanism and its on-going efforts of introducing improvement measures. We are pleased to note the announcement in the Chief Executive's 2024 Policy Address that CSB will review the PS(A)O and Public Service (Disciplinary) Regulation (PS(D)R). For this purpose, we understand that CSB is working in full steam on the review to explore whether there is room to streamline the procedures of disciplinary proceedings, thereby improving the efficiency and effectiveness in the handling of disciplinary cases. The Commission looks forward to providing its advice on CSB's preliminary proposals in 2025.

## Updated Civil Service Code

2.25 As public expectations on civil servants have continuously grown, the Government has updated the Civil Service Code (the Code) in June 2024 to spell out the constitutional basis and order of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, the constitutional roles and responsibilities of civil servants as a member of the executive authorities, as well as the core values and standards of conduct which civil servants should uphold. This important initiative has the full support of the Commission. As an independent statutory body, the Commission remains steadfast in its mission to uphold the impartiality and integrity of the civil service appointment and promotion systems. The Commission is equally committed to ensuring fairness and consistency in disciplinary punishments across the Civil Service, aligning its efforts with the core values and standards of conduct articulated in the updated Code.





## CHAPTER 3

### RECRUITMENT

3.1 Recruiting new talents and injecting new blood into the Civil Service is vital in sustaining a stable and robust workforce to achieve the aim of effective and efficient delivery of public service with high quality. B/Ds need to conduct regular recruitment exercises to meet their manpower requirements and service needs. The process of selection is rigorous and competition is keen. The Commission supports the conduct of recruitment based on merit and fair competition so as to select the best-suited candidates for the civil service jobs. Apart from ensuring the proper conduct of the recruitment process, we also attach importance to administrative efficiency so that the Government can compete with the market for talents and good candidates.

### Recruitment Submissions Advised in 2024

3.2 In 2024, the Commission advised on 140 recruitment submissions. With years of experience and clear guidelines in place, the Commission was pleased to note that B/Ds had been expediting the recruitment process in general, and recruitment exercises had been conducted in a largely smooth and effective manner. They had also adhered to civil service policies and rules in conducting the recruitment exercises, making appropriate preparations by planning and conducting recruitment exercises in advance of anticipated wastage. The number of recruitment submissions advised by the Commission in the past five years is shown below –



### Recruitment Submissions advised by the Commission from 2020 to 2024



### Quality of Recruitment Reports

- 3.3 During the year, the Commission was also delighted to see that a number of departments had submitted board reports of outstanding quality on their recruitment exercises. In each of their submissions, the recruitment boards concerned had provided pertinent information and well-reasoned assessments of individual candidates' performance, along with a clear and concise account of the boards' deliberations. The Commission's scrutiny of the recommendations was greatly facilitated and efficiency enhanced.
- 3.4 However, the quality of write-ups on interviewees in board reports from some departments remained inadequate, with the comments on individual

interviewees overly brief and generic, making it difficult to distinguish their performance. Although the ratings and scores given were clear and the results unaffected, the Commission has advised the relevant Departments to remind future recruitment boards to provide more specific comments in the written assessments to clearly reflect the performance of candidates so as to support the boards' recommendations.



## Eligibility of Candidates

3.5 Civil service jobs usually offer a lifelong career following an initial observation period, making it essential to appoint only candidates who fully meet the entry requirements and demonstrate the required calibre. To achieve this, it is important for the recruiting departments to clearly and accurately outline their most up-to-date entry requirements in job advertisements and/or vacancy

circulars. As the first point of contact with potential job seekers, these advertisements/circulars should be both succinct with adequate details and presented in an unambiguous manner to minimise gaps in expectations and interpretations. The Commission found that there was room for improvement in the presentation and content of the entry requirements prepared by some departments, as illustrated in Cases 3A and 3B below.

### Case 3A

In a recent job advertisement, a Department had adopted a long-in-use description of an academic requirement applicable to different disciplines of a grade. The description, however, was too general for the current exercise targeting at specialists holding specific qualifications. It did not take into account the latest changes in the landscape of post-secondary education, particularly new academic programmes recently offered for the relevant profession, leaving much room for varied literal interpretations. The ambiguity was worsened as the other grades in the same Department had adopted the same description of the academic requirement in their job advertisements, but inconsistency in interpretation appeared among different Divisions of the Department.

The Commission noted with concern that the lack of clarity in presenting the academic requirement had attracted queries from both the candidates and serving staff of the relevant Division about the standards and consistency in determining the eligibility.

Taking heed of the Commission's advice, the Department had conducted a holistic review of the entry requirements for all the grades concerned. Upon review, the Department had fine-tuned the description, elaborating on the expected requirements with details and updates in the light of the different academic qualifications in the prevailing education system. It also standardised the interpretations across the board. We believe what the Department has done will be able to provide clarity for potential job applicants and thus facilitate the recruitment process.

### Case 3B

In another case, the lack of clearly articulated entry requirements appeared in the description of the academic subject, causing confusion and false expectation among some job applicants. While the Department concerned was actually looking for candidates who had completed tertiary education in a specific subject, it set out the requirement in a much broader way in its job advertisement, resulting in a large number of applications from job seekers graduated in other subjects of the relevant discipline. This attracted complaints from such applicants, who were invited to selection interviews amidst the qualification assessment process but were ultimately deemed unqualified for the position due to their failure to meet the specific entry requirement of the Department.

Interviewing unqualified candidates not only incurs nugatory administrative work, but also causes confusion, false expectation and disappointment for candidates, which will undermine the credibility of the recruitment exercise. By providing clear and concise information regarding the qualifications expected for each position, the Department can prevent misunderstandings and ensure that candidates have a realistic understanding of what is required. Such enhancement will benefit the recruitment process, streamline administrative efforts, and maintain the integrity of the selection outcomes.

The Commission has advised the Department to clearly specify the required qualifications in job advertisements for future recruitment exercises to enhance clarity. We have also reminded the Department to complete the qualification assessment in future recruitment exercises at an earlier stage, whenever possible, especially in cases involving very specific qualification requirements as well as only local qualifications and in-house assessment. This will be conducive to the recruitment efficiency and avoid any false expectation from the job applicants.

3.6 While recruiting departments, being well-versed in the job requirements, are in the best position to assess applicants' eligibility, clearly articulating their expectations in advertisements and circulars can help attract the right candidates more effectively and better manage job seekers' expectations.



*Recruiting B/Ds should not lose sight of the importance of updating entry requirements to ensure clarity and to be in line with the evolving landscape in the local education system. Updating the entry requirements is not just a procedural task to ensure effectiveness and efficiency of recruitment exercises, but a vital strategy in keeping our public service dynamic and responsive.*



### Strengthening Vigilance in Recruitment Process

3.7 The selection of the best-suited candidates is fundamental to maintaining the integrity, effectiveness, and professionalism of the Civil Service. A rigorous selection process plays a pivotal role in ensuring that recruitment exercises are conducted fairly, transparently, and in strict adherence to the principles of merit-based employment. These processes are not merely administrative formalities,

but are critical safeguards to identify and appoint individuals best equipped to meet the demands of public service. Any failure to comply with these standards not only risks compromising the quality of appointments but also undermines public confidence in the civil service recruitment system. Case 3C illustrates the paramount importance of safeguarding the appointment of suitable candidates to the Civil Service.

### Case 3C

After the selection interviews of a recent recruitment exercise, a Department intended to appoint a former civil servant who had previously served in the same Department but was ordered by the Department to retire in the public interest under section 12 of the Public Service (Administration) Order not long ago. While such critical piece of information could be found in the candidate's prior employment record kept by the Department, it was regrettably overlooked during the vetting process.

Only upon the Commission Secretariat's request for further information about the recruitment board's recommendation, the problem was revealed, resulting in the proposed appointment of the candidate concerned being rescinded by the appointment authority after scrutiny of all relevant records. This had unfortunately caused an undue delay in the recruitment process which was entirely undesirable.

The Commission expressed serious concerns to the Department about its apparent negligence in recognising the candidate's previous retirement record as this exposed significant deficiencies in the vetting process of a recruitment exercise and serious miscommunication among the various units and the recruitment board involved in the recruitment process. Such oversights are totally unacceptable as unsuitable candidates would be appointed to the Civil Service. The failure to act upon known information at the opportune juncture could raise doubts on the integrity of the recruitment practices.

In response to the Commission's urgent call, the Department has done a comprehensive review on its recruitment process. It has identified various inadequacies and implemented a series of measures to prevent recurrence of similar problems in future so as to safeguard the integrity of the recruitment process.



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*Negligence and miscommunication during a recruitment process not only compromise procedural integrity but also risk undermining public trust in the recruitment practices in the Civil Service.*

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### Overcoming Recruitment Challenges in the Civil Service

3.8 The Commission notes that the Government faces keen competition from the private sector in its efforts to attract and recruit talents into the Civil Service. Recognising that a competitive labour market can pose challenges

to recruitment, the Commission underscores the importance of B/Ds in developing effective and targeted recruitment strategies to trawl a wider pool of candidates. In this context, the Commission is encouraged to see the adoption of proactive and flexible approaches by a Department in recruitment, as demonstrated in Case 3D below.

### Case 3D

Facing the challenges of recruiting fully-qualified professionals to the Civil Service in recent years, a Department had proactively resumed the conduct of recruitment exercises at the assistant professional level, targeting at graduates or semi-professionals who were still undergoing training or pursuing the relevant professional qualification. Besides, noting that it may take four to five years for a graduate to gain sufficient practical experience and obtain the requisite professional qualification for appointment to the permanent establishment, the Department sought to vary the entry system by allowing newly appointed assistant professionals to serve a longer probationary period, i.e. up to a maximum of five years, where necessary to enable sufficient time for them to acquire the necessary qualification. Any appointee who fails to do so may have his probationary service terminated.

The resumption of recruitment at the assistant professional level with a revised entry system allows the Department to tap a wider array of talents, addressing manpower gaps while fostering long-term development of the grade concerned. Early engagement of the “to-be-qualified” professionals also facilitates mentoring the next generation of leaders at an earlier stage by equipping them with the necessary Government experience as well as professional and management skill-sets to meet the succession needs in the long run.

The Commission appreciates the diligent efforts of the relevant Department in addressing its persistent manpower concerns, while maintaining the professional standards, as well as upholding objectivity and impartiality in recruitment and appointment processes.



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*In keeping with the Government's endeavours to attract talents, HoGs/HoDs should think out of the box and take bold steps in formulating their recruitment strategies to recruit talents to meet their manpower needs.*

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## CHAPTER 4

### PROMOTION AND HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

4.1 Promotion is a well-established mechanism for filling vacancies at the higher ranks in the Civil Service. It also provides opportunities for civil servants to develop their career and make advancement which is conducive to staff succession and smooth operation in their B/Ds. Premised on the principles of meritocracy and fair competition, promotion has to be earned. It is neither an entitlement nor a reward for long service. The Commission advises and assists the Government to ensure that deserving officers are promoted through a transparent and fair selection process.

#### Promotion Submissions Advised in 2024

4.2 In 2024, the Commission advised on 732 promotion submissions. The promotion submissions were largely clear and well-written. The Commission was also pleased to note the continued maintenance of general compliance with the relevant CSRs, as well as prescribed rules and procedures by B/Ds. The number of promotion submissions advised by the Commission in the past five years is shown below –

Promotion Submissions advised by the Commission from 2020 to 2024



## Human Resource Management

4.3 Human Resource Management (HRM) is a planned and strategic approach to managing staff performance. Good HRM practices are instrumental in helping achieve corporate goals as well as enhance service productivity and quality. In the process of examining promotion submissions, the Commission will give advice on HRM practices adopted by B/Ds when inadequacies are observed. In this Chapter, some specific observations made by the Commission are provided as a reference for B/Ds.

### Optimal use of available vacancies

4.4 Promotion is a recognition given to deserving officers who have demonstrated their capability and suitability in all respects for assuming more demanding responsibilities at the higher ranks. It also serves as an incentive for officers with aspiration to strive for continuous improvement. To realise the potential of capable officers and to meet staff expectations, it is imperative that promotion boards should make optimal use of the available vacancies to promote deserving officers at the earliest possible opportunity.

4.5 In the last Annual Report, the Commission raised its concerns over a persistent problem of leaving a considerable number of vacancies at promotion ranks unfilled despite the availability of eligible and capable candidates in two Departments. To meet the manpower gap, the Departments also arranged a number of unrecommended candidates to take up short-term acting appointments intermittently, lasting for a rather long period on each occasion.

4.6 While acknowledging the intricacies of the problem are manifold and the reasons behind each case may be unique, leaving vacancies unfilled in the promotion process is not conducive to staff development, succession planning and staff morale. Taking heed of the Commission's advice, the two Departments had positively responded and achieved marked improvement in filling the higher rank vacancies as illustrated in Cases 4A and 4B.



## Case 4A

With the conclusion of the 2023 promotion exercises in a Department, the percentage of unfilled vacancies for two ranks of a grade had exceeded 50% of the total number of available vacancies. Acknowledging the Commission's concerns, the two promotion boards conducted in 2024 had put considerable efforts in identifying more eligible and meritorious officers for testing at the higher ranks, leaving about one-third of the higher rank vacancies unfilled, which was a marked reduction when compared with 2023.

Notwithstanding the improvement, the Commission considered that the percentage of unfilled vacancies remained relatively high and that there should be scope for further reduction. As a response, the Department has committed to lowering the percentage through a phased approach with the progressive target of not more than 15% in the coming few years.

To fill the temporary manpower gaps, the Department had also reviewed its HRM practices and dispensed with the previous practice of arranging prolonged intermittent acting appointments without going through a proper selection process as required under CSRs.

While appreciating the efforts made by the Department so far, the Commission has urged its senior management to continue to monitor the development of related issues and implement effective measures to rectify any improprieties identified. With the Department's commitment, the Commission is looking forward to the filling of all the higher rank vacancies through the promotion avenue in the near term.

## Case 4B

The situation in another Department is even more encouraging. In its three promotion exercises conducted in 2023, the percentage of unfilled vacancies ranged from about 15% to 50% of the total number of available vacancies at the respective ranks, which was apparently unsatisfactory. In response to the Commission's advice, the Department had implemented a series of HRM measures to enable it to achieve the target of reducing the percentage of unfilled vacancies to 5% in two years.

The Commission was pleased to see the encouraging results. One promotion board conducted in 2024 was able to identify a sufficient number of suitable candidates to fill all the higher rank vacancies. As to the other two promotion ranks, the number of vacancies left unfilled was minimal given the need for some of the unrecommended contenders to further consolidate before consideration could be given to them for testing at the higher ranks.

Besides, the Department had avoided, as far as practicable, arranging the unrecommended candidates to take up acting appointments to fill the unfilled vacancies without going through a proper selection exercise. It would only arrange short-term acting appointments to meet operational needs with full justifications.

To enlarge the pool of eligible candidates in the long run, the Department had also put in place a series of measures to facilitate and encourage its grade members to attain the requisite training requirements for promotion, such as, drawing up a more robust training plan as well as arranging extra and designated training classes.

The Commission was pleased with the efforts made by the Department, and has encouraged the Department to keep up its good work. In time, the Commission is looking forward to seeing a healthy and vibrant succession in the grades concerned.

## Staff development

4.7 Staff development is an integral part of HRM. The Commission has been advocating a holistic approach to staff development that encompasses a structured career posting policy and a systematic training plan for staff at all levels. A robust staff training and development plan could help enhance the performance and competencies of staff, prepare them for a wider spectrum of responsibilities as well as build up a pool of talents for succession purpose.

4.8 In 2024, the Commission observed that some promotion boards were unable to identify a sufficient number of officers to fill all the vacancies due to the failure of the Departments to arrange in-house training in a timely manner, limiting the number of officers eligible for consideration for promotion. While operational needs and limited training resources may occasionally impede training arrangements, it is incumbent upon the Departments to strike an appropriate balance between addressing officers' career development needs and ensuring operational expediency. As illustrated in Cases 4C and 4D, B/Ds should not undermine the importance of staff development and must accord the utmost priority to allocating resources for staff development needs.

### Case 4C

Given the Department's distinct operational requirements, in-house training is essential to equip officers with the specialised knowledge and skills needed for their roles and career advancement. However, in a promotion exercise, the Commission noted that no in-house training was arranged by the Department concerned in 2023, resulting in a considerable number of officers not being able to obtain the prescribed professional qualification which is one of the promotion criteria. This had aggravated the manpower shortage of the Department.

Notwithstanding the Department's explanation that the training had been rescheduled for late 2024 due to its extensive involvement in large-scale projects and events, the Commission is of the view that, as the prescribed qualification is a requirement for promotion eligibility, the Department bears the responsibility of ensuring that training is conducted in a timely manner to support staff development and succession planning.

The Commission urged the Department to promptly arrange the necessary training for the affected officers so that they could acquire the qualification and become eligible for consideration in the next promotion exercise. In response, the Department had arranged the training in November 2024, during which all officers concerned had successfully attained the prescribed qualification.

This case exposed deficiencies in the Department's management of training resources, undermining the importance of staff development needs. The Commission had brought this case to the personal attention of the HoD concerned and reminded those responsible for training-related matters of the significance of ensuring prompt and effective scheduling of training. Additionally, the Department was requested to review its training policies and workflows to prevent recurrence of similar situation.

### Case 4D

Similar to Case 4C, only officers having the prescribed qualification were eligible for promotion in a grade of another Department, with professional training provided in-house due to the Department's unique operational needs. The Commission noted that the Department had faced significant challenges in filling vacancies, largely due to the lack of resources for in-house training. Due to the competing needs for other work priorities, only a few qualified officers were available to deliver the much needed in-house training, resulting in a limited pool of eligible candidates for promotion. More than half of the vacancies in two ranks of the grade had been left unfilled in consecutive promotion exercises.

We also observed that professional resources for in-house training were further stretched by the involvement of qualified trainers in considerable non-core duties, such as, event organisation and other administrative tasks.

The Commission has advised the Department to consider redeployment of its manpower resources, particularly relieving the qualified trainers from non-core duties to enable them to focus on their primary responsibilities, including providing in-house professional training. The Department has responded positively and is pursuing different measures to tackle the issues, such as, engagement of additional non-civil service contract staff to take over the overall responsibility of organising events. The Commission looks forward to seeing the Department's enhanced training capacity to meet the career development needs of its professional staff.



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*Staff development is fundamental to the smooth operation of B/Ds and the sustainability of succession planning. Senior management should devise strategic and comprehensive training plans to make the optimal use of available resources, and conduct regular reviews to ensure the effectiveness and adaptability of training policies.*

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### Arranging Acting Appointment

4.9 The acting appointment mechanism serves as a useful tool that assist the departmental and grade managements in assessing an officer’s suitability for substantive promotion as well as in meeting operational needs for covering temporary manpower gaps. For officers recommended for long-term acting by a promotion board, it is imperative for the Department to arrange the acting

appointments in a timely manner, as delays may adversely affect the career interests of the recommended officers. This is particularly important for officers approaching the prescribed retirement age who may otherwise lose eligibility for promotion because of not meeting the 12-month active service requirement in subsequent promotion exercises. In this regard, we noted an undesirable situation in Case 4E.



## Case 4E

An officer with an exemplary performance track record was waitlisted for long-term acting at the top priority in the last promotion exercise in 2022, with due regard that he would reach his prescribed retirement age in about two years' time. However, instead of arranging him to act at the earliest opportunity, the Department only arranged him to commence acting two months prior to the current promotion board, even after other waitlisters with lower priorities.

Considering the officer's brief acting experience, the current board was not convinced that he was fully tested meriting substantive promotion to the higher rank with a complexed and demanding portfolio. The board, therefore, recommended him to continue acting, alongside with all the other waitlisters. However, the board's recommendation would render him ineligible for consideration for substantive promotion in the next exercise due to his impending retirement.

While the Department claimed that operational needs should take precedence when making the acting arrangement, and that the officer was fully aware of his position and would be allowed to continue acting until his retirement, the situation was highly undesirable. This could have been avoided through more thoughtful planning by the Department.

The Commission has urged the Department to review its HRM practices and enhance its manpower planning to ensure that long-term acting appointments are arranged in a timely manner in accordance with the priorities recommended by a promotion board, thereby safeguarding officers' career prospects, fostering staff morale, and supporting its effective succession planning.



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*Adopting a vigilant and holistic approach in addressing staff development needs is crucial to ensuring fairness, maintaining staff morale, and strengthening succession planning.*

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## Succession planning

4.10 Succession planning is another integral part of a comprehensive HRM strategy. Good succession planning is imperative to ensure smooth succession, in particular, at the directorate levels of B/Ds. Early identification and grooming of young and high-potential officers are crucial in preparing future leaders to take on greater responsibilities and meet public expectations. A robust staff development plan further bolsters this effort by enhancing officers' skill-sets, broadening their exposure,

and systematically cultivating a diverse and capable talent pool. This proactive approach not only facilitates seamless succession but also ensures the long-term sustainability and effectiveness of the Civil Service.

4.11 The Commission, through its scrutiny of recommendations from promotion boards, has noted that age bunching among departmental grade officers at the directorate levels continues to pose a recurring challenge in several Departments as illustrated in Case 4F.

### Case 4F

During the year, the Commission noted that in a few promotion submissions for the rank of deputy HoD (D3), most eligible officers at the lower rank of assistant HoD (D2) were aged 55 or above, with a prescribed retirement age of 60, implying that their prospects for further advancement to the senior directorate level were minimal. In one of these cases, the Commission even observed that all of the few eligible officers, who were of similar age, had been promoted to their current rank of assistant HoD on the same date. This resulted in an even narrower cohort of candidates with similar seniority and age profiles.

With the majority of officers at the assistant HoD level retiring around the same time, the Departments will risk losing a substantial number of experienced leaders within a short period, undermining the departmental leadership and directorate succession.

To address the directorate succession issue, the Commission has reiterated to the Departments concerned of the need to intensify efforts in identifying and developing young and bright officers from various ranks at the non-directorate level for meeting directorate succession needs. By nurturing talents of different age profiles earlier in their careers, the Departments can expand and make ready a pool of capable candidates for selection of the most suitable ones to shoulder higher responsibilities at the directorate level.

4.12 The Commission was also concerned that the bunching of retirements at the lower directorate levels would have ripple effect on the succession at the HoD level. We noted that in a few cases, the Administration had to extend the tenure of incumbent HoDs under the FE scheme as a stopgap measure to tide the Departments over.



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*Proactive and comprehensive succession planning is the cornerstone of sustainable leadership. Nurturing young talents today ensures continuity, resilience, and operational excellence for tomorrow.*

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### Performance management

4.14 Performance management is an essential element in HRM. HoDs/HoGs have the overall responsibility to ensure that the performance management system for the staff/grades under their purview functions effectively, and there is timely, accurate, comprehensive, candid and objective reporting of staff performance. Both over-generous and over-stringent reporting distort the performance management objectives.

4.13 The Commission has raised concerns with the respective Departments and CSB about the importance of ensuring HoD succession. They have to map out succession plans for HoDs at an early stage, which should be underpinned by robust staff training and development plans. Promotion boards should also be mindful of the age bunching issue when selecting candidates for promotion, particularly at the junior directorate levels (say D1 and D2).

4.15 The Commission observed that over-generous appraisal reports were prevailing in some departments last year. Some even gave the top-tier overall rating to about two-thirds of the appraisees. Such practices significantly hindered the ability of promotion boards to identify genuine outstanding performers and make well-justified recommendations based on performance records. The Commission urged these departments to step up their efforts to –

- (a) review the assessment standards where necessary;

- (b) implement measures to remind supervising officers of the importance of fair, candid and well-justified reporting, and arrange for them to attend relevant training on performance management; and
- (c) monitor and review the effectiveness of the measures from time to time.

4.16 The appraisal system in the Civil Service is a three-tier structure under which the Appraising Officers (AOs), Countersigning Officers (COs) and Reviewing Officers (ROs) are required to make their timely, candid and independent assessments based on facts and observations. In particular, ROs play a pivotal role in the performance

management process by, among other things, monitoring the standard of appraisals and advising AOs/COs if the assessment quality is considered below standard or their assessment standards are inconsistent with that of the department. When ROs hold views that differ from the assessments made by AOs or COs, they should clearly articulate their reasoning to the AOs and COs concerned and, where necessary, make appropriate adjustments to the ratings. Such adjustments or additional remarks should be communicated to the appraisees to ensure they have a clear understanding of their performance and the areas requiring improvement. During the year, the Commission, however, noted some incidences of inadequacies as illustrated in Cases 4G and 4H.

#### Case 4G

In reviewing a promotion submission, the Commission observed that in the individual appraisals of three close contenders in the last reporting cycle, the RO had initially assessed two officers as ready to perform higher rank duties, while another officer was deemed not yet ready. However, during the conduct of the promotion board two months later, where the same RO served as Board Chairman, the officer previously assessed as not ready was ultimately considered more favorably to the other two officers after a comparison of their relative merits.

This situation underscores the need for greater consistency and thorough evaluation in the appraisal process. When assessing an officer's readiness for promotion, the RO should adopt a holistic approach by considering all officers at the same rank as well as thoroughly evaluating the full range of abilities and qualities required for the higher rank. If needed, the RO should consult the respective AO and CO to gather additional information and clarifications. This would help ensure that strong contenders are accurately identified and that the promotion board's decisions are both fair and well-informed.

## Case 4H

In a few cases, the Commission observed that the ROs expressed different opinions from the AOs and COs on the overall performance and/or promotability ratings of some appraisees. However, these discrepancies were not communicated to the appraisees, AOs and COs, raising concerns about transparency.

In particular, without being informed of such differences, the appraisees concerned were not aware of their level of attainment, which can hinder their professional growth, motivation, and ability to address areas for improvement. A transparent appraisal system not only ensures fairness but also enables appraisees to take ownership of their development.

In addition, it is essential for the AOs and COs to have a clear understanding of the assessment standards that underpin grading decisions. This shared understanding fosters consistency, mutual respect, and constructive dialogue, creating a more transparent and effective appraisal process.

Onus is on the HoD/HoGs to ensure that AOs/COs/ROs are clear with the set appraisal standards and apply them consistently in making, countersigning or reviewing performance assessment as given in the appraisal reports. The Commission has urged the Departments concerned to advise the ROs to strictly adhere to the established guidelines and diligently fulfill their roles, as ROs are best-placed and duty-bound to administer the appraisal system effectively.



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*Communication is not merely a formality; it forms the foundation of trust and clarity in the workplace. Candid feedback during appraisals, grounded in thorough and holistic assessment, ensures individuals understand their performance and inspires them to soar to new heights.*

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## CHAPTER 5

### CIVIL SERVICE DISCIPLINE

- 5.1 It is the duty of all civil servants to work with dedication and diligence, and spare no effort in delivering quality service to the community. To maintain the integrity and efficiency of the public service, and sustain the community's trust in the Government, civil servants have to uphold the highest standard of conduct and discipline at all times. To this end, the Government has put in place a well-established disciplinary system ensuring that any civil servant who violates Government rules and regulations is disciplined and those breaking the law are brought to justice.
- 5.2 The Commission collaborates with the Government to maintain the highest standard of conduct in the Civil Service. With the exception of exclusions specified in the PSCO<sup>14</sup>, the Administration is required under s.18 of the PS(A)O<sup>15</sup> to consult the Commission before imposing any punishment under s.9, s.10 or s.11 of the PS(A)O upon a Category A officer. This covers virtually all officers except those on probation or agreement and some who are remunerated on the Model Scale 1 Pay Scale. At the end of June 2024, the number of Category A officers falling within the Commission's purview for disciplinary matters was about 123 800.
- 5.3 The Commission's advice on disciplinary submissions is based on facts and objective evidence, supported by full investigations conducted by the relevant B/Ds. While the nature and gravity of the misconduct or offence are our primary consideration, we are also mindful of the need to maintain broad service-wide consistency in disciplinary standards, protect the right of the representations by the accused and at the same time respond to changing times and public expectations.

14 Please refer to paragraph 1.4 of Chapter 1.

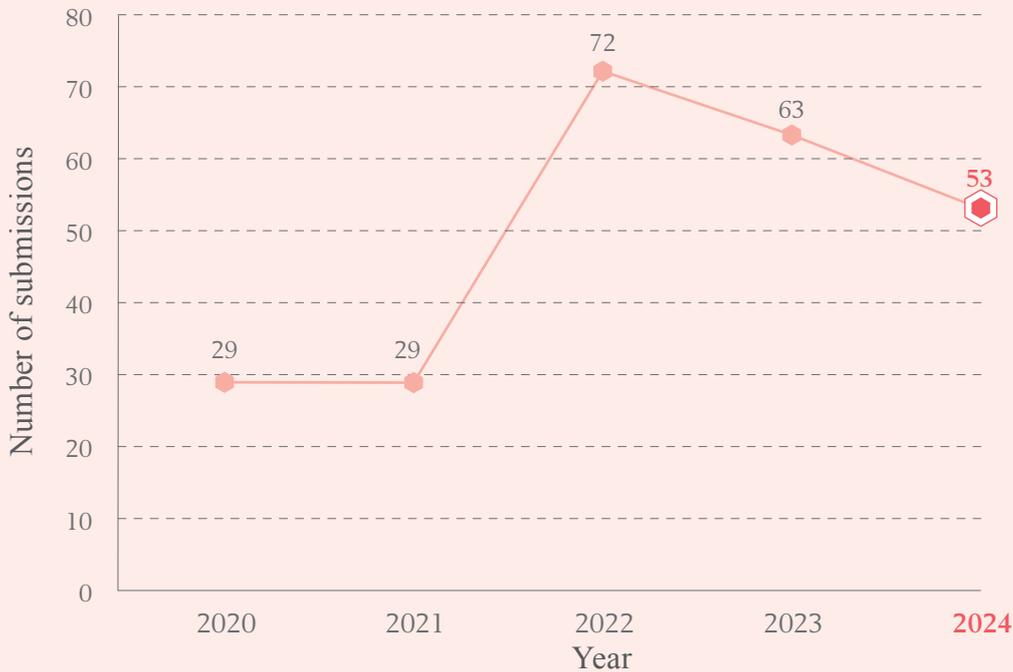
15 Please refer to paragraph 1.5 of Chapter 1.

## Disciplinary Submissions Advised in 2024

5.4 In 2024, the Commission advised on 53 disciplinary submissions which had gone through the formal disciplinary procedures prescribed under the PS(A)O. It represents about 0.04% of the 123 800 Category A officers within the Commission’s purview. The number of disciplinary submissions as advised by the Commission in the past five years is shown below –



Number of disciplinary submissions advised by the Commission from 2020 to 2024



5.5 As shown in the above chart, the number of disciplinary submissions advised by the Commission has remained consistently low in the past five years. It indicates that the great majority of our civil servants have continued to measure up to the very high standard of conduct and discipline required of them. Nonetheless, there is no room for complacency in the concerted efforts to uphold a civil service of high integrity and probity. CSB has assured the Commission that it will sustain its efforts in promoting good standards of conduct and integrity through training, seminars as well as the promulgation and updating of rules and guidelines. The Commission will, as always, remain vigilant and collaborate with the Government to ensure equity, fairness and maintenance of broad consistency in punishment throughout the service.

5.6 To illustrate the nature of the 53 disciplinary submissions advised by the Commission in 2024, a breakdown by category of criminal offence/misconduct and salary group is at **Appendix IX**. As depicted in the pie chart below, nearly half of the submissions had resulted in the removal of the civil servants concerned from the service by “compulsory retirement”<sup>16</sup> or “dismissal”<sup>17</sup>, while a quarter had resulted in the officers receiving the punishment of “severe reprimand”<sup>18</sup>. In about 48% of the submissions, a financial penalty was added in the form of a “fine”<sup>19</sup> or a “reduction in salary”<sup>20</sup>. These figures bear testimony to the resolute stance that the Government has taken against civil servants who have committed acts of misconduct or criminal offences.

16 An officer who is compulsorily retired may be granted retirement benefits in full or in part, and in the case of a pensionable officer, a deferred pension when he reaches his statutory retirement age.

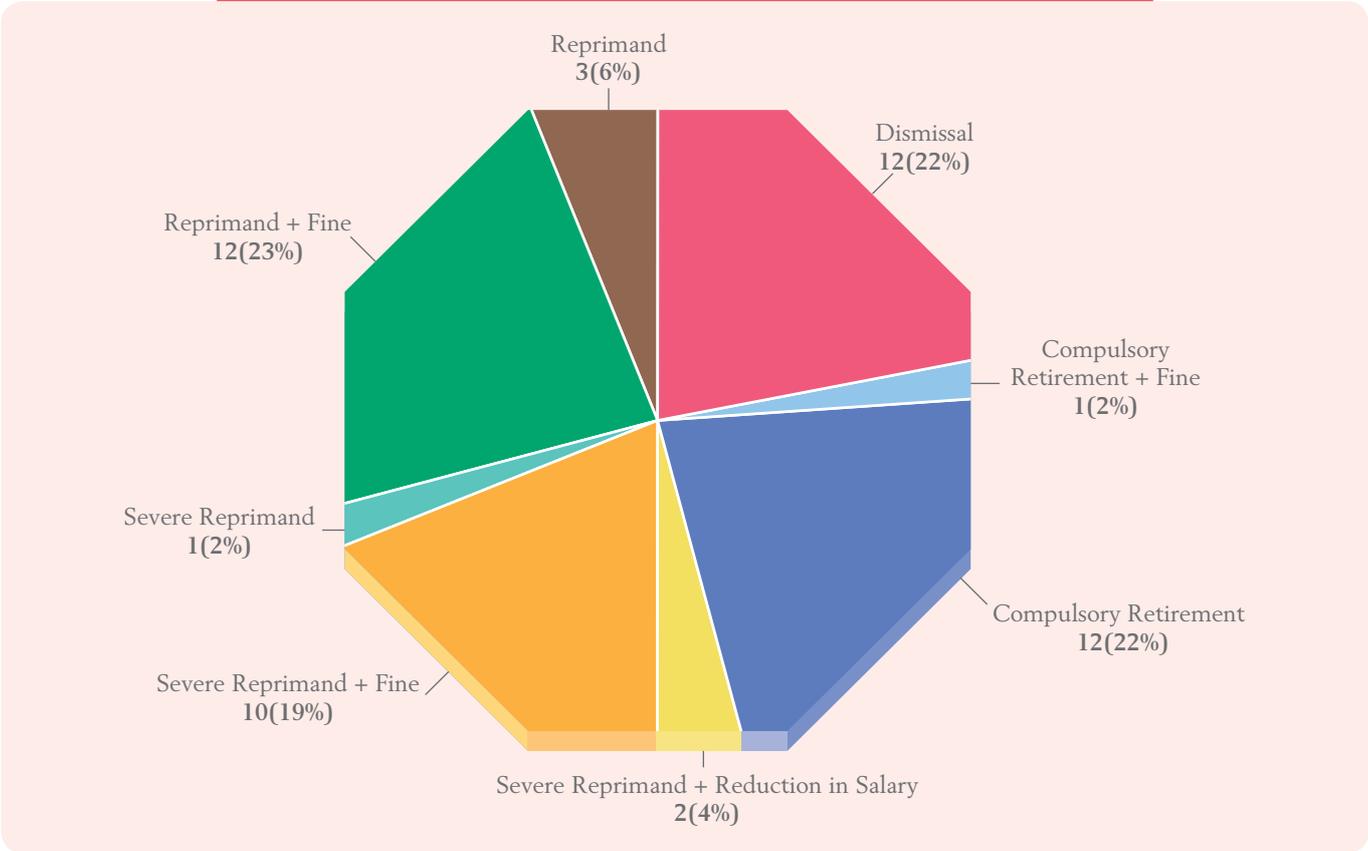
17 Dismissal is the most severe form of punishment as the officer forfeits his claims to retirement benefits (except the accrued benefits attributed to the Government’s and the officer’s mandatory contribution under the Mandatory Provident Fund Scheme or the Civil Service Provident Fund Scheme).

18 A severe reprimand will normally debar an officer from promotion or appointment for three to five years. This punishment is usually recommended for more serious misconduct/criminal offence or for repeated minor misconduct/criminal offences.

19 A fine is the most common form of financial penalty in use. On the basis of the salary-based approach, which has become operative since 1 September 2009, the level of fine is capped at an amount equivalent to one month’s substantive salary of the defaulting officer.

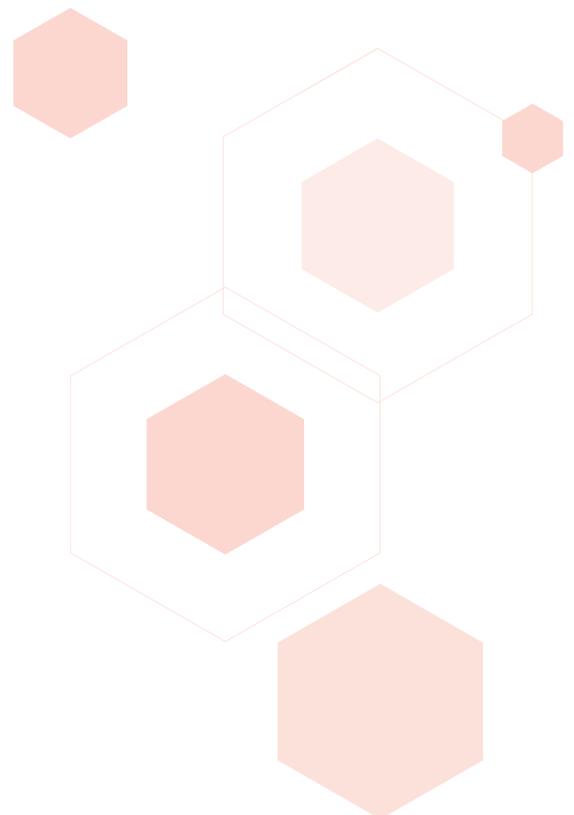
20 Reduction in salary is a form of financial penalty by reducing an officer’s salary by one or two pay points. When an officer is punished by reduction in salary, salary-linked allowance or benefits originally enjoyed by the officer would be adjusted or suspended in the case where after the reduction in salary the officer is no longer on the required pay point for entitlement to such allowance or benefits. The defaulting officer can “earn back” the lost pay point(s) through satisfactory performance and conduct, which is to be assessed through the usual performance appraisal mechanism. In comparison with a “fine”, reduction in salary offers a more substantive and punitive effect. It also contains a greater “corrective” capability in that it puts pressure on the officer to consistently perform and conduct himself up to the standard required of him in order to “earn back” his lost pay point(s).

**Breakdown of disciplinary submissions advised by the Commission in 2024 by form of punishment**



**Reviews and Observations on Disciplinary Issues**

5.7 The Commission has been working in close partnership with the Government to identify, develop and promote good practices in the management of the Civil Service. As reported in Chapter 2 of this Annual Report, CSB has undertaken to review the PS(A)O and PS(D)R with a view to enhancing the civil service disciplinary mechanism. The Commission will provide advice when CSB consults us on its preliminary proposals in 2025.

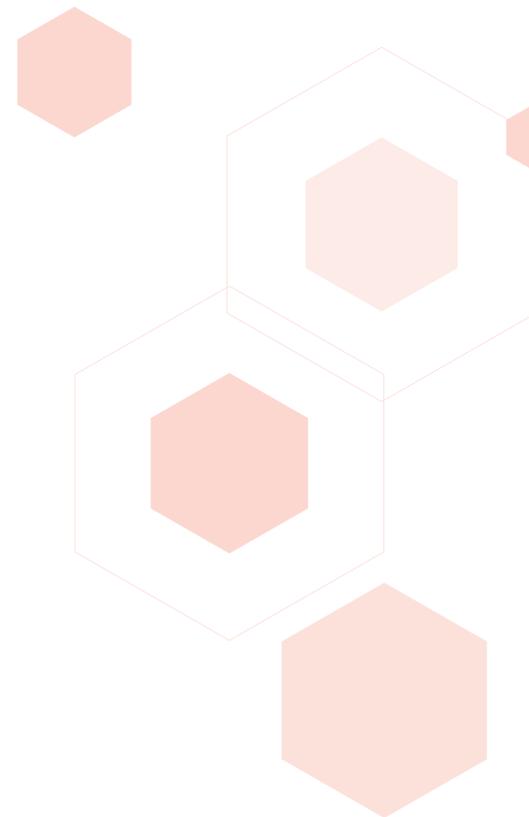


5.8 Separately, we are glad to see that the Secretariat on Civil Service Discipline (SCSD) has maintained its out-reach visits to B/Ds to explore scope to enhance mutual efficiency in processing disciplinary cases. Recognising that personnel assigned and the investigation techniques they possess are pivotal to the successful conclusion of disciplinary cases, SCSD has acted on the Commission's advice and continued to arrange capacity building workshops for investigation work on disciplinary cases. Such workshops are open to appointment practitioners as well as departmental managers who are responsible for day-to-day staff management. The Commission will continue to collaborate with CSB, and provide feedback and suggestions to facilitate its pursuit of the training initiatives.

5.9 Apart from deliberating and advising on the appropriate level of punishment for the cases it received for advice, the Commission also makes observations on them and initiates discussions with CSB to explore scope for improvement in handling disciplinary cases or staff management. In the ensuing paragraphs, we will highlight some of the observations and recommendations we have tendered in the year.

### Processing time of disciplinary cases

5.10 The Commission accepts that more time is required to consider cases with complications. However, failure to take timely action in processing disciplinary cases not only weakens the credibility of the disciplinary system, the Government's determination in upholding a high standard of probity in the Civil Service would also be undermined. In the past year, the Commission noted with concern that it took the Departments concerned exceedingly long time to conclude the disciplinary cases as illustrated in Cases 5A and 5B.



## Case 5A

An officer was suspected to have manipulated his official account of a departmental computerised system for private convenience and gains. After investigation, the Department found that the officer had abused the use of his official account on 70 occasions over a period of seven years albeit the total amount of government loss involved was not significant.

In view of the seriousness of the case, the Department reported it to a law enforcement agency (LEA) for follow up. Discounting the time spent by the LEA to investigate into the case and conclude that no criminal proceedings would be taken against the officer, the Department spent another three years to conduct its investigation, gather the necessary information and seek legal advice before initiating formal disciplinary proceedings against him. The Department attributed the long processing time to reasons such as substantial volume of information involved, heavy workload and stringent manpower situation. Although the officer was ultimately removed from the service given the gravity of his misconduct, the Commission considered the prolonged processing time unacceptable. We had drawn the case to the personal attention of the HoD concerned.

At the request of the Commission, the HoD has submitted a review report on the handling process of the Department, admitting the need for making improvements. The report sets out a series of measures to be implemented to avoid recurrence of similar delays in processing disciplinary cases. Besides, the Department is committed to launching a new computerised system in 2025 with built-in features to prevent abusive use by staff.

While appreciating the HoD's undertaking to make improvements, the Commission has reminded the Department to review the effectiveness of the measures on a regular basis so that refinement/enhancement could be made promptly and diligently to achieve the required effects.

**Case 5B**

A complaint was received by a Department which alleged that an officer had committed multiple misconduct acts, the establishment of which might likely lead to a removal punishment for the officer.

The Department spent more than two years to conduct investigation and initiate disciplinary proceedings. It took another 2.5 years for conducting disciplinary hearings mainly due to the officer's sickness, rendering him unfit to attend the hearings at various stages during the inquiry process. The inquiry report was subsequently prepared ten months after finishing the inquiry hearings.

Suspecting that his misconduct acts would have been established, the officer resigned after the inquiry by giving one month's salary in lieu of notice before any punishment could be imposed on him.

Apparently, the officer's resignation was to avoid disciplinary punishment as it would have led to his dismissal without retirement benefits given the seriousness of his established misconduct acts.

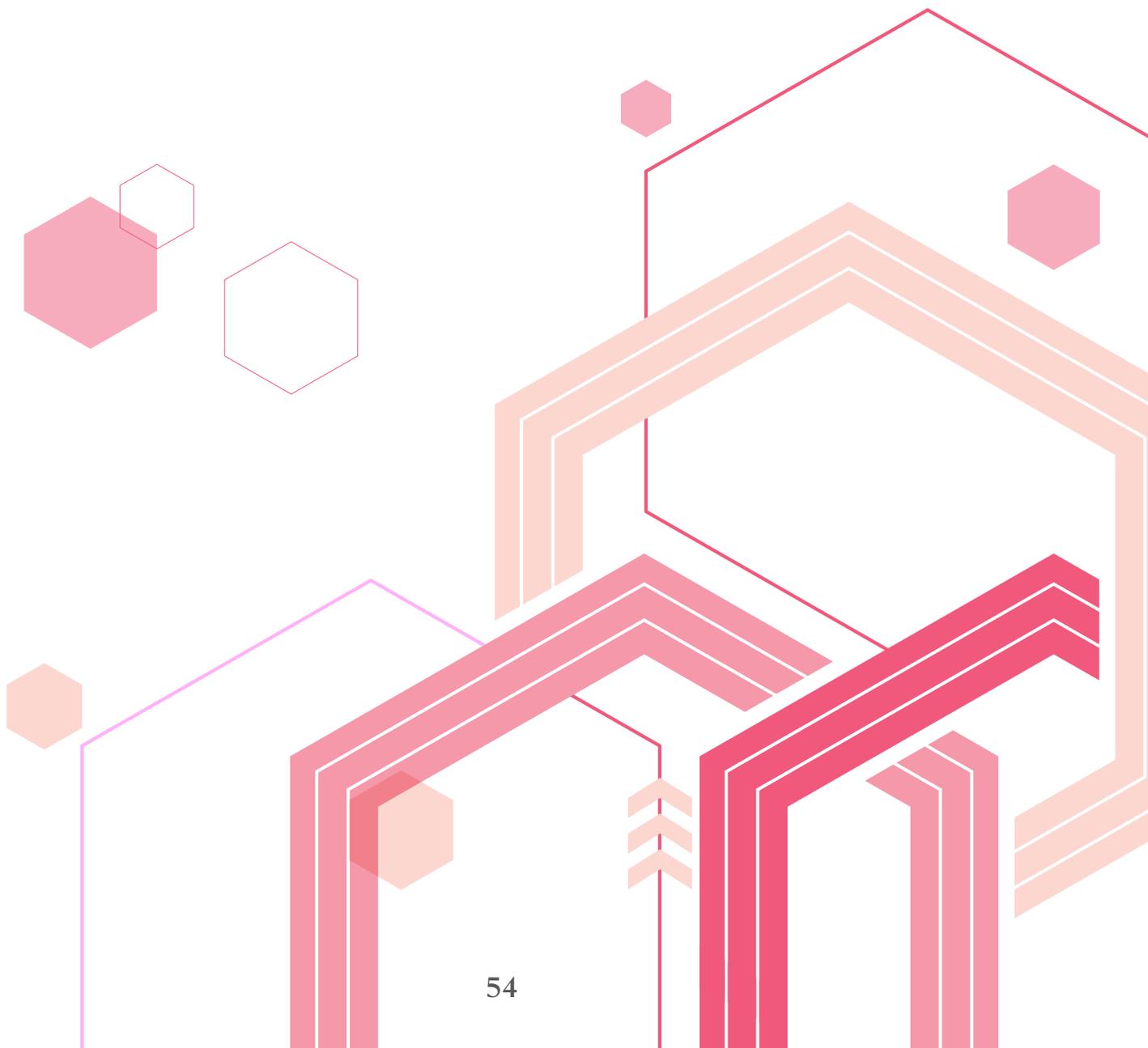
While the Department had withheld the release of the officer's retirement benefits upon his resignation, it needed to seek the Commission's advice timely on forfeiting his retirement benefits wholly in accordance with the established guidelines. However, the case was only submitted to the Commission three years after the officer's resignation. Upon receipt of the Commission's support of the recommendation to forfeit the officer's retirement benefits, the case had dragged on for almost nine years.

While appreciating the complexity of the case and the requirement of observing due process, the acute delay was totally unacceptable. The Commission has requested the HoD concerned to make a report to us setting out clearly the reasons for such a long processing time and the measures taken/to be taken for avoidance of future recurrence. The Commission looks forward to the positive feedback from the HoD.

5.11 CSB is also concerned about the need to process disciplinary cases in a timely manner. Starting from January 2024, B/Ds have been required to report on a half-yearly basis to their senior management and CSB on the progress of their handling of disciplinary cases with a view to stepping up the monitoring of the processing time of disciplinary cases, and ensuring that punishments meted out are commensurate with the gravity of the misconduct concerned. The Commission is glad to note the positive actions taken by CSB. We expect to see more speedy and proper processing of disciplinary cases in the coming year.

### Handling of disciplinary cases

5.12 Timeliness aside, a robust and decisive approach in handling disciplinary cases will send a clear message to staff that inappropriate behaviours are not tolerated, reinforcing the standards expected within the Civil Service so as to maintain a professional and accountable workforce. Cases 5C and 5D illustrate the importance for B/Ds to be decisive in action to initiate formal disciplinary actions against officers committing misconduct acts.



**Case 5C**

An officer was convicted of having assaulted his co-worker while they were working in a public venue. As the officer was a repeat offender with records of various workplace assaults against his co-workers, and on one occasion, against a member of the public, the Commission supported the Department's recommendation that a removal punishment should be imposed on the defaulting officer.

Upon scrutiny of the case, the Commission noted that the officer, with a medical history of mental illness, had been reported to have problems in emotion management and interpersonal skills since his early stage of appointment. As shown in his appraisal reports, the behavioural issues and communication problems had persisted for several years, and seriously affected the daily operation and staff morale of the office. Instead of taking robust management actions in good time to address the problems, the supervisors maintained a compassionate approach by giving him routine advice and calling special appraisal reports on him to monitor his performance over the years.

While the case needed to be handled with care in view of the officer's medical history, more vigilant and decisive management actions should have been taken earlier in view of his aggravated and persistent behavioural and performance issues. Prompt action was especially called for to deter his misconduct acts so as to avoid posing further nuisance or even safety risk to his colleagues and members of the public.

The Commission has expressed concern to the Department about its indecisiveness and leniency in handling the case. Taking reference from this case, the Department should remind all supervising officers and the grade management to be more robust and stringent in managing staff with conduct issues.

**Case 5D**

An officer, who had been serving in his Department for six years, was recommended for dismissal in 2024 as he had been late for work persistently despite repeated reminders and warnings from his supervisors. The Commission was concerned that the Department only instituted formal disciplinary action against the officer when he had been late for work for an aggregate of more than 950 hours (or equivalent to some 100 working days) over a long span of three years.

On a closer examination of the case, the Commission noted that the officer's lateness problem was first reported in his appraisal during the second year of his probationary service. Yet, the Department confirmed him to the permanent establishment after his serving three years of probation merely on the basis of his slight improvements in attendance and general satisfactory performance.

Ironically, the Department began deducting the officer's salary under the "no work, no pay" principle as stipulated in CSR 610 shortly before his confirmation to the permanent establishment (i.e. when he was still serving on probationary terms). It was apparent that the Department had failed to holistically assess his overall suitability for long-term appointment. This lenient approach conveyed a misleading message to the officer, suggesting that his misconduct was of little consequence and could simply offset by salary deductions. The officer was eventually dismissed, by when his lateness problem had further deteriorated and persisted for more than three years.

The Commission has drawn the case to the personal attention of the HoD and reiterated the need for making improvements in staff management. The Department should also remind all supervising officers of the importance of taking a more resolute approach in handling misconduct cases so that defaulting officers could be punished in a timely manner and could clearly understand the consequence of their misconduct acts.



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*A robust and decisive approach in handling disciplinary cases will send a clear message that inappropriate behaviours are not tolerated.*

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### Supervisory accountability

5.13 It is beyond doubt that defaulting officers are held directly accountable for their misconduct acts. At the same time, B/Ds should be on constant alert to ensure the robustness of the control/monitoring mechanism of their departmental operation. Effective daily staff management is key to the maintenance of a high standard

of staff conduct and discipline, and is clearly more constructive than taking punishment action after the occurrence of misconduct. Omission and non-performance of duties, especially committed over a period of time, should have been detected and avoided if supervisors could discharge their supervisory and monitoring responsibilities properly and diligently, as illustrated in Cases 5E and 5F.

#### Case 5E

This case concerns an officer who was criminally convicted of “Theft”. In examining the misconduct case, the Department found that the defaulter was arrested in a supermarket while he was away from office without approval. The defaulter and his two co-workers worked under the same supervisor in a public venue. Working on a two-shift pattern, they were assigned to take either shift depending on the operational needs.

On the material day, the defaulter and one officer worked on one shift, whereas the supervisor and the other officer on the other. Before the scheduled off-duty time on the day, the defaulter told his co-worker on the same shift that he would go out for making some purchases. Both of them did not notify the supervisor, reflecting the lax office discipline and deficiency in staff management. The supervisor only came to know the defaulter’s unauthorised absence when the latter reported to the Department about his arrest by a LEA.

Upon the Commission’s request, the Department has subsequently enhanced its monitoring of staff attendance at the venue with staff supervision tightened up. Noting that there are other offices with staff working on shifts, we have also advised the Department to –

- (a) consider extending the monitoring measures to all these offices;
- (b) clearly advise all staff of the standard of conduct required to ensure that proper office discipline is maintained at all times; and
- (c) remind all supervisors that they are held accountable in maintaining both office operation and proper office discipline under their purview.

## Case 5F

A complaint was received by a Department alleging that the officers working in an outstation office had left their workplace earlier than their scheduled off-duty time without authorisation. After investigation, the Department found that the majority of officers working in the outstation office had committed the misconduct acts of unauthorised absence over a prolonged period of time. Worse still, the defaulting officers had made false entries in their attendance records. Although disciplinary punishments were imposed on the defaulting officers given their established acts of misconduct, the supervisor was exculpated on grounds that he did not work in the same outstation office with his subordinates.

The Commission was disappointed to note the lax office discipline and poor integrity of the officers concerned, as well as the syndicated nature of the misconduct acts committed by them. The concerned office had then operated on a three-shift pattern to provide round-the-clock support services, with a relatively long overlapping period of two consecutive shifts to allow handover of duties. As defended by the defaulting officers concerned, they thought that they could leave work early after handing over their duties to the officers on the following shift, thereby resulting in the habitual unauthorised absence.

Upon discovery of the case, the Department has stepped up its monitoring on staff attendance. However, the wilful disregard of office discipline has reflected poorly on the defaulting officers and also exposed the Department's inadequate staff supervision.

The Commission has drawn the case to the personal attention of the HoD and invited the Department to conduct a critical and comprehensive review on its staff management system, with a view to upholding the standard of office discipline and strengthening the supervisory accountability. The Department was also requested to review the shift pattern of the office to prevent the recurrence of similar misconduct acts and to ensure the gainful deployment of staff.

While this case might be an isolated one, CSB, taking into account its gravity, has also taken part in the review, advising the Department ways to step up its office discipline further and strengthen its staff supervision through the adoption of various management measures and technology solutions. The Commission fully supports their concerted efforts and looks forward to the review report to be submitted by the HoD.



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*Omission and non-performance of duties should have been detected and avoided if supervisors discharge their supervisory and monitoring responsibilities properly and diligently.*

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## CHAPTER 6

### VISITS

#### Visits to Departments

6.1 The Chairman and Members of the Commission visited the Social Welfare Department (SWD) and the Government Flying Service (GFS) in August 2024 and November 2024 respectively. These visits have facilitated useful exchanges on various issues pertaining to civil service appointments, performance management and staff development of the Departments concerned.

#### Social Welfare Department

6.2 The visit to various service and operational units of SWD had greatly enhanced the Commission's understanding of the Department's work, operations, and its invaluable contributions to fostering a caring community. The Commission also had the precious opportunity to meet SWD's frontline staff, with fruitful exchanges on their roles, challenges, and the critical support they provide to individuals and families in need.



Visit to the Social Welfare Department in August 2024.



Visit to the Social Welfare Department in August 2024.

## Government Flying Service

6.3 The visit to GFS enabled the Commission to gain deeper insights into its operations and the invaluable services it provides to the public and other government departments, through a comprehensive briefing by its senior staff and a tour

of its hangar and other facilities. The Commission also met with GFS's frontline officers which provided us with the opportunity to better understand their work, the challenges they face, and the dedication required to deliver their essential services.



Visit to the Government Flying Service in November 2024.



Visit to the Government Flying Service in November 2024.

## Visit from the Public Administration and Civil Service Bureau of the Macao Special Administrative Region

6.4 Separately, the Chairman of the Commission met the delegation from the Public Administration and Civil Service Bureau of the Macao Special Administrative Region in September 2024. The delegates were briefed on the role, functions and work of the Commission. A wide range of topics related to civil service appointments was discussed, and views were exchanged.



Meeting with the Public Administration and Civil Service Bureau of the Macao SAR in September 2024.



## CHAPTER 7

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

7.1 The Commission would like to express our sincere gratitude to Mrs Ingrid YEUNG, the Secretary for the Civil Service, and her colleagues for their unwavering support and assistance in all areas of the Commission's work. Additionally, the Commission extends its heartfelt acknowledgement to Permanent Secretaries, Heads of Departments and their senior staff for their cooperation and understanding in responding to the Commission's enquiries and suggestions throughout 2024.



## APPENDIX I

### Curricula Vitae of the Chairman and Members of the Public Service Commission



**Ms Maisie CHENG Mei-sze, GBS, JP**  
BA(Hons) (HKU)  
Chairman, Public Service Commission  
(appointed on 1 May 2023)

Ms Cheng was a veteran civil servant. She joined the Administrative Service in September 1987 and had served in various Policy Bureaux and Departments during her 34 years of service. Senior positions held by Ms Cheng prior to her retirement included Director of Government Logistics (2013 – 2015), Director of Marine (2015 – 2019), and Permanent Secretary for the Environment / Director of Environmental Protection (2019 – 2021).



**Mr Lester Garson HUANG, SBS, JP**

LL.B. (HKU), M. Ed (CUHK), Solicitor, Notary Public, China-Appointed Attesting Officer

Member, Public Service Commission

(from 1 February 2018 to 31 January 2024)

Mr Huang is a Partner and Co-Chairman of P C Woo & Co. Currently, he is a Council Member of the Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups and a Steward of the Hong Kong Jockey Club. Previously, he was President of the Law Society of Hong Kong as well as the Chairman of the Council of the City University of Hong Kong, the Social Welfare Advisory Committee, and the Standing Committee on Language Education and Research, a Non-Executive Director of the Urban Renewal Authority and the Securities and Futures Commission. He was also a member of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority's Exchange Fund Advisory Committee and the Standing Committee on Judicial Salaries and Conditions of Service and an ex-officio member of the Education Commission.



**Mrs Ava NG TSE Suk-ying, SBS**

BSocSc (CUHK), LLB (LondonU), MUP (McGill U), LLM (Arb & DR) (HKU), FHKIP, MCI Arb

Member, Public Service Commission

(from 1 February 2018 to 31 January 2024)

Mrs Ng joined the Civil Service as an Assistant Planning Officer (later retitled as Assistant Town Planner) in February 1977. She retired from the post of Director of Planning in June 2010. Previously, she was a Member of the Advisory Committee on Post-service Employment of Civil Servants.



**The Honourable Mrs Margaret LEUNG KO May-yee,  
SBS, JP**

Honorary Fellow (HKU), BSocSc (HKU)  
Member, Public Service Commission  
(from 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2024)

Mrs Leung started her banking career in 1975. She had been a Director and General Manager of The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation, the Deputy Chairman and Chief Executive of Hang Seng Bank, and Deputy Chairman and Chief Executive of Chong Hing Bank. She retired in 2018. She previously served as a member of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference. Currently, she is a non-official member of the Executive Council. Besides, she is an Independent Non-Executive Director of the Agricultural Bank of China Limited, China Mobile Limited, First Pacific Company Limited and Sun Hung Kai Properties Limited. She is also the chairman of the Advisory Committee on Arts Development, a member of the Advisory Committee on Post-office Employment for Former Chief Executives and Politically Appointed Officials, a member of the Culture Commission, an Honorary Steward of the Hong Kong Jockey Club, the Treasurer and a member of the Council of the University of Hong Kong, a member of the Business School Advisory Council of the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology and a non ex-officio member of the Law Reform Commission of Hong Kong.



**Mr Tim LUI Tim-leung, GBS, JP**

Fellow Member of The Hong Kong Institute of Certified Public Accountants

Member, Public Service Commission  
(from 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2024)

Mr Lui joined PricewaterhouseCoopers in 1978 and retired as a Senior Advisor in 2018. He is a Past President of the Hong Kong Institute of Certified Public Accountants. Currently, he is the Chairman of the University Grants Committee. Over the years, he has served as the Chairman of the Securities and Futures Commission, the Education Commission, the Committee on Self-financing Post-secondary Education, the Joint Committee on Student Finance, the Standing Commission on Directorate Salaries and Conditions of Service and the Employees' Compensation Insurance Levies Management Board. Mr Lui is a Deputy of the National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China.



**Dr Clement CHEN Cheng-jen, GBS, JP**

Member, Public Service Commission  
(appointed on 1 December 2019)

Dr Chen is the Managing Director of Tai Hing Cotton Mill Limited. Currently, he is the Chairman of the Standing Committee on Judicial Salaries and Conditions of Service, a Non-Executive Director of the Insurance Authority, Vice-President of the Executive Committee of the Hong Kong Professionals and Senior Executives Association, and Honorary President of the Federation of Hong Kong Industries. Previously, he served as the Chairman of the Council and the Court of the Hong Kong Baptist University, the Standing Committee on Youth Skills Competition of Hong Kong, the Vocational Training Council and the Hong Kong Productivity Council.



**Prof Francis LUI Ting-ming, BBS, JP**

Bachelor of Arts (Economics), University of Chicago  
Doctor of Philosophy (Economics), University of Minnesota  
Member, Public Service Commission  
(appointed on 1 June 2021)

Prof Lui is Professor Emeritus, Adjunct Professor and Honorary Fellow of the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology; and Chair Professor and Director of Institute of Development Economics of the Macau University of Science and Technology. Currently, he is a member of the Chief Executive's Policy Unit Expert Group and a non-official member of the Board of Governors of the Hong Kong Arts Centre. Over the years, he has served as a member of different government boards and committees covering the areas of education, employment, housing strategy, land supply, population policy and fiscal planning, poverty alleviation and retirement protection.



**Ms Agnes CHAN Sui-kuen, BBS**

Bachelor of Economics, University of Sydney

Fellow Member of The Hong Kong Institute of Certified Public Accountants

Member, Public Service Commission

(appointed on 1 May 2022)

Ms Chan is the Senior Advisor of Chairman's Office of Ernst & Young Greater China (EY). Prior to this position, she was the Managing Partner for EY Hong Kong and Macau. Currently, she is a member of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, Hong Kong SAR delegate of the All-China Women's Federation and Chairman of the General Committee of the Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce. She is also a member of the Users' Committee of the Inland Revenue Department and a member of the HKSAR Government's Advisory Panel on Base Erosion and Profit Shifting 2.0. Previously, she was a Non-Executive Director of the Securities and Futures Commission, a member of the Exchange Fund Advisory Committee of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority, a member of the Competition Commission of Hong Kong, the Mandatory Provident Fund Schemes Appeal Board, the Environment and Conservation Fund Committee of Hong Kong, and the Telecommunications Users and Consumers Advisory Committee of the Office of the Communications Authority.



**Mrs Ann KUNG YEUNG Yun-chi, BBS, JP**

Bachelor of Sciences in Business Administration (Accounting),  
University of Southern California  
Member, Public Service Commission  
(appointed on 1 May 2022)

Mrs Kung served as Deputy Chief Executive of Bank of China (Hong Kong) Limited (BOCHK) until her retirement in July 2022, and was appointed as an Advisor as at August 2022. She is a Director of BOCHK Charitable Foundation, and a Vice Patron and board member of the Community Chest. She is currently the Chairman of the HKSAR Government Standing Committee on Directorate Salaries and Conditions of Service, and the Hospital Governing Committee of Hong Kong Children's Hospital; a member of the Board of the Airport Authority of Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Tourism Board, the Board of Hong Kong Palace Museum, the Hospital Authority Advisory Committee on Mainland Affairs, the Civil Service Training Advisory Board, the Council of the Chinese University of Hong Kong; and a Steward of the Hong Kong Jockey Club. In the financial sector, she is Chairman of the Banking and Financial Services Group of the Employers' Federation of Hong Kong. She was previously a member of the Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorist Financing Review Tribunal, the Advisory Committee of the Securities and Futures Commission, and the Financial Infrastructure and Market Development Sub-Committee of the Exchange Fund Advisory Committee under the Hong Kong Monetary Authority.



**Mr Victor LAM Wai-kiu, SBS**

BSc (Computer), HKU  
MA (Theology), St. Joseph's College of Maine  
Fellow, Hong Kong Institution of Engineers  
Fellow, Hong Kong Computer Society  
Member, Public Service Commission  
(appointed on 1 February 2024)

Mr Lam joined the Civil Service as an Analyst/Programmer II in August 1985 and had provided information technology services for various Policy Bureaux and Departments during his 37 years of service. He retired from the post of Government Chief Information Officer (now retitled as Commissioner for Digital Policy) in December 2022. Currently, he is a member of the Advisory Committee on Post-service Employment of Civil Servants, the Committee of the Artificial Intelligence Subsidy Scheme, the Building Committee of Hong Kong Housing Authority, a non-executive director of EH Plus Digital Technology Limited (a wholly owned subsidiary of Hospital Authority), and the convenor of the Information Security Governance Committee of Hong Kong Genome Institute.



**Mr Adrian WONG Koon-man, BBS, MH, JP**

Bachelor of Laws (Honours), University of Leeds  
Master of Laws, University of Hong Kong  
Member, Public Service Commission  
(appointed on 1 February 2024)

Mr Wong is an Executive Director and Chief Operations Officer of VL Asset Management Limited, and a Director of Abercan Limited. He is an Independent Non-executive Director of the MTR Corporation Limited. He is also the Chairman of the Standing Commission on Civil Service Salaries and Conditions of Service, as well as a member of the Travel Industry Authority and the Unsolicited Electronic Messages (Enforcement Notices) Appeal Board. Previously, he was the Chairman of the Corruption Prevention Advisory Committee and a member of the Advisory Committee on Corruption of the Independent Commission Against Corruption. He was also a member of the Board of the Airport Authority Hong Kong, the Board of the Aviation Security Company Limited, the Listing Committee of the Stock Exchange of Hong Kong Limited, the Communications Authority, the Air Transport Licensing Authority, as well as a Director of the Board of the Urban Renewal Fund.

**Mr Ivan CHU Kwok-leung**

Bachelor of Social Science, University of Hong Kong  
Master of Commerce, University of New South Wales  
Member, Public Service Commission  
(appointed on 1 July 2024)

Mr Chu was former Chairman of John Swire & Sons (China) Limited, Chief Executive of Cathay Pacific, and Executive Director of Swire Pacific Limited. He was also Chairman of Welkin China Private Equity Limited. Currently, he is Chairman of the Papa Group. He is a member of the Trade and Industry Advisory Board, as well as the Audit Committee of the University of Hong Kong. He is also a Council Member of the UNICEF Hong Kong and Head Judge of THE ONE International Humanitarian Award. Over the years, he has served as a member of various government boards and committees covering the areas of logistics and aviation.

**Mr Stephen YIU Kin-wah, JP**

Professional Diploma in Accountancy, Hong Kong Polytechnic (now Hong Kong Polytechnic University)

Master in Business Administration, University of Warwick

Fellow Member of The Hong Kong Institute of Certified Public Accountants

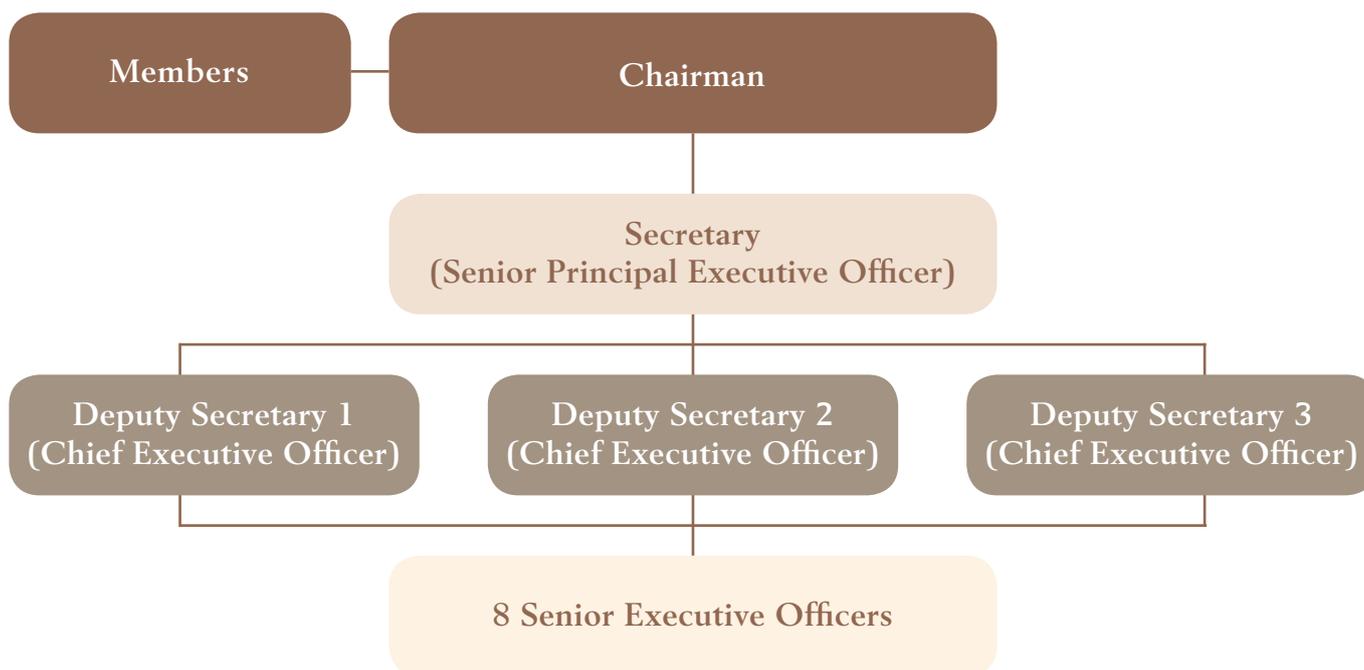
Member, Public Service Commission  
(appointed on 1 July 2024)

Mr Yiu joined the global accounting firm KPMG in Hong Kong in 1983. He served as the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of KPMG China and Hong Kong as well as a member of the Executive Committee and the Board of KPMG International and KPMG Asia Pacific. He retired in 2015. Currently, he is the Chairman of the Insurance Authority, and the Treasurer and Council Member of the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology. Besides, he is a member of the International Advisory Council of the National Financial Regulatory Administration, the Exchange Fund Advisory Committee, the Board of the Hong Kong Academy of Finance, and the Board of the Airport Authority Hong Kong. Previously, he was an Independent Non-Executive Director of the Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing Limited, as well as a member of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Complaints Committee.



## APPENDIX II

### Organisation Chart of the Public Service Commission Secretariat



### Establishment

Directorate Executive Officer	1
Executive Officer Grade	11
Clerical Grade	18
Secretarial Grade	3
Chauffeur Grade	1

34



## APPENDIX III

### Submissions Advised by the Commission

Category	Number of Submissions Advised				
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Recruitment	140	157	132	168	140
Promotion/Acting appointment	704	742	746	763	732
Extension of service or re-employment after retirement	22	26	23	23	27
Extension or termination of probationary/trial service	173	247	196	225	147
Other Civil Service appointment matters	91	178	96	111	89
Discipline	29	29	72	63	53
Total number of submissions advised	1 159	1 379	1 265	1 353	1 188
<i>(a) Number of submissions queried</i>	853	886	812	874	735
<i>(b) Number of submissions with revised recommendations following queries</i>	162	158	162	135	125
<b><i>(b) / (a)</i></b>	19%	18%	20%	15%	17%



## APPENDIX IV

### Recruitment Submissions Advised by the Commission

Terms of Appointment	Number of Recommended Candidates in 2024	
	Open Recruitment	In-service Appointment
<b>Probation</b>	1 546	0
<b>Agreement</b>	85	0
<b>Trial</b>	143	71
<b><i>Sub total</i></b>	<b>1 774</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1 845</b>	

	Comparison with Previous Years				
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Number of recruitment submissions involved	140	157	132	168	<b>140</b>
Number of candidates recommended (all local candidates)	1 471	1 597	1 606	1 887	<b>1 845</b>



## APPENDIX V

### Promotion Submissions Advised by the Commission

Category	Number of Recommended Officers				
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Promotion	2 601	3 178	2 968	3 310	<b>3 426</b>
Waitlisted for promotion	450	272	381	316	<b>349</b>
Acting with a view to substantive promotion (AWAV) or waitlisted for AWAV	322	325	313	349	<b>337</b>
Acting for administrative convenience (AFAC) or waitlisted for AFAC	5 508	5 859	5 850	6 432	<b>6 350</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>8 881</b>	<b>9 634</b>	<b>9 512</b>	<b>10 407</b>	<b>10 462</b>



## APPENDIX VI

### Extension of Service and Re-employment after Retirement Submissions Advised by the Commission

Category	Number of Recommended Officers in 2024		
	Directorate	Non-directorate	Total
Submissions under the adjusted mechanism implemented from 1 June 2017 for further employment beyond retirement age for a longer duration than final extension of service	13	52	65

	Comparison with Previous Years				
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Number of extension of service or re-employment after retirement submissions advised	22	26	23	23	27
<i>Number of submissions involving directorate ranks</i>	10	9	10	7	16
<i>Number of submissions involving non-directorate ranks</i>	12	17	13	16	11



## APPENDIX VII

### Extension/Termination of Probationary/Trial Service Submissions Advised by the Commission

Category	Number of Submissions Advised				
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Termination of trial service	1	3	6	1	3
Termination of probationary service	25	66	40	45	20
<b><i>Sub total</i></b>	<b>26</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>23</b>
Extension of trial service	11	10	7	15	19
Extension of probationary service	136	168	143	164	105
<b><i>Sub total</i></b>	<b>147</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>124</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>196</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>147</b>



## APPENDIX VIII

### Other Civil Service Appointment Matters Advised by the Commission

Category	Number of Submissions Advised				
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Non-renewal of agreement	0	3	2	2	1
Renewal or extension of agreement	4	3	1	0	6
Retirement under section 12 of the Public Service (Administration) Order	1	73	0	1	4
Secondment	4	2	1	1	6
Review of acting appointment	8	5	4	11	8
Updating of Guide to Appointment	74	92	88	95	64
Lateral appointment	0	0	0	1	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>89</b>



## APPENDIX IX

### Disciplinary Submissions Advised by the Commission

#### (a) Breakdown of Submissions in 2024 by Salary Group

Punishment	Number of Submissions Advised			Total
	Salary Group			
	Master Pay Scale Pt. 13 and below or equivalent	Master Pay Scale Pt. 14 to 33 or equivalent	Master Pay Scale Pt. 34 and above or equivalent	
Dismissal	7	4	1	12
Compulsory Retirement + Reduced pension	0	0	0	0
Compulsory Retirement + Fine	0	1	0	1
Compulsory Retirement	11	1	0	12
Reduction in Rank	0	0	0	0
Severe Reprimand + Reduction in Salary	1	1	0	2
Severe Reprimand + Fine	9	0	1	10
Severe Reprimand	0	0	1	1
Reprimand + Fine	8	3	1	12
Reprimand	2	1	0	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>53</b>

**(b) Breakdown of Submissions in 2024 by Category of Criminal Offence/Misconduct**

Punishment	Number of Submissions Advised				
	Criminal Offence			Misconduct <sup>21</sup>	Total
	Traffic related	Theft	Others <sup>22</sup>		
Dismissal	0	0	2	10	12
Compulsory Retirement	2	0	4	7	13
Lesser Punishment	2	6	7	13	28
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>53</b>

**(c) Comparison with Previous Years**

Punishment	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Dismissal	4	9	32	14	12
Compulsory Retirement	8	6	5	14	13
Lesser Punishment	17	14	35	35	28
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>53</b>

21 Including unauthorised absence, unauthorised loans, unauthorised outside work, failure to follow instructions or perform duties, etc.

22 Including assault, sex-related offences, possession of dutiable goods, accepting advantages without permission, etc.



## ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS ANNUAL REPORT

AOs	Appraising Officers
B/Ds	Bureaux/Departments
CE	Chief Executive
COs	Countersigning Officers
CSB	Civil Service Bureau
CSPF	Civil Service Provident Fund
CSRs	Civil Service Regulations
FE	Further employment beyond retirement age for a longer duration than final extension of service
G/A	Guide to Appointment
GMs	Grade managements
HKSAR	The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
HoDs	Heads of Department
HoGs	Heads of Grade
HRM	Human Resource Management
PS(A)O	Public Service (Administration) Order
PSCO	Public Service Commission Ordinance
ROs	Reviewing Officers
SCSD	Secretariat on Civil Service Discipline