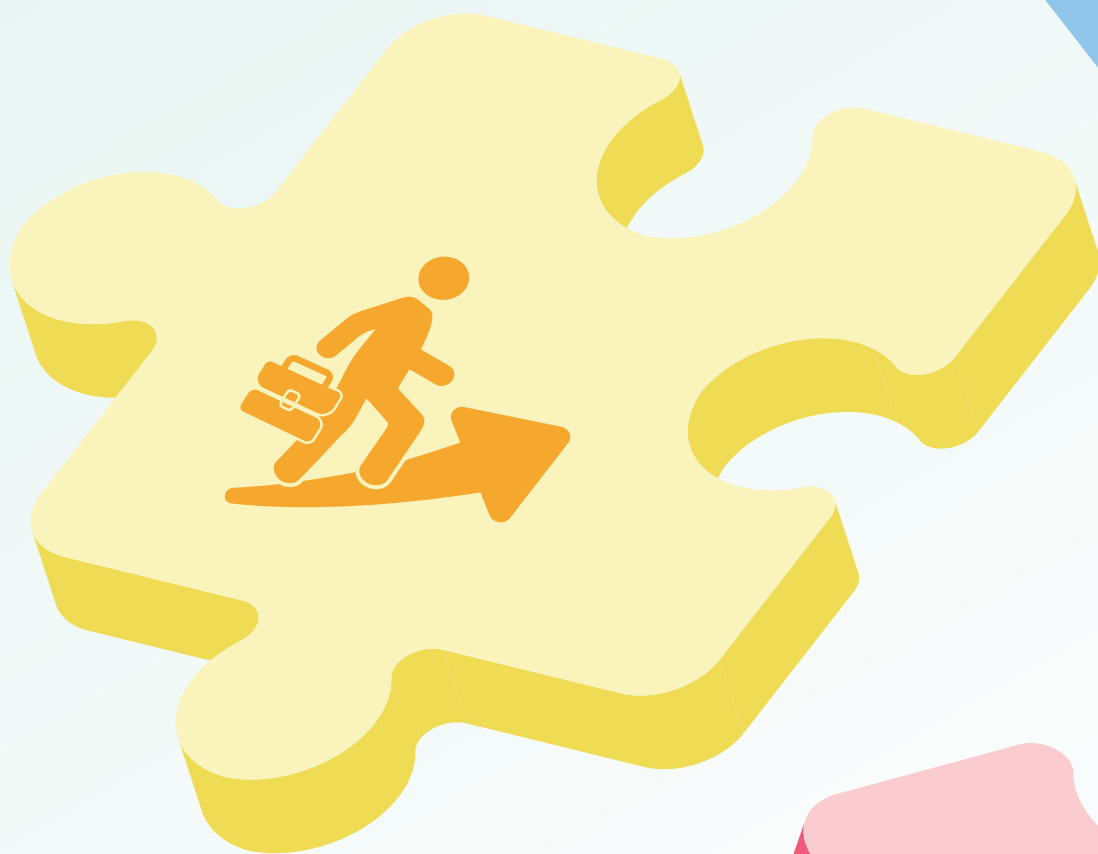


公務員絛用委員會

# Public Service Commission

Annual Report  
2025 年報





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## CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD

“ As the Civil Service navigates through an era of rapid technological advancements and rising public expectations, the Commission remains steadfast in its commitment to maintaining a meritorious Civil Service to meet the evolving demands of the community. ”



The year 2025 marked another busy yet rewarding year for the Commission, as we steadfastly continued to discharge the statutory responsibilities by advising the Chief Executive (CE) on matters pertaining to Civil Service appointments, promotion, and discipline. In terms of workload, the Commission provided advice on a total of 1 097 submissions, with cases on recruitment and promotion continuing to constitute the bulk of our work as in the past.

As always, the Commission is committed to ensuring that both the promotion and recruitment processes are meticulously executed, and that the claims of eligible candidates are considered fairly and comprehensively. We believe that promotion extends beyond recognising merit; it is a strategic tool for developing and motivating a stable, loyal and effective workforce that serves

the best interest of the community. Equally, recruiting talent is vital, as it injects new blood and perspectives to the Civil Service.

During the year, the Commission was pleased to note that Bureaux/Departments (B/Ds) had generally adhered to the established regulations and guidelines in ensuring procedural propriety and fairness when conducting promotion and recruitment exercises. We commended the positive initiatives and effective practices adopted by B/Ds when warranted. At the same time, we did identify some areas requiring improvement or practices that fell below the required standards. In such cases, we provided the B/Ds concerned with our observations and recommendations for enhancement. We are grateful to note that B/Ds are generally positive and receptive to our advice and have acted upon it.

On disciplinary matters, the Commission remains dedicated to upholding the high standards of integrity and proper conduct among civil servants. The consistently low number of disciplinary cases in recent years has positively reflected on the professionalism and integrity of our civil servants. Knowing that there is no room for complacency, we will continue to fully support the Government's robust stance on maintaining discipline and taking decisive action against any misconduct.

This Report offers an overview of the promotion, appointment and discipline submissions reviewed in 2025, highlighting some challenging cases, with inclusion of the Commission's key recommendations and advice given on them. By sharing these cases, we aim to provide useful guidance for those involved in HRM and to highlight the critical role of senior management in fostering continuous improvement.

The Commission has always underscored the importance of a proactive and visionary HRM approach which is crucial for effective and long term succession planning as well as staff development. When reviewing the cases submitted by B/Ds in the year, we have urged them to adopt strategic and forward-thinking approaches in their staff development, training and succession planning, aiming to cultivate a resilient, high-performing and sustainable workforce.

Apart from our advisory role on individual submissions, the Commission works closely with the Government for the betterment of the Civil Service through changes to policies, mechanisms and procedures. To enhance the civil service disciplinary mechanism, we fully support the Government's review on the Public Service (Administration) Order and the Public Service (Disciplinary) Regulation. Having sought the Commission's views on its proposals in 2025, the Civil Service Bureau (CSB) conducted staff consultation and briefed the Legislative Council Panel on Public Service. We look forward to the implementation of these enhanced measures in 2026.

In terms of performance management, the Commission welcomes the CE's policy initiative of developing a more rigorous performance appraisal system as announced in the CE's 2025 Policy Address. On this, we look forward to contributing our views to CSB so as to reflect and differentiate the performance levels of staff more effectively.

Maintaining a meritorious Civil Service has always been the core value treasured and advocated by the Commission. We are in full support of the establishment of the Heads of Department Accountability System (the System) as announced in the CE's 2025 Policy Address. In enabling the Commission to conduct the necessary independent investigation work under the System, it is necessary to expand the existing statutory functions of the Commission. We will work closely with CSB on the related preparatory work for implementing the System.

In an era characterised by rapid advancements in information technology and the expanding influence of artificial intelligence, it is imperative for the Civil Service to proactively embrace change and leverage innovation to maintain its efficacy. This dynamic environment presents an ideal opportunity for B/Ds to implement forward-thinking strategies that enhance productivity and build organisational resilience. The Commission is committed to working closely with B/Ds to tackle these challenges and strengthen the Civil Service for the future.

Opportunity is taken to express my heartfelt gratitude to my fellow Commission Members for their unwavering support and invaluable counsel. In particular, I would like to pay tribute to Dr Clement CHEN, who retired from the Commission after having served as Member for six years. Simultaneously, I warmly welcome Mr Samuel CHAN, who joined the Commission in December 2025.

My appreciation extends to the Secretary for the Civil Service and her colleagues for their robust support and assistance in taking forward the Commission's recommendations and advice. Lastly, I am grateful 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 2025 was as follows –



Chairman and Members of the Public Service Commission.



The Public Service Commission at a meeting.



The Public Service Commission at a briefing conducted by the Secretary for the Civil Service on the CE's 2025 Policy Address.



Chairman	
Ms Maisie CHENG Mei-sze, GBS, JP	since May 2023
Members	
Dr Clement CHEN Cheng-jen, GBS, JP	December 2019 to November 2025
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
Mr Samuel CHAN Ka-yan, BBS, JP	since December 2025
Secretary	
Ms Fontaine CHENG Fung-ying, JP	since October 2018

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

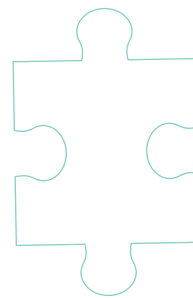
## Secretariat

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 2025, 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 2025) 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 2025, the number of established civil service posts falling under the Commission's purview was about 55 000 out of a total of about 190 000. 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>.



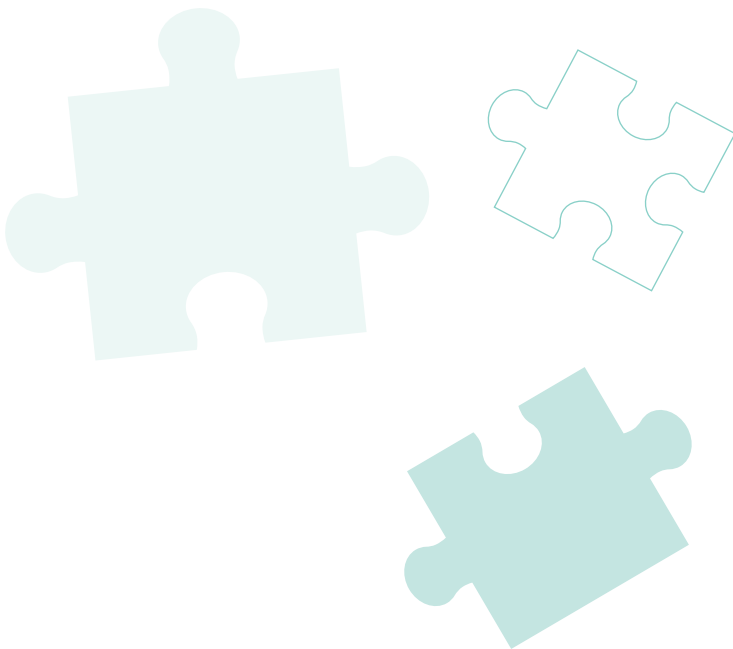
- 1 In accordance with s.6(2) of the PSCO, the post of the Director of Audit as well as posts in the judicial service of the Judiciary, the Independent Commission Against Corruption and the disciplined ranks of the Hong Kong Police Force are outside the Commission's purview. In addition, the Director 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 2025, the number of Category A officers falling under the Commission's purview for disciplinary matters was about 125 000.

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.

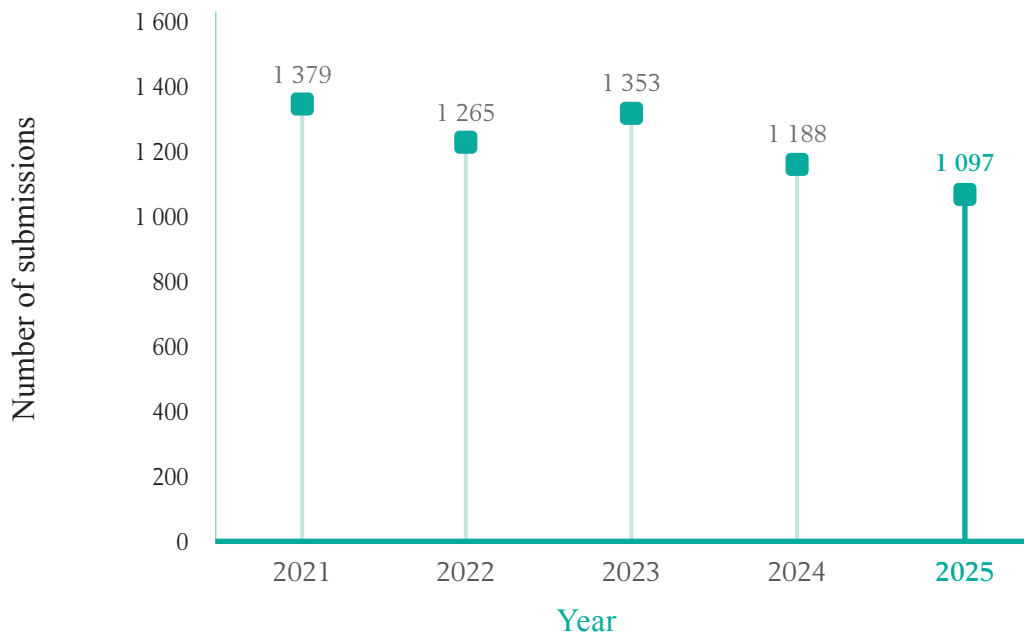


## Work in 2025

1.10 In 2025, the Commission advised on 1 097 submissions covering recruitment, promotions and disciplinary cases as well as other appointment-related subjects. Queries were raised in respect of 722 submissions, resulting in 98 re-submissions (14%) with recommendations revised by B/Ds in the light of the Commission’s comments. All submissions in 2025 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 Furthermore, the Commission Chairman continued to attend board meetings convened by various B/Ds (hereafter referred to as “selection meetings”), covering appointments, promotions, and further employment matters, in the capacity of an observer. During these meetings, the Commission Chairman offered strategic insights and suggested enhancement measures to address observed inadequacies as necessary, while also providing guidance on compliance with established rules and procedures. This year, the Commission Chairman attended over 60 selection meetings, with several Commission Members also participating as observers in some of these meetings.

**Number of Submissions advised by the Commission from 2021 to 2025**



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.

1.12 Separately, the Commission handled a total of 42 representations and complaints in 2025. 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
- (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.

1.13 The Commission has a key role to ensure compliance and consistency 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.

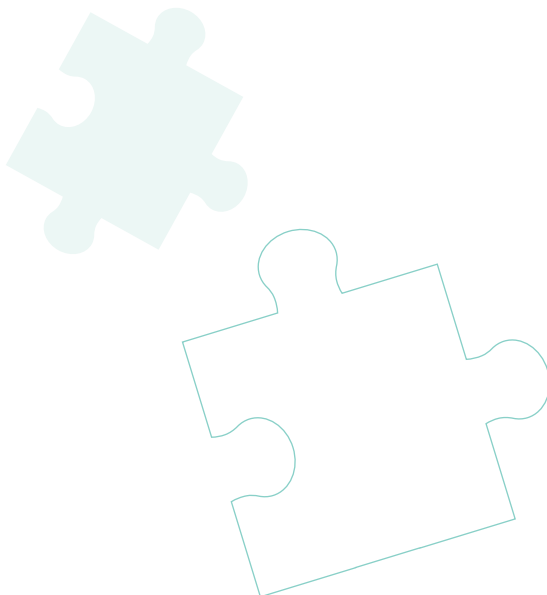
1.14 Specifically, robust staff management is essential for sustaining high standards of performance and conduct in the Civil Service. In some disciplinary cases, if supervisors properly and diligently fulfill their supervisory and monitoring responsibilities, some acts of misconduct by their subordinates could be detected at an early stage or even totally avoided. This is particularly important for those supervisors at the middle level to do so as many of them are usually responsible for supervising sizable teams of junior/frontline staff. It is imperative for them to equip themselves with the necessary skills to manage staff with performance and/or conduct issues. The Commission is pleased that CSB, taking heed of the Commission’s advice, launched an online training programme for these supervisors in December 2025 with a view to strengthening their staff management skills. More details about this training initiative are set out in Chapter 5.



1.15 In 2025, the Commission continued to field officers from the Commission Secretariat to participate by offering observations and views in training sessions and workshops organised for officers of the Executive Officer Grade and GMs. Equipping them with the necessary knowledge and expertise in human resource management 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. These interactive training sessions and workshops fostered active engagement, where officers could exchange experiences and deepen their understanding of human resource management practices. We were delighted with the positive feedback gauged. Moreover, these forums have strengthened communication between the Commission and B/Ds, allowing subject officers to become better acquainted with the Commission's standard and requirements, thereby enhancing our mutual efficiency.

1.16 Last year, the Commission advised B/Ds, where necessary, to arrange for supervising officers to attend the relevant appraisal management courses organised by the Civil Service College. The Commission is pleased to note that B/Ds have responded positively, addressing actively the identified inadequacies in performance management by providing necessary training to their supervisory officers. The Commission will continue to work closely with CSB in this regard.

1.17 Separately, through our scrutiny of various submissions, the Commission has observed that certain B/Ds may face different challenges in handling matters related to appointments, performance management and staff development. To foster mutual understanding, the Commission will normally schedule targeted visits to two B/Ds in a year. During these visits, the Commission will have exchanges with these B/Ds and may suggest enhancement measures and, if necessary, ask the B/Ds to report back to the Commission on the progress of the measures taken and the improvements made. The visits arranged for the Commission in 2025 are set out in Chapter 6. The Commission will continue to visit B/Ds to discuss areas and matters of mutual interest.



## Homepage on the Internet

1.18 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.

1.19 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.



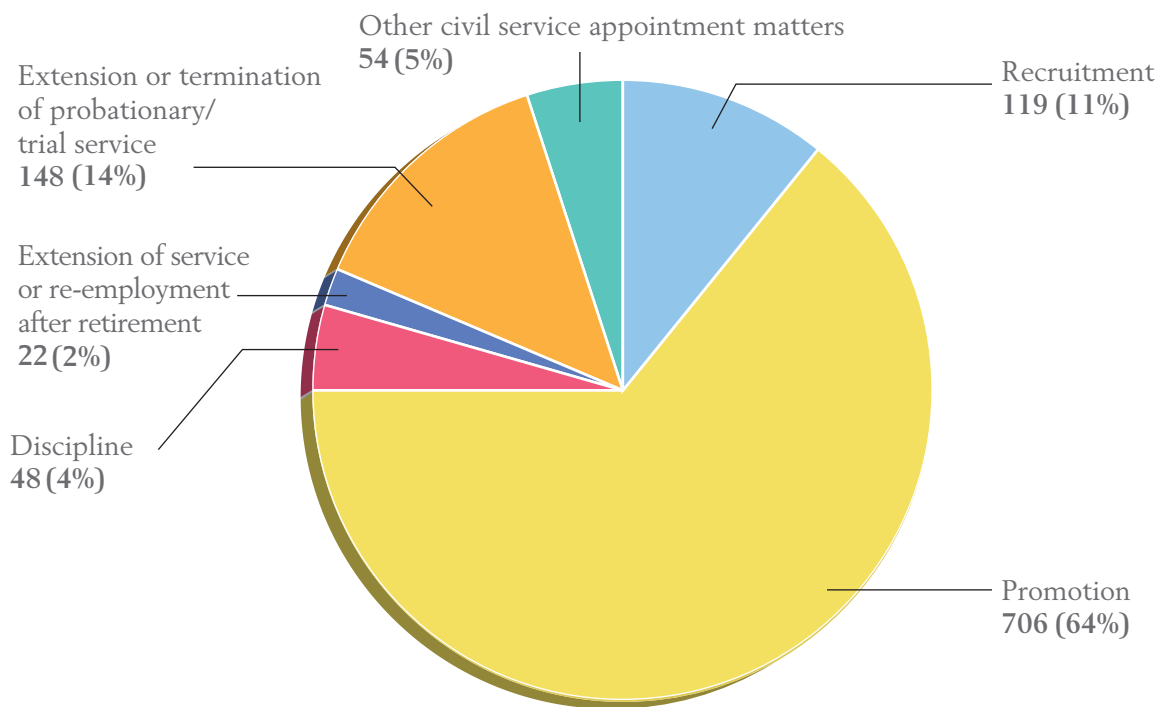
## CHAPTER 2 CIVIL SERVICE APPOINTMENTS

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

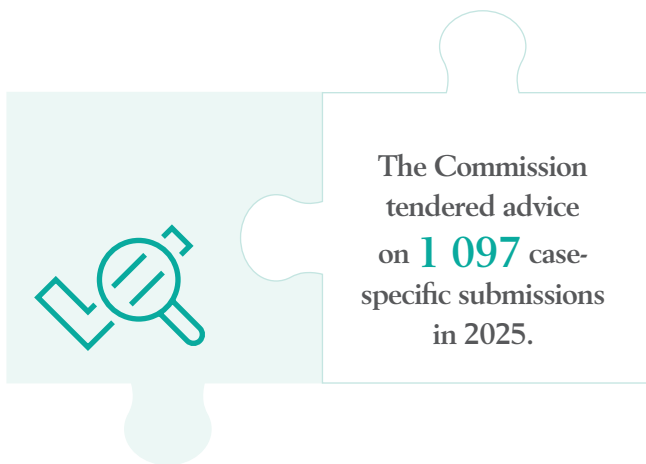
importance to the effective governance of the Government. In view of the foregoing, civil service appointment has to be highly selective to ensure that only the most suitable and meritorious are recruited and appointed into the Civil Service.

2.2 In 2025, the Commission considered and tendered advice on 1 097 case-specific submissions with breakdown below –

**Breakdown of 1 097 submissions advised by the Commission in 2025**



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

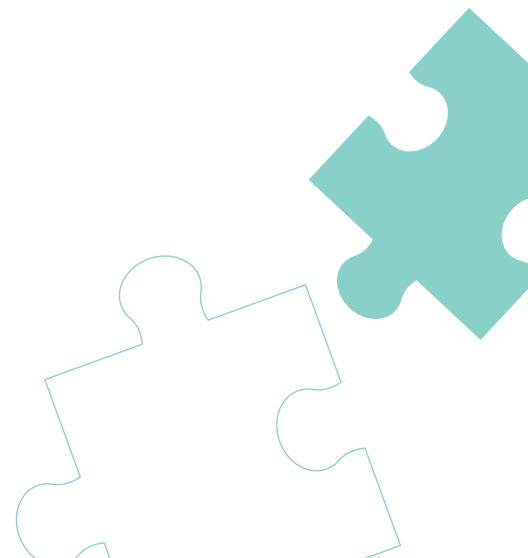
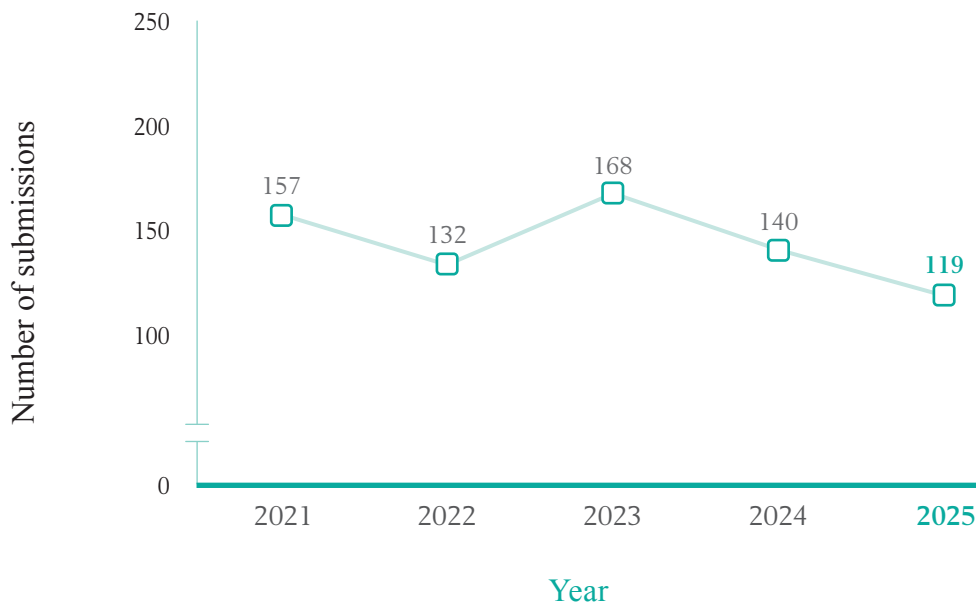
2.4 Recruitment to the Civil Service is undertaken by CSB and individual B/Ds which may take the form of an open recruitment or in-service appointment or both. Where submissions are required to be made to the Commission<sup>6</sup>, we need to be satisfied that objective selection standards and proper 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-2025) 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 2025, the Commission advised on 119 recruitment submissions involving the filling of 1 254 posts, of which 1 218 posts (in 114 submissions) were through open recruitment and 36 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 –

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

Number of Recruitment Submissions advised by the Commission from 2021 to 2025

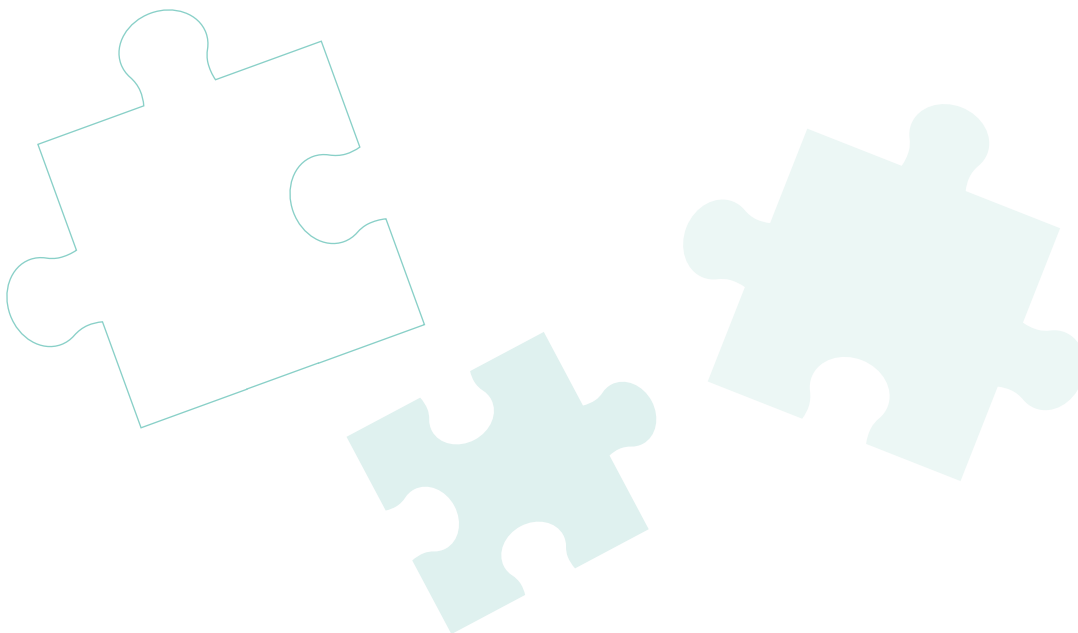


## Management of Officers on Probation/Trial

- 2.6 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.

- 2.7 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 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.

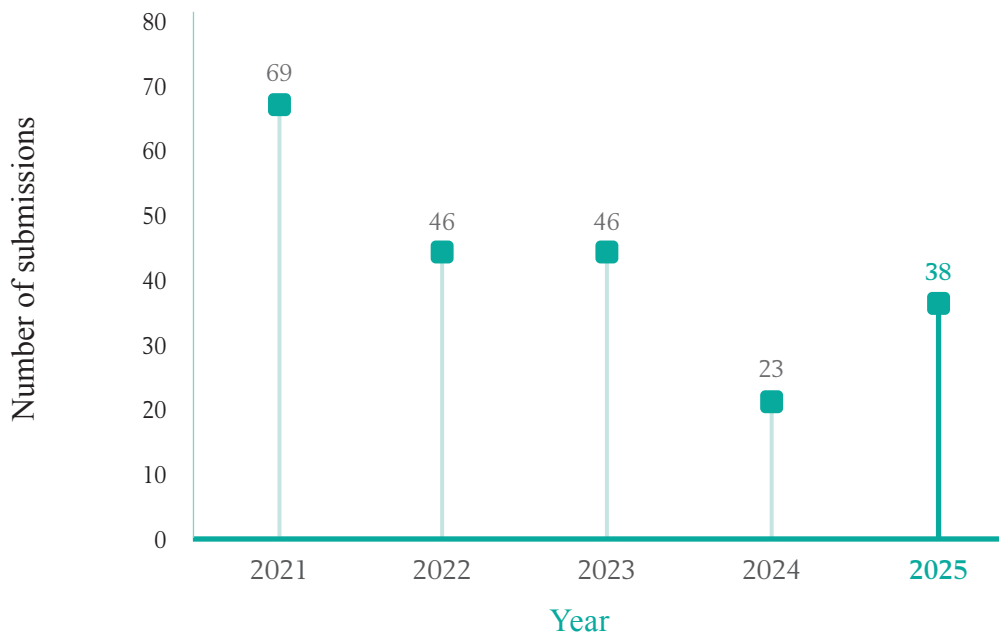


2.8 While fair opportunities should be given to new appointees to pursue a long-term career in the Government, extension of probationary/trial period should not be used as a substitute for termination of service or solely for the purpose of giving an appointee more time to prove his suitability. It is 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.

2.9 In 2025, the Commission advised on a total of 38 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 2021 to 2025**



2.10 There were 110 other 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 the submissions related to termination/extension of probationary/trial service and a comparison with those in the past four years are provided at **Appendix V**. Some observations made by the Commission on these submissions are provided in Chapter 3.

## Civil Service Promotion

2.11 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 as well as enhancing the efficiency and quality of the overall civil service promotion system as a whole.

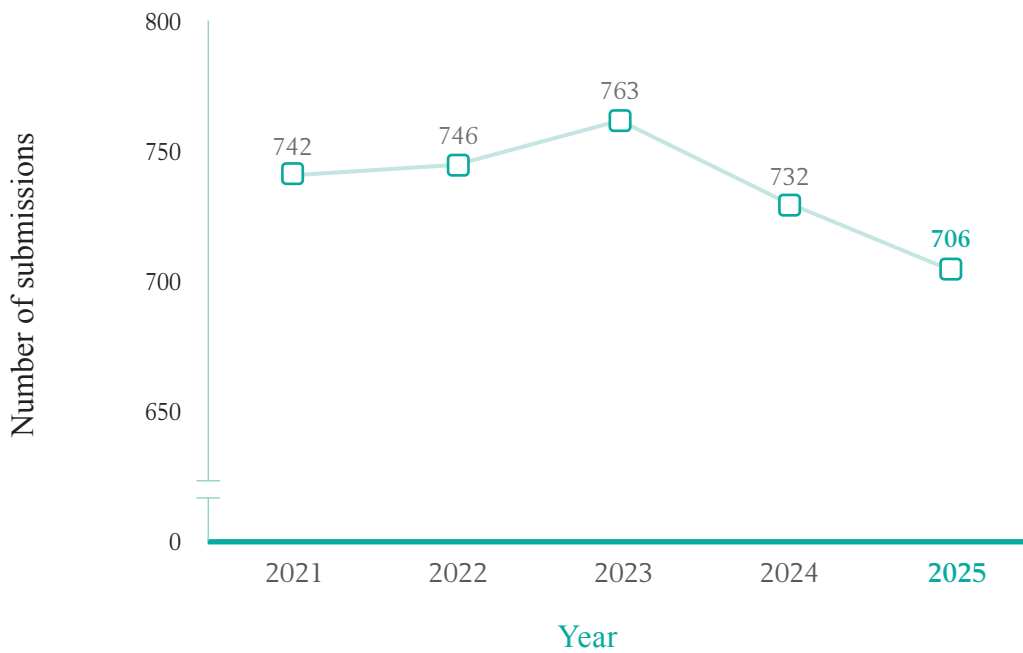


<sup>7</sup> Under the purview of the Commission, recommendations on promotion to middle and senior ranks, i.e. those attracting a maximum monthly salary not less than the amount specified at Master Pay Scale Point 26 or equivalent, are required to be submitted to the Commission for scrutiny and advice.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

2.12 In 2025, the Commission advised on 706 promotion submissions involving the recommendations of 9 212 officers for promotion or acting appointment. The number of promotion submissions advised by the Commission in the past five years is shown below –

2.13 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 VI**. Some specific observations made by the Commission on these submissions are provided in Chapter 4.

**Number of Promotion Submissions advised by the Commission from 2021 to 2025**

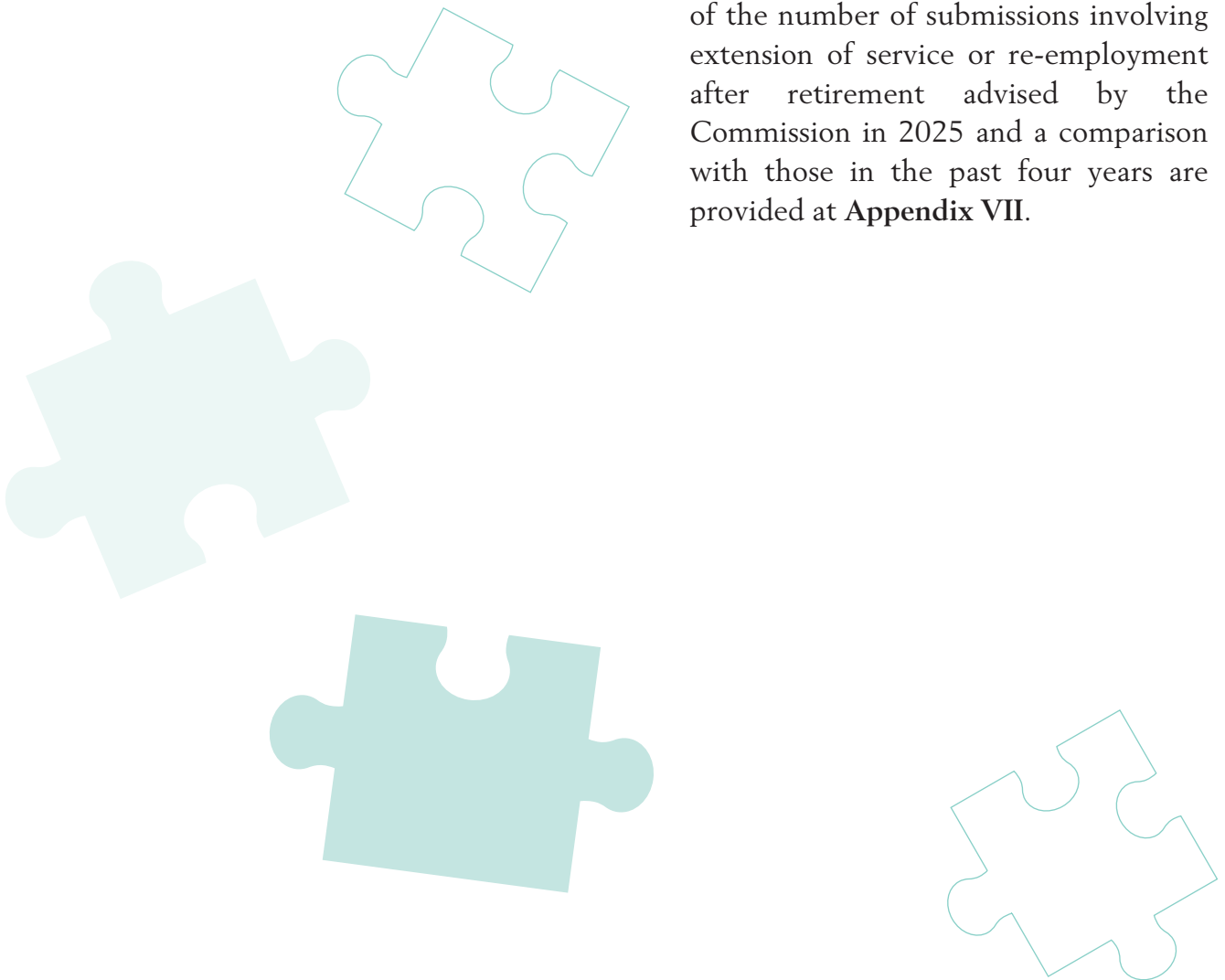


## Extension of Service of Civil Servants

2.14 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

2.15 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 2025, the Commission considered 22 FE submissions and supported the extension of service of 64 officers. A breakdown of the number of submissions involving extension of service or re-employment after retirement advised by the Commission in 2025 and a comparison with those in the past four years are provided at **Appendix VII**.



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.

## Other Civil Service Appointment Matters

2.16 In 2025, the Commission advised on 54 other appointment submissions. They cover cases of non-renewal/termination or extension of agreement; secondment<sup>9</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>10</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

2.17 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, on top of the accrued benefits attributable to mandatory contributions, which will not be affected, the accrued benefits attributable to the Government's Voluntary Contributions, if applicable, will also be payable in accordance with the rules of the relevant scheme.

- 2.18 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.

9 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.

10 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.

2.19 In 2025, the Commission was consulted on two cases under s.12 of the PS(A)O on the ground of persistent sub-standard performance out of a total of 18 being processed by the Government in the same year<sup>11</sup>. The Commission had tendered its advice supporting the retirement of the officers of the two cases concerned in the public interest. These two officers were ordered to retire in May and August 2025 respectively. For the remaining 16 cases, two officers had improved their performance during the observation period and the s.12 cases were suspended; and 14 officers remained under close observation or their s.12 cases were being processed by the Government as at the end of 2025.

2.20 With the streamlined mechanism smoothly implemented, 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.

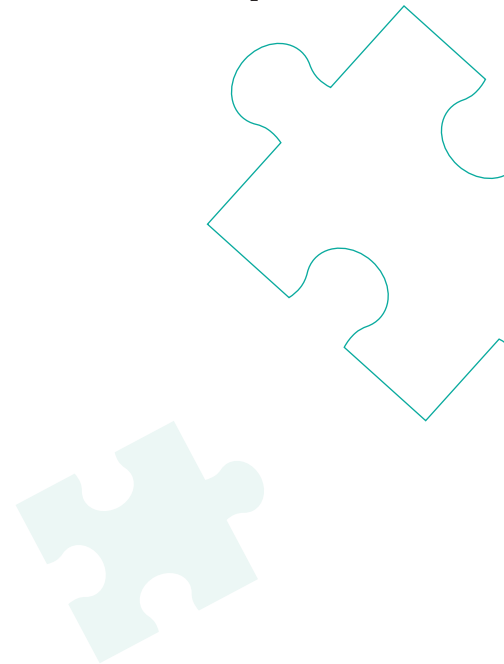
11 Of these 18 cases, one was processed under the mechanism for handling civil servants with persistent sub-standard performance under s.12 of the PS(A)O modified in 2005, and 17 under the streamlined mechanism promulgated in 2023.

## Establishing the Heads of Department Accountability System

2.21 The Commission appreciates the Administration's dedication to enhancing the civil service management system, as well as its on-going efforts to strengthen governance efficacy. We are pleased to note the announcement in the CE's 2025 Policy Address for the establishment of a Heads of Department Accountability System (the System) and the Government's contemplation to expand the Commission's current role with a view to enabling it to conduct the independent investigation work under Tier II of the System as and when required. To this end, we understand that CSB has been working in full steam on the making of subsidiary legislation under the PSCO to provide the Commission with the new investigative function to undertake Tier II investigation of the System. We look forward to working closely with CSB on the preparatory work for implementing the System.

## Strengthening the Performance Appraisal System for Civil Servants

2.22 One of the Commission's priority tasks is to collaborate with the Administration to strengthen the performance management system in the Civil Service, aiming to better realise civil servants' performance and development potential. Refinements and improvements to the performance management system are a continuous process. We are glad to note that the CE's 2025 Policy Address put forward the establishment of a more rigorous performance appraisal system for civil servants that seeks to more effectively reflect and differentiate the performance levels of staff. We understand that CSB has commenced the study on strengthening the civil service performance appraisal system with a view to more effectively distinguishing the staff's performance level. The Commission is in full support of this initiative, and stands ready to contribute its comments and advice as required.





## CHAPTER 3

### RECRUITMENT AND MANAGEMENT OF OFFICERS ON PROBATION/TRIAL

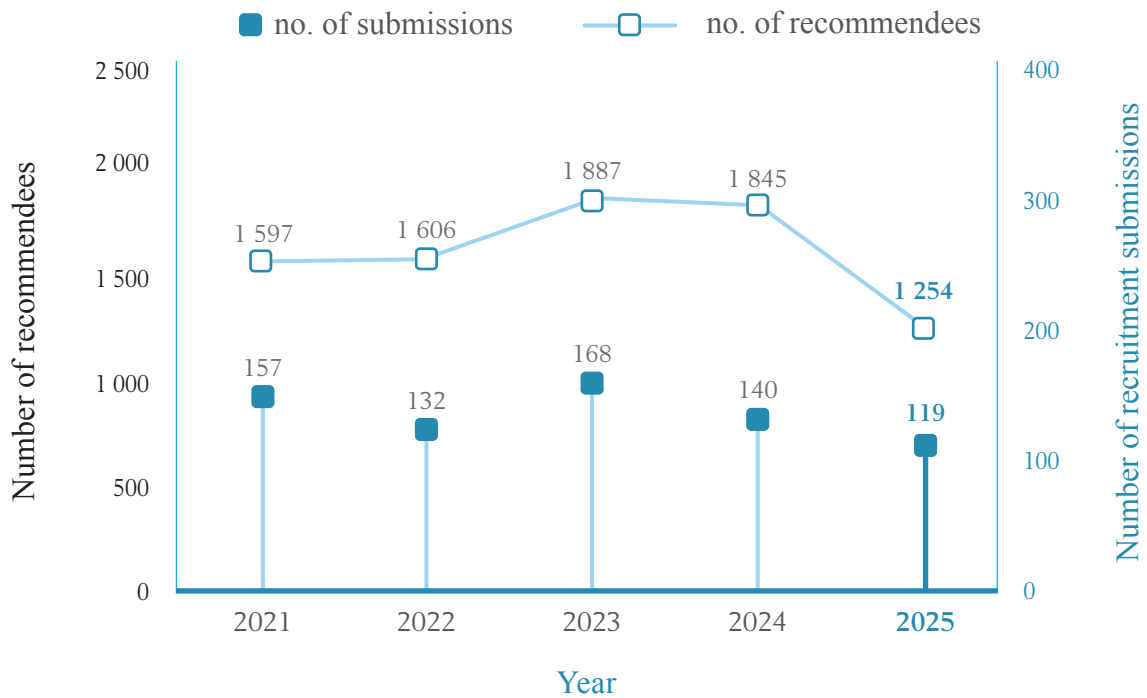
#### Recruitment

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 2025

3.2 In 2025, the Commission advised on 119 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 2021 to 2025



### 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.

The Commission advised on **119** recruitment submissions

involving the filling of **1 254** posts.

3.5 The Commission also observed that the information contained in some board reports was not accurate, with the scores of candidates being erroneously inputted. While corrections were made upon our enquiry and the overall recommendations of the recruitment exercise remained intact, the Commission has reminded the Departments concerned to remain vigilant and thoroughly check the accuracy of all information in the board reports before submitting them to the Commission for advice.

### Efficiency of recruitment process

3.6 The Commission has all along advocated the need to conduct and complete recruitment exercises expeditiously

without delay. It is imperative for B/Ds to prepare well and make adequate plans for each stage of their recruitment exercises so that vacancies can be filled at the earliest opportunity. B/Ds are also encouraged to regularly review their recruitment frameworks to identify improvements that enhance efficiency without compromising the standard of assessment of candidates.

3.7 During the year, the Commission observed areas for improvement in the recruitment arrangements of some Departments which had undermined recruitment efficiency. Cases 3A and 3B illustrate our observations and advice in this respect.

#### Case 3A

In a recruitment exercise conducted by a Department, two rounds of selection interview were held to assess candidates' suitability for appointment. The Commission noted that instead of using different criteria in evaluating the candidates, the Department had adopted exactly the same assessment form and marking scheme in both rounds of interview. As explained by the Department, it was aimed to have a more in-depth assessment on the performance of the candidates invited for the second round of interview.

The Commission expressed concerns that identical assessment criteria across different rounds of recruitment interview was not an efficient use of resources. Such practice also begged the question of the distinct purpose for having two rounds of the interview, undermining the cost-effectiveness of the recruitment process.

The Commission has advised the Department to review its interview arrangements to ensure that each round of assessment should serve a clear and complementary purpose. If it is necessary to have a more comprehensive understanding of the candidates' capabilities, the Department could have included the relevant assessment elements in a single interview. It should strike a balance between rigorous assessment and procedural efficiency with a view to upholding the principles of merit, fairness and cost-effectiveness in civil service recruitment.

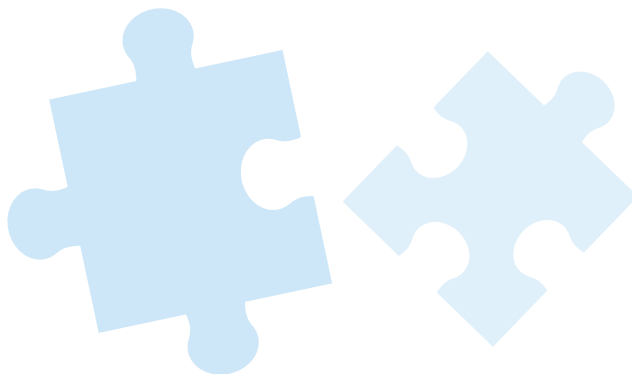
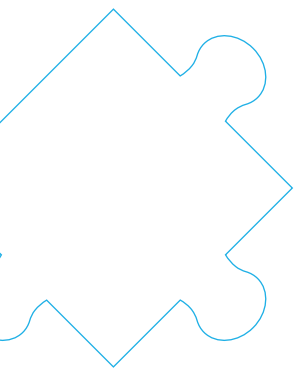
### Case 3B

In a year-round recruitment exercise, it came to the Commission's attention that the processing of an application from a candidate with disability had spanned over two years. The Department explained that the long processing time was due to the difficulty in obtaining the necessary documentary proofs from the applicant to support his request for special arrangements in attending written examination and selection interview.

Appreciating that the Department had erred on the prudent side to make special arrangements only when the disability status was ascertained beyond doubt, the Commission has advised the Department to achieve greater efficiency by communicating with the applicant concerned more proactively to obtain the necessary proofs. In case the validity of the proofs provided by the applicant is doubtful, the Department should consult CSB promptly to facilitate timely and concrete arrangements, thus avoiding any unnecessary delays.



*Time is of the essence when handling recruitment exercises so that manpower gaps could be bridged seamlessly to sustain quality public service.*

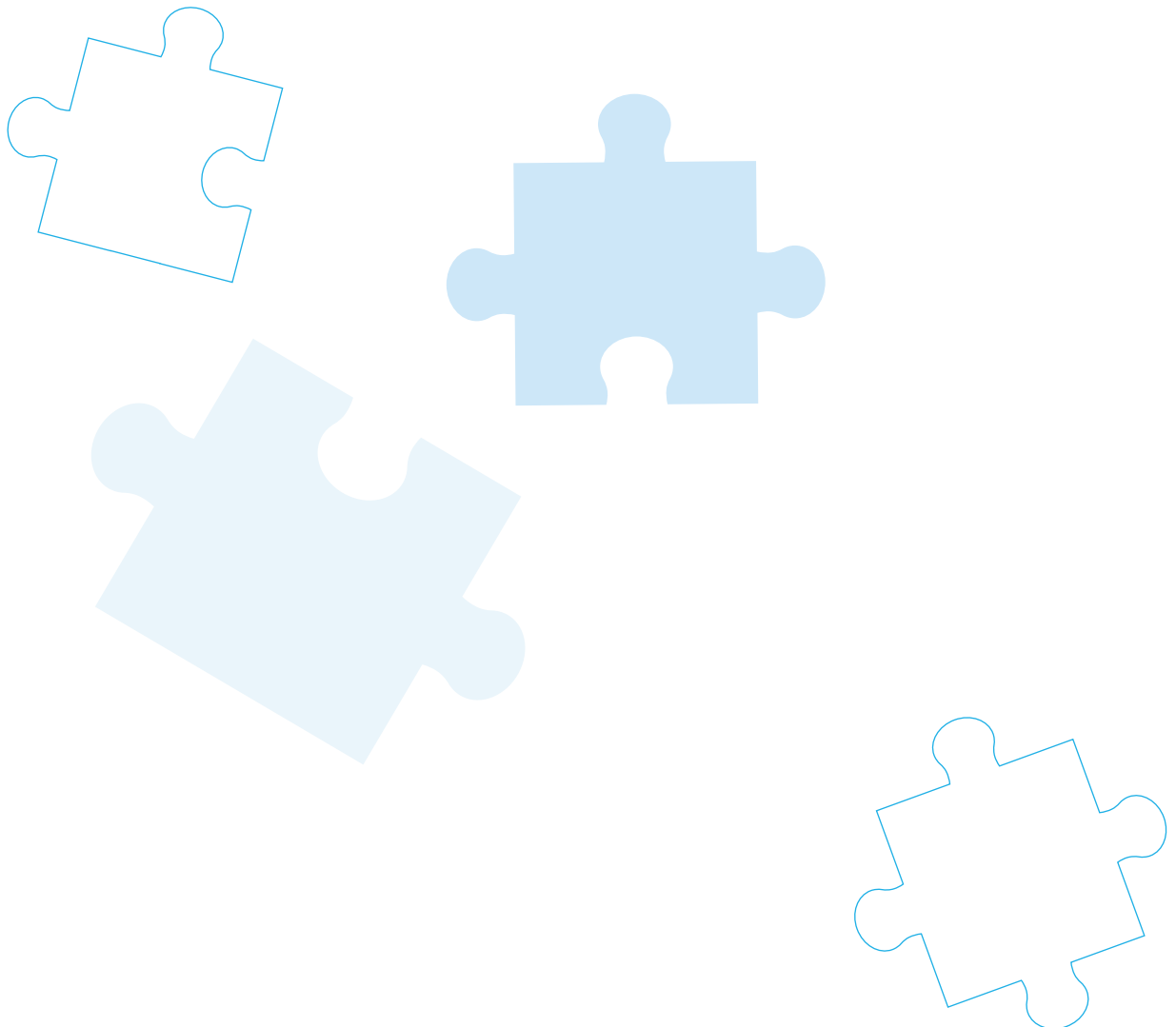


## Management of Officers on Probation/Trial

3.8 As pointed out in Chapter 2, in determining the suitability of officers on probation/trial to continue to hold office, HoDs/HoGs should apply stringent standards in assessing their performance and conduct. To uphold the high standards of the Civil Service, it is imperative that only officers who are suitable in all respects are allowed to pass the probation/trial bar for continued appointment.

## Assessment of suitability for passage of probation/trial bar

3.9 The Commission noted that B/Ds have in general been vigilant in applying stringent standards in assessing an officer's suitability for passage of the probation/trial bar. However, the Commission was concerned that a Department had much room for improvement in its management of probationers with persistent unsatisfactory performance, as exemplified in Case 3C.



### Case 3C

A verbal warning was meted out to an officer towards the end of his three-year probation due to a duty-related misconduct which was relatively minor in nature. In scrutinising the Department's proposal to defer his passage of probation bar following the warning, the Commission noted that most of his appraisals during the probationary period were rated "4 – Moderate" on a six-tier rating scale with adverse remarks in his performance and unimpressive core competencies. Notably, in his last probationary report (also rated "4") completed prior to the misconduct case, the Appraising Officer (AO) recommended him for passage of probation bar despite his shaky performance. Worse still, the Countersigning Officer (CO) indicated in the appraisal that he "reluctantly" agreed to such recommendation without a critical review of the AO's assessment on the officer's suitability for passage of probation bar. Similarly, the Reviewing Officer concurred with the AO's and CO's observations without pointing out their ungrounded recommendations.

Given the probationer's persistent unsatisfactory performance, the Commission had reminded the Department to critically assess his suitability to pass the probation bar. Ultimately, the Department, after review, issued a letter-of-intent to the probationer concerned informing him of the intention to refuse his passage of probation bar. The officer later resigned from the service.

To avoid recurrence of similar cases in future, the Commission has strongly urged the Department to take the following actions –

- (a) the Department should remind the reporting officers concerned of their responsibilities to fulfill their roles properly and provide sound justifications when making/agreeing to recommendations on an officer's passage of probation bar;
- (b) should a probationer fail to measure up to the required standards of performance, despite guidance and coaching, at any time during the probationary period, the Department should take appropriate and prompt performance management actions, such as issuing advisory letters, calling special progress reports, arranging stoppage of increment; and
- (c) confirmation of probationers to the permanent establishment should not be taken lightly and stringent suitability standards should be upheld when considering their suitability for passage of probation bar.



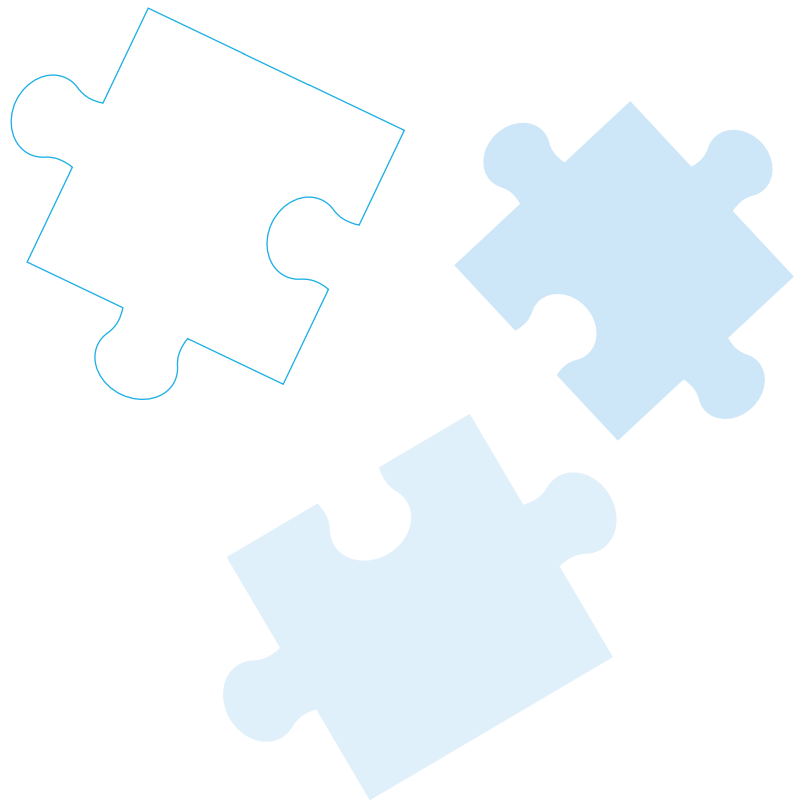
*To ensure the integrity and effectiveness of the administration of the probation/trial system, it is imperative for B/Ds to consistently enforce stringent standards, exercise due diligence at all times, and take decisive actions when the performance of probationers or officers on trial falls below expected levels.*



### Taking prompt and expeditious action in handling cases involving probationers

3.10 As required under CSR186(4), recommendations involving extension or termination of probationary service, which fall under the purview of the Commission, should as far as practicable be submitted to the Commission at least two months before the end of the probationary period.

3.11 In 2025, the Commission observed that a Department had repeatedly failed to handle cases involving probationers promptly and timely, leading to unacceptable delays in its submissions to the Commission. The cases depicted in 3D are relevant.



## Cases in 3D

The Department had come to the view of refusing an officer's passage of probation bar due to his conduct issues. After reviewing the officer's representations against the intended refusal, the Department decided to uphold its view. However, the Department took more than five months to submit the recommendation to the Commission.

In another submission, the Department proposed to defer the passage of probation bar of three officers due to their suspected involvement in misconduct cases, the investigation of which had been on-going. However, we noted that the Department's submission was delayed by up to six months from the officers' due dates for passage of the probation bar, even though their alleged acts of misconduct had been revealed either before or shortly after those due dates.

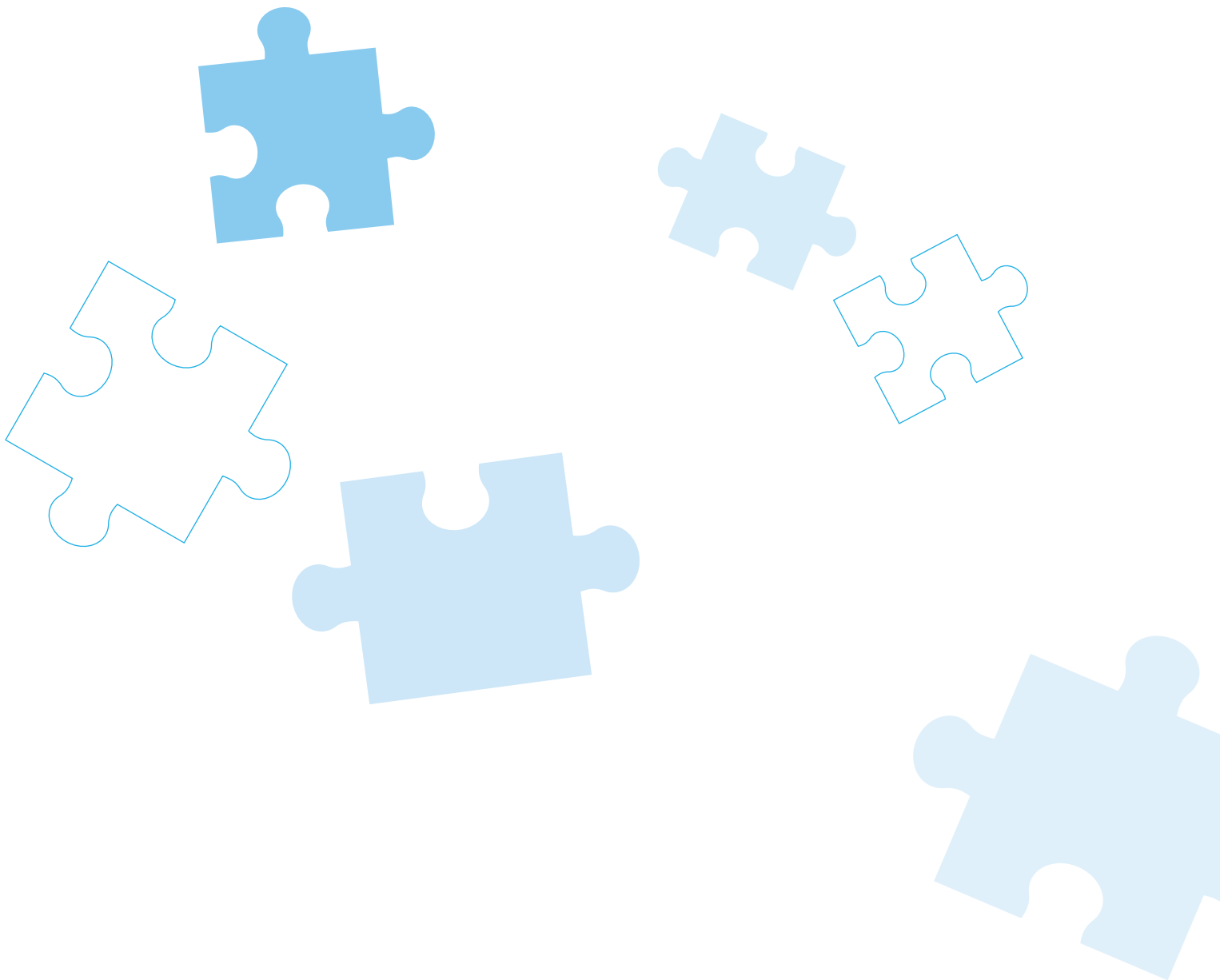
In another case, the complaints management section of the Department referred a suspected criminal incident involving a probationer to law enforcement agencies (LEAs) in April 2025 for investigation. Considering that the officer was due to pass the probation bar in October 2025 and that it would not be possible to clear his integrity doubts pending the on-going investigation of the LEAs, the GM should have submitted its proposal to extend his probationary service in good time. However, as the GM only became aware of the officer's involvement in the on-going investigation about five months after the referral, it only submitted the case to the Commission in November 2025, well beyond the due date for passage of the officer's probation bar.

The Commission expressed serious concerns about such delays, which undermine the punitive and deterrent effects, weaken the credibility of the disciplinary system, as well as compromise the Government's resolve to uphold a meritorious Civil Service. The Commission has brought the unsatisfactory handling of these cases to the attention of the Department's senior management.

While the Department has undertaken to implement measures to improve the situation, the Commission has asked it to constantly review the effectiveness of the measures taken/to be taken, and refine them when necessary. We have also advised the Department to review its workflow and enhance its internal communication to ensure that prompt and appropriate actions should be taken on probationers with performance and/or conduct issues.



*When handling cases involving probationers, B/Ds must swiftly address issues related to performance and conduct, continuously enhance their operational processes, and maintain effective communication to ensure timely actions and uphold the principles of merit within the Civil Service.*





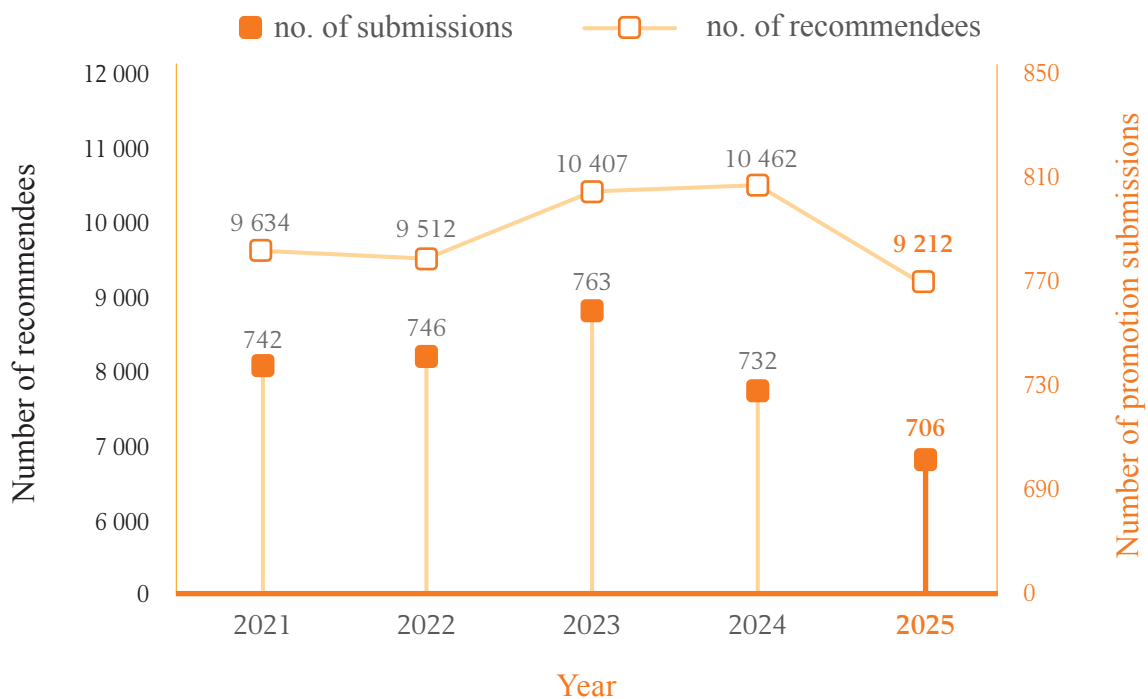
## CHAPTER 4 PROMOTION AND HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

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 2025

4.2 In 2025, the Commission advised on 706 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 2021 to 2025

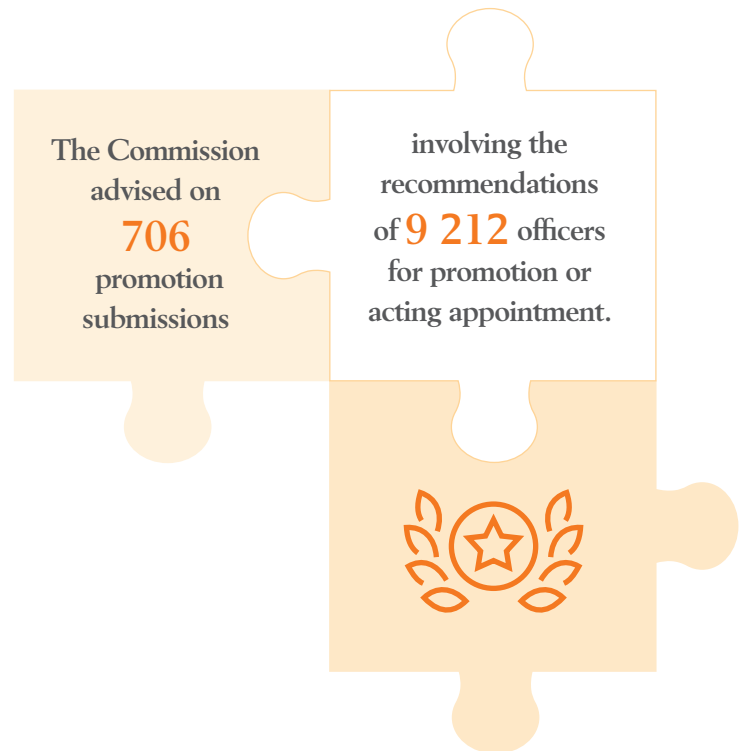
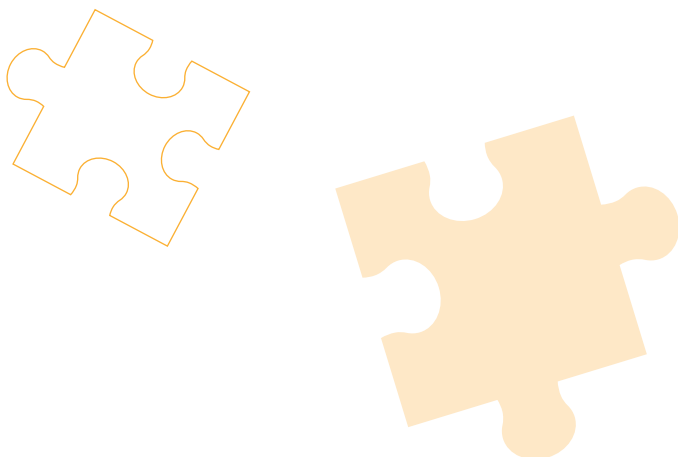


### Counting of Vacancies

4.3 The first and foremost task of a promotion/selection board is to ascertain the total number of vacancies available for promotion and/or acting appointments. Miscalculation of vacancies is clearly not in the operational interest of B/Ds nor the career interest of the officers concerned. Paragraph 3.5(a) of the Guidebook on Appointments (the Guidebook) issued by CSB sets out the principles in determining the number of promotable and acting vacancies in a promotion exercise. As far as promotable vacancies are concerned, the guiding principles are –

- (a) those expected to arise within the current reporting cycle should be counted as promotable vacancies; and
- (b) time-limited posts should be counted as promotable vacancies if sufficient permanent vacancies will become available to absorb the promotees before the lapse of the time-limited posts concerned. There is no restriction on how far ahead a corresponding permanent vacancy should be anticipated for it to be so used in a promotion exercise.

4.4 During the year, most B/Ds were able to follow the guiding principles above in calculating promotable vacancies. However, the Commission found miscalculations in the submissions made by three Departments due to their failure to realise that future permanent vacancies could be used to absorb the promotees before the lapse of their time-limited posts. In response to the Commission’s enquiries, the Departments reviewed and updated their vacancy situations, enabling the effective dates of the promotion of the recommended promotees to be advanced to earlier dates, where appropriate. The Commission has reminded the Departments concerned to closely observe the relevant guidelines in counting promotable vacancies and to urge the subject officers to fully familiarise themselves with such guidelines in future.



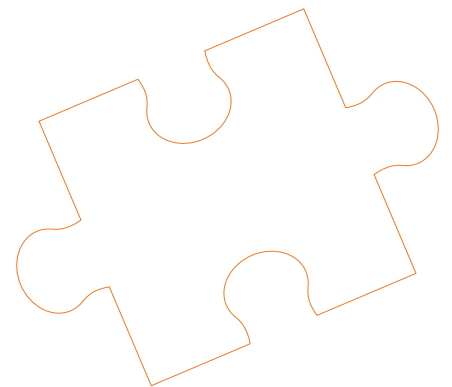
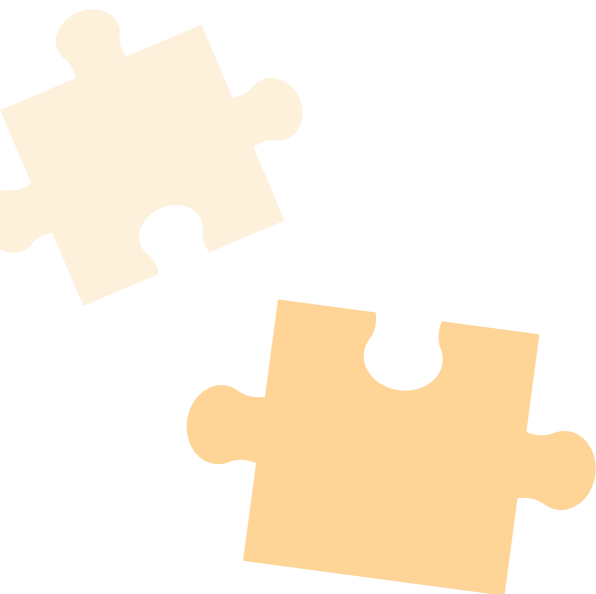
## Timely Submission of Board Reports

- 4.5 According to paragraph 3.46 of the Guidebook, B/Ds should submit promotion board reports to the Commission for advice within two months after the board meetings. Late submission is not conducive to maximising staff resources for the operation of B/Ds. It will also affect their manpower development plans and posting arrangements for officers identified as suitable for promotion/acting.
- 4.6 During the year, the Commission was generally satisfied with B/Ds' overall adherence to the timing requirement for submitting promotion board reports. However, we observed that in 2025, there were still some late submissions, for example, one Department had submitted four promotion board reports late in a row. The Department had taken three to four months to submit these reports after the respective board meetings. The main reasons for such delays included changes in personnel for preparing board

reports and clustering of other promotion exercises. While appreciating the heavy commitments of the subject officers, late submission of promotion board reports may disrupt the timetables for staff postings and/or career development plans. The Commission has strongly advised the Department concerned to make better work plans and ensure timely submission of board reports in future.

## Human Resource Management

- 4.7 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. Some specific observations made by the Commission in the ensuing paragraphs are provided as a reference for B/Ds.



### Optimal use of available vacancies

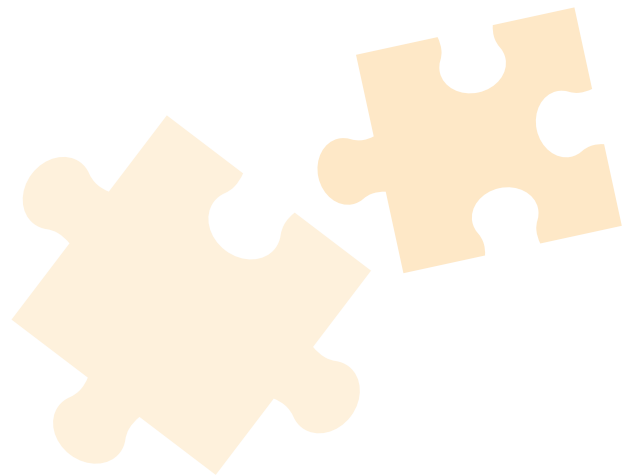
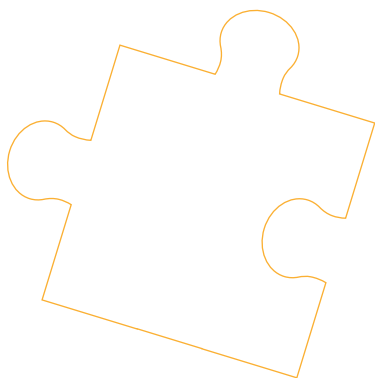
4.8 Promotion is a recognition given to deserving officers who have demonstrated their capability and suitability in all respects for assuming more demanding responsibilities at the higher ranks. It also serves as an incentive for officers with aspiration to strive for continuous improvement. It is imperative for promotion boards to make optimal use of the available vacancies to promote deserving officers at the earliest possible opportunity so as to –

- (a) realise the potential of capable officers;
- (b) meet staff expectations; and
- (c) better motivate staff.

4.9 Apart from the need to count the number of promotable vacancies accurately in accordance with the guidelines stipulated in the Guidebook as mentioned in paragraph 4.3 above, the Commission is also concerned whether B/Ds have made the optimal use of available vacancies.

In the last two Annual Reports, the Commission raised its concerns over a persistent problem in two Departments of leaving a considerable number of vacancies at promotion ranks unfilled despite the availability of eligible and capable officers.

4.10 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 made marked improvement in filling the higher rank vacancies in 2024 as reported in the last Annual Report. The Commission was pleased to note that the two Departments had achieved further improvement in 2025, as illustrated in Cases 4A and 4B.

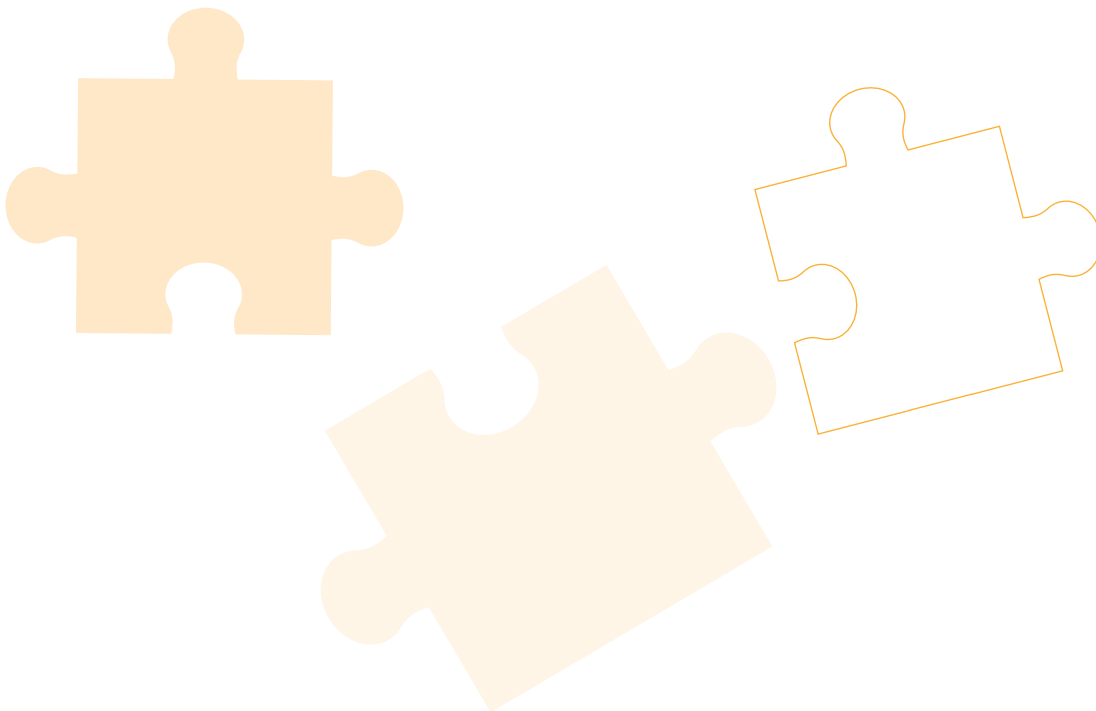


### Case 4A

In a Department, the percentage of unfilled vacancies for two ranks of a grade had exceeded 50% of the total number of available vacancies upon conclusion of the 2023 promotion exercises. In response to the Commission's concerns, the percentage of unfilled vacancies for both ranks had decreased to about 35% in 2024. Taking heed of Commission's advice for making further improvement, the two promotion boards conducted in 2025 had identified more eligible and meritorious officers for testing at the higher ranks. As a result, the percentages of unfilled vacancies for the two ranks had further reduced to 15% and 25% respectively. The Commission is glad to note that the Department has undertaken to further lower the percentage of unfilled vacancies to below 10% in the coming few years.

To fill the temporary manpower gaps, while the Department still arranged some unrecommended officers to fill the higher rank vacancies through short-term acting appointments, we note that such acting appointments were arranged with full justifications and in compliance with the relevant CSRs. The Commission also noted that some improprieties of intermittent acting appointments identified had been rectified by the Department.

We commended the efforts made by the Department and encouraged it to keep up its good work.



## Case 4B

In another Department, the percentage of unfilled vacancies of its three promotion exercises conducted in 2023 had ranged from 15% to 50% of the total number of available vacancies at the respective ranks. With the Department's continuous efforts and implementation of a series of HRM measures to enlarge the pool of eligible candidates, the promotion boards conducted in the subsequent two years in 2024 and 2025 were able to identify a sufficient number of suitable candidates to fill the higher rank vacancies.

To sustain its efforts to fill up the available promotable vacancies, the Department was responsive to the Commission's advice to enlarge the pool of eligible candidates. It had put in place augmented measures to encourage and facilitate its grade members to attain the requisite training requirements for advancement, such as drawing up a more robust training plan as well as arranging extra and designated training classes. In 2025, there was a notable increase in the number of eligible candidates in the relevant ranks, with one case having more than 100 officers attaining the requisite training requirements as compared to that in 2024. While we acknowledged the Department's good work done, we look forward to its continued efforts in maintaining a healthy and dynamic succession in the grades concerned.



4.11 Apart from the two Departments in Cases 4A and 4B above, the Commission was glad to note that another Department had identified the crux of the high vacancy problem and adopted a multi-pronged approach to address it. Progressive improvement was observed as illustrated in Case 4C below.

### Case 4C

A Department had previously failed to identify a sufficient number of candidates for filling vacancies at the first promotion rank of a grade in consecutive exercises. Noting the Commission’s concerns, the Department had stepped up its staff development measures and provided vocational training with a view to developing the potential officers at the entry rank, and equipping them with the knowledge and skills required of the next higher rank. As a result, more competent officers could be nurtured to take up higher responsibilities.

With the Department’s efforts starting to pay off, the promotion board conducted in 2025 was able to identify more eligible and meritorious officers for testing at the higher rank. As a result, the percentage of unfilled vacancies was substantially trimmed to below 20% of the total number of available vacancies, as compared to 30% in the past few exercises.

The Commission was pleased to see the positive result, and had encouraged the Department to keep up with its efforts to fill the vacancies as far as possible for meeting the succession needs of the grade in the long run.



*Through proactive staff development and vocational training, challenges are transformed into opportunities, significantly enhancing officers’ readiness for advancement and reducing unfilled vacancies.*



### Limitations in training capacity

4.12 The Commission noted that in a number of cases, the high vacancy rate at the promotion ranks had been attributable to the limited number of officers who could meet the stipulated prerequisite requirements for promotion. While the Department in Case 4B was able to make improvement by implementing different measures to facilitate its grade members to attain the requisite training

requirements for advancement, the high vacancy rates in two other Departments had been due to insufficient training capacity for the specific professional training to enable candidates to obtain the requisite qualifications for promotion. This problem continues to be challenging, as illustrated in Cases 4D and 4E.

#### Case 4D

The promotion boards for one rank of a grade had not identified an adequate number of officers to fill all available vacancies in the past few years. The problem persisted in 2024, with over 60% of the higher rank vacancies left unfilled. The major reason was the limited number of eligible officers who could successfully complete the departmental training and obtain the requisite qualifications for progression to the higher rank.

Taking heed of the Commission's advice, the Department conducted a review and adopted a multi-pronged approach in resolving the problem. In addition to revamping and enhancing the training progression plans for the grade members, the Department strengthened its training capacity through engaging additional training resources from the market and exploring the use of new technology. The Department further enhanced the monitoring system in keeping track of officers' progress throughout various stages of training, as well as providing them with periodic assessments and timely guidance.

The Commission was pleased to note that the measures adopted by the Department had yielded initial positive results in 2025, with the vacancy rate of the rank concerned reduced by about 10% as compared with that in 2024. The Commission looks forward to the lowering of unfilled vacancies further with the increased number of officers attaining the prescribed qualification for promotion in the coming years.

## Case 4E

The situation of another Department was even more challenging. The unfilled vacancies for two ranks of a grade remained substantial in 2025, exceeding 50% of the total number of available vacancies in both ranks.

Similar to Case 4D, officers need to undergo and pass the training prescribed and conducted by the Department so as to be qualified for consideration for promotion to the higher ranks. As explained by the Department, one of the major causes for the high vacancy rates is insufficient manpower for in-house training, which is necessary due to its unique operational needs, to create a sufficiently large pool of qualified officers.

On closer examination, the Commission noted that such a limitation was mainly resulted from the senior experienced officers in the Department, who should assume the training duties, being engaged in a wide range of non-core duties, largely administrative in nature. Another challenge is that there was a number of resignations in previous years resulting in further drain of eligible candidates for consideration of advancement.

At the Commission's request, the Department conducted a detailed review of its operation and formulated effective measures to cope with the challenges. The measures included enhancement of administrative support for releasing the in-house qualified trainers from non-core duties, engagement of additional external trainers on contract terms as well as implementation of strategies to retain staff. With the implementation of these measures, the Department expected to have improved training capacity and a long-term solution to its vacancy issue in the coming five years.

While appreciating the efforts made by the Department, the Commission has urged its senior management to remain vigilant. In addition, we have requested the Department to submit a progress report in 2026 reporting on the implementation and effectiveness of its various measures. The Commission anticipates that there will be improvement in the vacancy rates of the grade as committed by the Department.



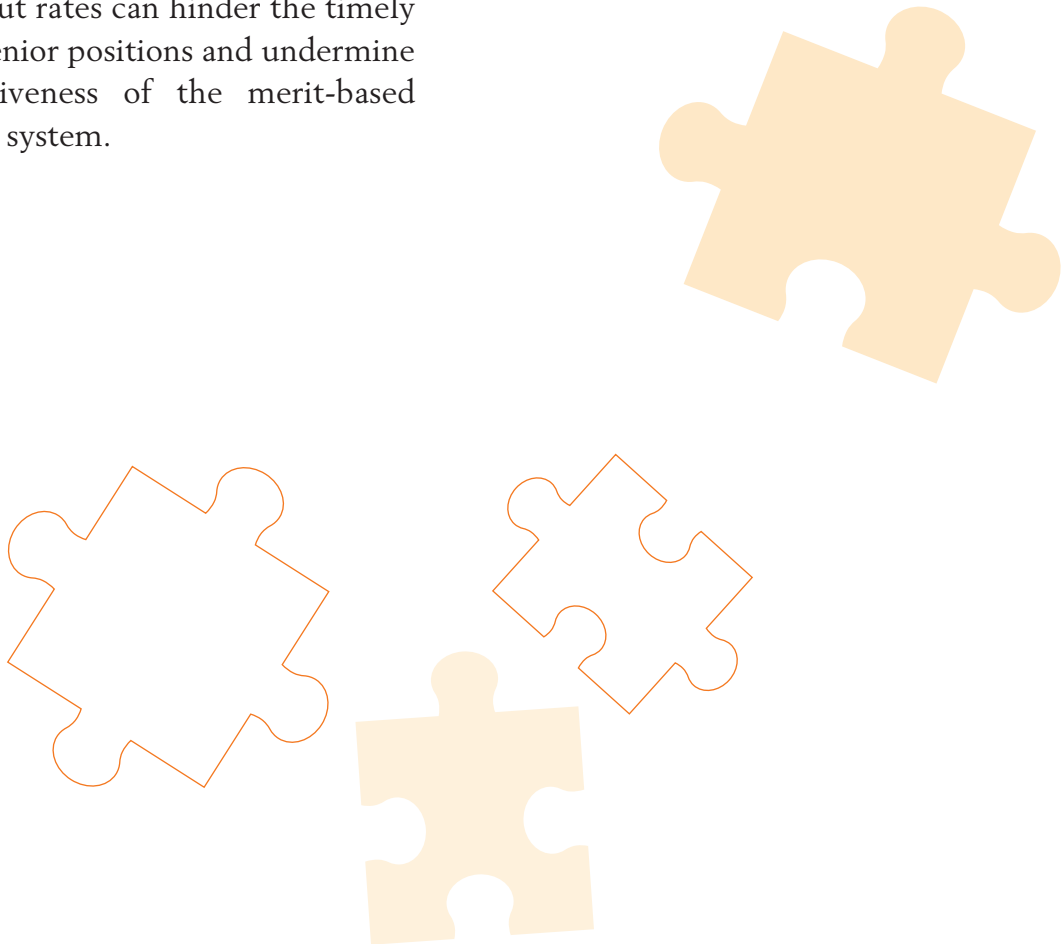
*Adopting innovative and proactive approaches to tackle manpower challenges is instrumental in constructing a pool of talents, ensuring sustainability, and meeting future operational demands.*



### Persistent high opt-out rates in promotion exercises

4.13 In some cases, the percentage of unfilled vacancies would aggravate due to individuals opting out in promotion exercises, leading to a reduced number of eligible officers for consideration. While specific grade or rank may implement opt-out arrangement where there is special ground, persistently high opt-out rates can hinder the timely filling of senior positions and undermine the effectiveness of the merit-based promotion system.

4.14 During the scrutiny of promotion submissions, the Commission was concerned about the phenomenon of high opt-out rates persisting in several grades for some years, implying the need for proactive management actions. The cases depicted in 4F are relevant.



## Cases in 4F

In one Department, the opt-out rates of two ranks of a grade had consistently ranged between 25% and 40% over the past three consecutive years. In another Department, the opt-out rate of a specific rank of a grade increased from 17% in 2023 to 20% in 2024, before moderating to 18% in 2025. Besides, in a different Department, although the average opt-out rate of a rank of a grade had remained at about 10% over the past three years, the absolute number of officers opting out was not small, ranging from 24 to 28 annually.

While the officers concerned usually indicated their wish of not being considered for advancement owing to personal or health reasons, the phenomenon of persistently high opt-out rates clearly suggested a need for the relevant GMs to delve deeper into the underlying causes and implement more targeted measures to motivate eligible officers to pursue their career advancement.

Regular engagement with grade members will enable the GMs to ascertain the reasons behind the lack of aspiration of the officers concerned. It is also imperative for the GMs to provide suitable training and posting to their staff so as to broaden their exposure and better prepare them for higher responsibilities. Such strategies will encourage more officers to take up advancement opportunities, thereby fostering a more robust succession planning.

The Commission has advised the GMs concerned to address the issue of low aspiration among their grade members and looks forward to improvement in near future.



*Persistently high opt-out rates underscore the need for proactive career management. By aligning strategies with officers' career aspirations, we can motivate them to pursue career growth, ensuring a Civil Service that is responsive to future challenges.*



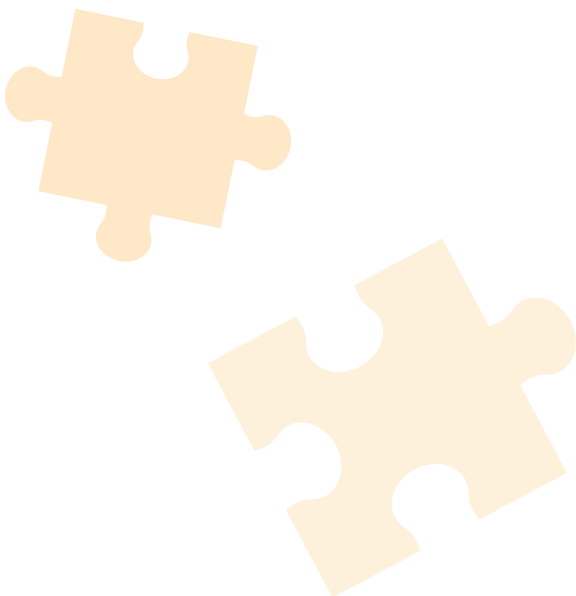
## Performance management

4.15 Performance management is an essential element in HRM. Heads of Department/ Heads of Grade (HoDs/HoGs) have the overall responsibility to ensure that the performance management system for the staff members/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.

4.16 In 2025, the Commission was pleased to note that in a few cases, the Departments had taken progressive actions to monitor the assessment standards in response to the Commission's concerns and have successfully improved the over-generous reporting situation. However, the tendency of rating the overall performance of a great majority of eligible officers at the top level still persisted in some departments.

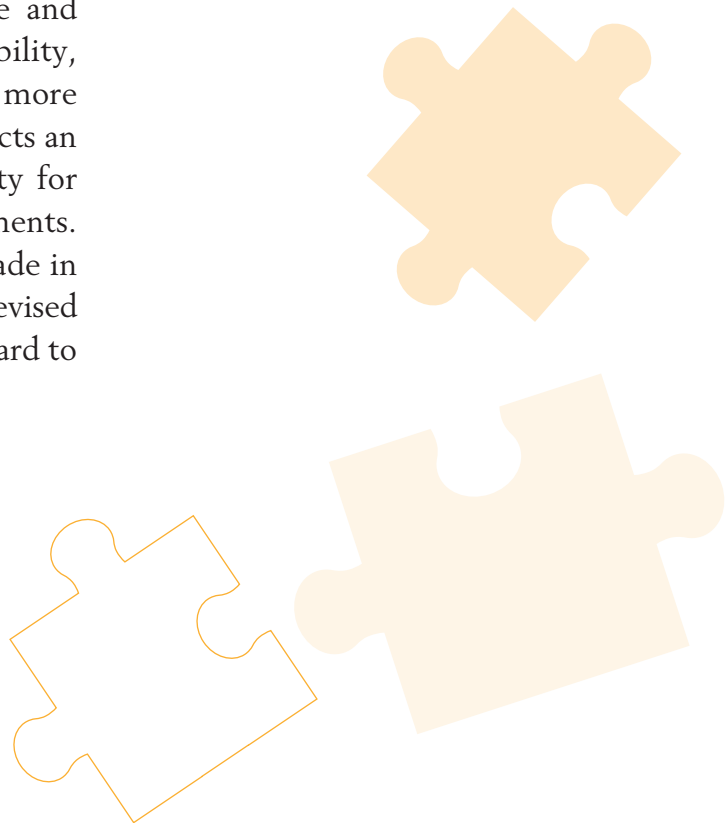
4.17 Separately, the Commission noted that some departments had the tendency of rating most officers at the same level. For example, in the promotion submissions of several grades in two Departments, over 95% of eligible officers received identical ratings on their overall performance and/or promotability. Although performance and promotability ratings should not be taken and read in isolation but in totality with the detailed written assessment, ranking the performance and promotability of most eligible officers at the same level will make it difficult to identify real performers and to support the promotion boards' recommendations on the basis of the officers' performance records. The Commission has 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.



4.18 As mentioned in the 2024 Annual Report, we were pleased to note that on the Commission’s advice and with CSB’s ongoing efforts, all B/Ds had adopted the standard six-tier rating scale for overall grading in the appraisal reports of major grades and ranks, thus achieving consistency in performance assessment within the Government. However, the Commission observed that the rating scale used by some B/Ds to assess officers’ promotability, including descriptions such as “exceptionally well fitted”, “well fitted”, or “fitted” for promotion, is subject to considerable room for interpretation. This type of promotability rating cannot clearly indicate officers’ demonstrated readiness for higher responsibilities. At the Commission’s request, CSB has followed up with the relevant B/Ds to review and refine the rating scale and assessment standards for promotability, aiming to develop a clearer and more precise framework that better reflects an appraisee’s readiness and suitability for advancement or acting appointments. While noting the good progress made in 2025 with the rating scale already revised in a number of B/Ds, we look forward to the further progress on this front.

4.19 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. This is to ensure a multi-perspective assessment on an appraisee. In 2025, the Commission noted deviations from the three-tier appraisal system in the completion of appraisal reports as illustrated in Case 4G.



### Case 4G

A Department had improperly arranged a single reporting officer to concurrently assume the roles of AO, CO, and RO in completing appraisal reports. As explained by the Department, this was due to the fact that the CO concerned, who was also the RO for the rank, had been on pre-retirement leave. This arrangement was a clear deviation from the prevailing guidelines, which stipulate that the roles of AO, CO, and RO should be assumed by different officers as far as practicable. At the Commission's request and in consultation with CSB, the Department subsequently rectified this arrangement by engaging different officers to assume the assessment roles in the appraisals concerned.

Having one officer assuming all the roles of AO, CO, and RO in an appraisal report was unsatisfactory and exposed apparent inadequacies in the Department's performance management practices. While the Commission noted that this happened under exceptional circumstances, the Commission seriously reminded the Department to comply with the guiding principles of the performance management system when arranging the completion of appraisal reports in the future.

### Succession

4.20 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.

4.21 In the 2023 Annual Report, the Commission had highlighted concerns over the acute succession challenges at the directorate levels of a Department. Taking heed of the Commission's advice, the Department concerned had positively responded and achieved notable improvement in its succession planning, as illustrated in Case 4H.

## Case 4H

With five out of six serving officers at Directorate 1 level and above retiring within a mere ten months, the Department had failed to identify suitable successors for filling these directorate posts. Consequently, it was compelled to conduct an FE exercise expeditiously to consider extending the service of a number of incumbents approaching retirement so as to meet operational needs.

With the Commission's grave concerns raised, it was encouraging to note that the housekeeping Bureau of this Department had subsequently stepped up its efforts in closely monitoring the succession situation. The Department concerned also responded positively by accelerating the development and grooming of junior officers with potential. Thanks to these concerted efforts over the past two years, notable improvement had been made in its succession planning. Two promotion boards conducted in 2025 were able to identify a sufficient number of suitable candidates to fill all the higher rank vacancies and the need to conduct FE exercises was no longer required.

The Commission was pleased with the improvement observed. The housekeeping Bureau and the Department were encouraged to sustain their efforts, adopting a forward-looking approach to ensure robust long-term succession planning, along with vigorous training and career development plans to speed up the grooming of junior officers with potential at various ranks.



*From facing a potential succession crisis to achieving a leadership stability, a department's determination and responsive strategies are able to effectively address challenges, laying the groundwork for ongoing organisational resilience.*

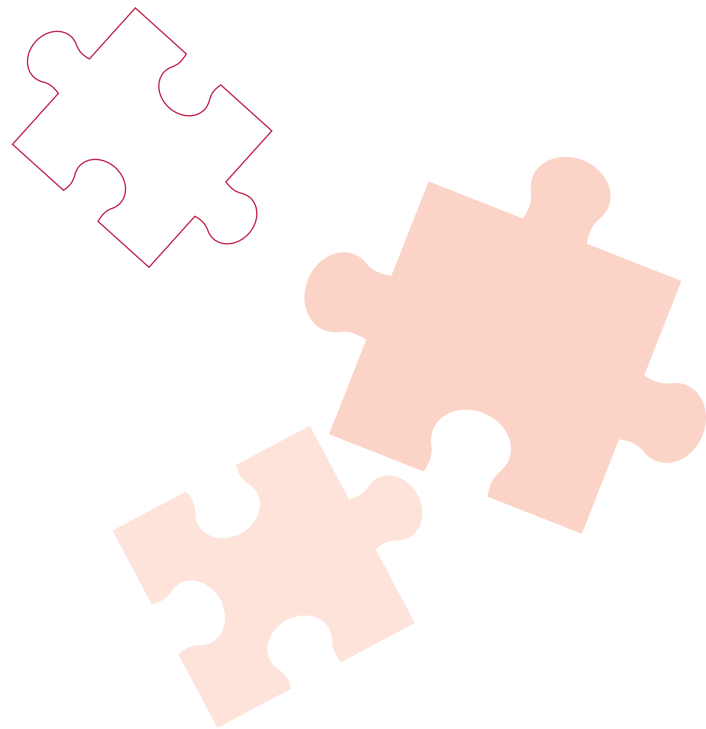




## CHAPTER 5

### 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>12</sup>, the Administration is required under s.18 of the PS(A)O<sup>13</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 2025, the number of Category A officers falling within the Commission's purview for disciplinary matters was about 125 000.
- 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.

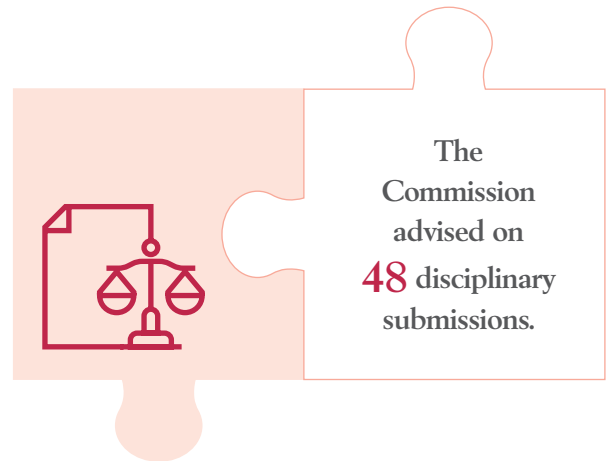


12 Please refer to paragraph 1.4 of Chapter 1.

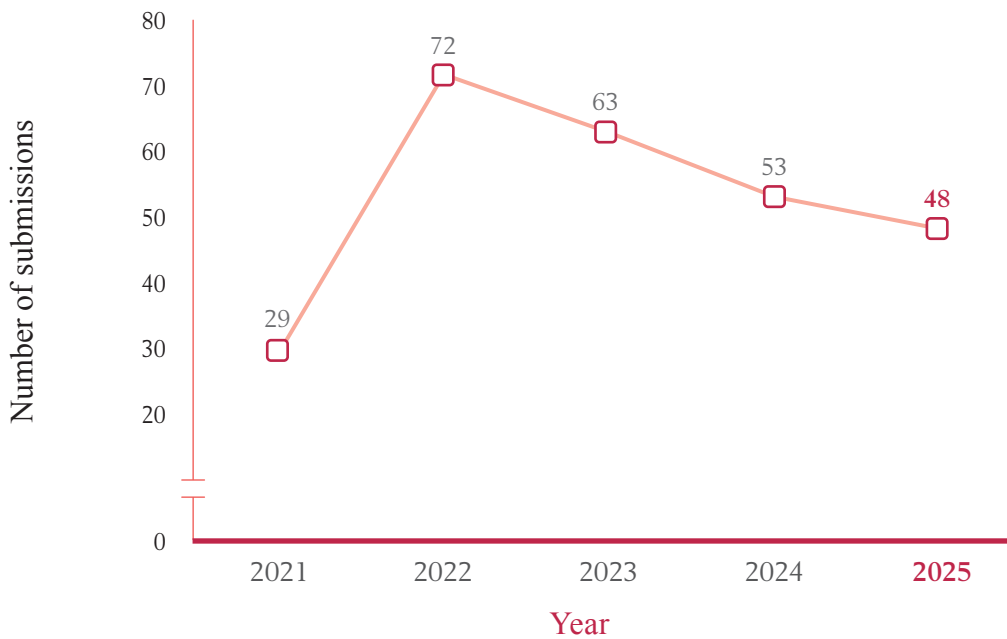
13 Please refer to paragraph 1.5 of Chapter 1.

## Disciplinary Submissions Advised in 2025

5.4 In 2025, the Commission advised on 48 disciplinary submissions which had gone through the formal disciplinary procedures prescribed under the PS(A)O. It represents about 0.04% of the 125 000 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 2021 to 2025

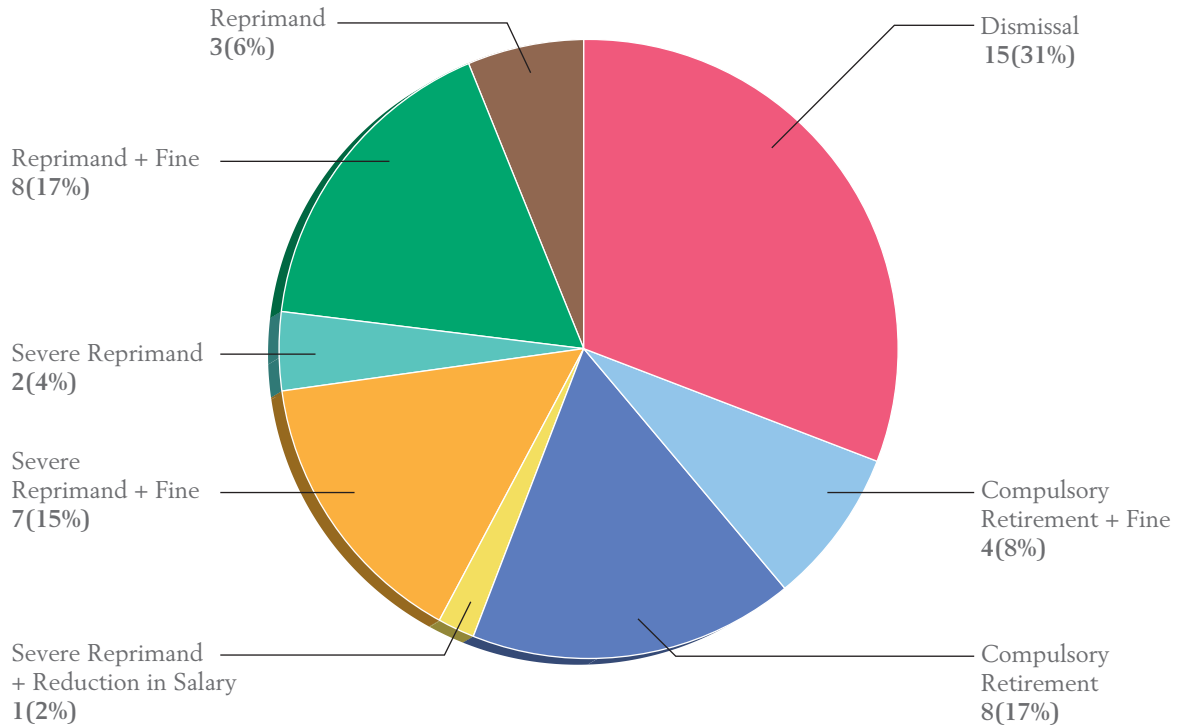


5.5 As shown in the above chart, the number of disciplinary submissions advised by the Commission has remained consistently low in the past five years. It indicates that the great majority of our civil servants have continued to measure up to the very high standard of conduct and discipline required 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 48 disciplinary submissions advised by the Commission in 2025, a breakdown by category of criminal offence/misconduct and salary group is at **Appendix IX**. As depicted in the pie chart below, more than half of the submissions had resulted in the removal of the civil servants concerned from the service by “compulsory retirement”<sup>14</sup> or “dismissal”<sup>15</sup>, while 21% had resulted in the officers receiving the punishment of “severe reprimand”<sup>16</sup>. In about 42% of the submissions, a financial penalty was added in the form of a “fine”<sup>17</sup> or a “reduction in salary”<sup>18</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.

- 14 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.
- 15 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).
- 16 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.
- 17 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.
- 18 Reduction in salary is a form of financial penalty by reducing an officer’s salary by one or two pay point(s). 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 2025 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. We are pleased to note that CSB has reviewed the PS(A)O and the Public Service (Disciplinary) Regulation with a view to enhancing the civil service disciplinary mechanism. Having sought the Commission’s views on the proposals in 2025, CSB conducted staff consultation and briefed the Legislative Council Panel on Civil Service. We look forward to the promulgation of the enhanced measures in 2026.

5.8 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.

## Staff management

5.9 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 punitive action after the occurrence of misconduct. If misconduct happens, supervising officers and the management have the duty to identify any breeding grounds for or circumstantial factors leading to the cases so as to take remedial actions decisively to avoid recurrence of similar misconduct, as illustrated in Cases 5A to 5D below.

### Case 5A

This case concerns two public venues in which a number of officers were found having failed to perform duties at their assigned duty posts at the same time without permission, affecting adversely the operation of the venues concerned. After investigation, the Department found that the supervisors had not given approval for the officers concerned to change their duty posts. With the misconduct acts established, the service of those officers on probationary terms was terminated, whereas the remaining defaulting officers on permanent establishment were subject to disciplinary punishment.

The Commission was disappointed to note the lax office discipline. The wilful disregard of office discipline reflected badly on the defaulters concerned as well as the capability of their supervisors in staff management.

The Commission has urged the Department to –

- (a) review the existing staff monitoring mechanism and implement practical measures to step up its effectiveness, with a view to upholding the standard of staff discipline in all the venues concerned operating under the Department; and
- (b) remind all supervising officers that they would be held accountable in maintaining proper staff discipline under their purview. They should take prompt and decisive actions against any malpractices in order to deter misconduct acts of their subordinates.

We look forward to the implementation of enhanced measures to be worked out by the Department to prevent recurrence of similar misconduct acts in its venues and ensure effective provision of public service. The Department should also review its measures regularly, and refine them as and when necessary to ensure their effectiveness.

## Case 5B

An officer often slept in the store room of his office during duty hours. However, the supervisor was not aware of his misconduct until the receipt of a complaint made by a staff member working in the same office. The supervisor, having immediately checked and found the officer sleeping on the spot, simply warned him not to do so and directed him to go back to work. A week later, the officer was found sleeping again in the store room during duty hours. With the support of the records of closed-circuit television, it was found that he had misconducted himself repeatedly. As the officer was on probationary terms, the case was submitted to the Commission with the recommendation of terminating his probationary service.

The case again reflected the lax office discipline and deficiency in staff management in the office concerned. In addition, the lenient approach adopted by the supervisor in handling the case conveyed a misleading message to the officer as well as other staff that the misconduct acts were tolerated.

In supporting the termination of the officer's probationary service, the Commission has impressed upon the Department the need for making improvement in staff management by –

- (a) exploring and implementing more effective monitoring measures to enhance staff supervision with a view to upholding office discipline at all times and ensuring effective office operation; and
- (b) reminding all supervising officers of the importance of taking a resolute approach in handling misconduct cases so that defaulting officers could be punished in a timely manner and clearly understand the consequence of their misconduct acts.

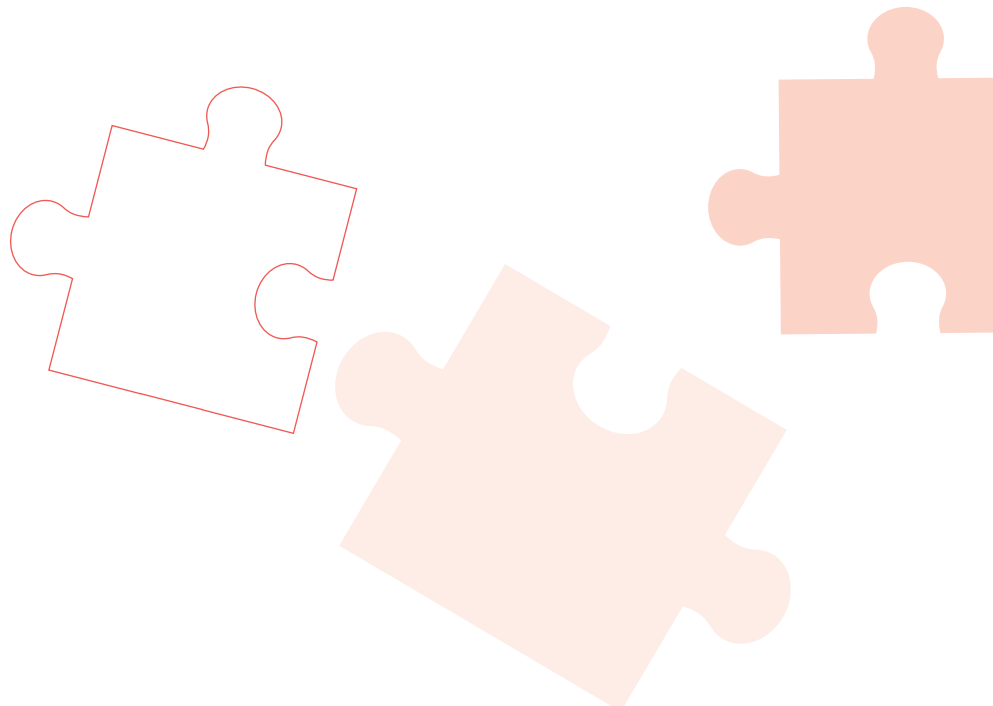
## Case 5C

Another Department received a complaint alleging that an officer had been absent from duty. The officer worked together with three other officers in a team responsible for performing outdoor duties. After investigation, the Department discovered that all the four officers, including the team head, had committed the misconduct acts of unauthorised absence and falsification of entries in the attendance record books. As one of the officers was on probation, his service was terminated without recourse to disciplinary action whereas the remaining three officers on permanent establishment were subject to disciplinary punishment.

The involvement of the whole team in the misconduct case has revealed the Department's slackness in office discipline and staff supervision, particularly among those frontline staff conducting outdoor duties. The falsification of entries in the attendance books further begged the question over the officers' integrity. Noting that the Department has implemented various measures to enhance the monitoring of staff punctuality and attendance, the Commission has urged the Department to follow through the improvement measures and review their effectiveness from time to time to ensure that office discipline is upheld at all times.



*Effective daily staff management is key to the maintenance of a high standard of office discipline and staff conduct.*



## Case 5D

An officer was recommended to be punished by dismissal as he had been late for work habitually despite repeated reminders and warnings from his supervisors, and also failed repeatedly to follow his supervisor's instructions.

On closer examination of the case, the Commission noted that, having detected the officer's lateness problem, the supervisors initially requested the officer to submit daily work progress reports by a specified time every morning. Seeing no improvement in the officer's punctuality in the following two months, coupled with his repeated failure to submit work progress reports as instructed, the supervisors asked the officer to sign on an attendance register upon arrival in the office every day. Despite being so requested, the officer continued to be late for work. The Department eventually decided to initiate formal disciplinary action against the officer, by then the lateness problem had persisted for nearly a year.

The officer's failure to improve his punctuality, despite the administrative measures imposed, reflected his blatant disregard of office discipline and his supervisors' instructions. The Department should have taken more robust management actions at a much earlier time, including but not limited to, issuing advisory letters and taking summary disciplinary actions<sup>19</sup> against the officer, instead of resorting to merely administrative measures.

The Commission noted that the Department had taken follow-up actions to request its supervisors to closely monitor staff attendance and remind them of their supervisory accountability in doing so. The Commission has further requested the Department to remind all supervising officers of the importance of taking a resolute approach in handling misconduct cases so that timely sanctions could be meted out to achieve the punitive effect.



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



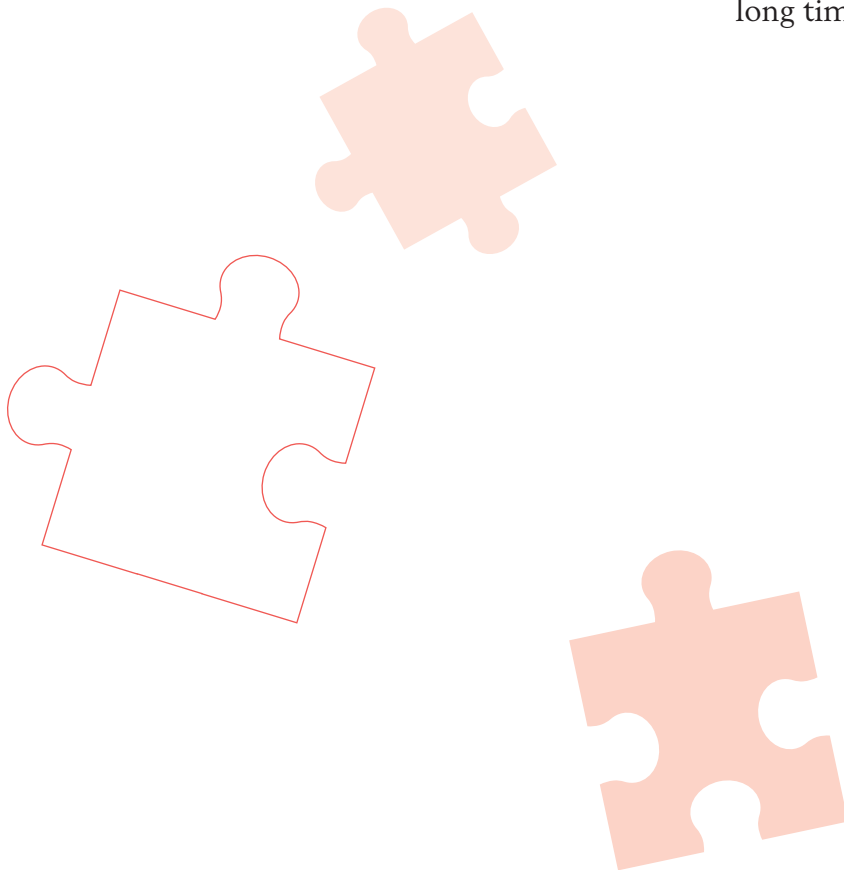
19 Verbal warnings and written warnings are forms of summary disciplinary actions taken in less serious cases of misconduct/offence that do not warrant formal disciplinary proceedings. A verbal warning and a written warning would normally debar an officer from promotion and appointment for six months and one year respectively from the date of the issue of the warning. The Commission's advice is not required in summary disciplinary cases.

### Processing time of disciplinary cases

5.10 Taking prompt and timely action in processing disciplinary cases with appropriate punishment meted out is essential to the fair and effective administration of the disciplinary system. Delay in action not only weakens the credibility of the system and the punitive deterrent effect of the punishment, it is also unfair to the involved parties concerned, and undermines the Government's credibility of not tolerating acts of misconduct.

5.11 In the past two years, the Commission observed that a number of departments had taken a relatively long time to conclude their disciplinary cases. Apart from reminding them of the importance of processing disciplinary cases expeditiously, we requested those departments with more serious problems to submit review reports to the Commission suggesting measures to be adopted to solve the problem. The departments concerned had undertaken in their review reports to implement various enhancement measures to ensure the timely processing of disciplinary cases in future.

5.12 However, we still noted that in 2025, there was room for improvement in the timeliness of processing disciplinary cases in a few other departments. Case 5E below illustrates the lesson learnt arising from a Department taking exceedingly long time to conclude a disciplinary case.



## Case 5E

A team of five officers, two being the team heads, was assigned to perform raiding duties in designated districts at scheduled times during their duty shift. The officers recorded in their attendance books that the duties had been completed as assigned. However, subsequent departmental checks on the transportation records of the team revealed that the team had returned to the office at a time much earlier than scheduled. The officers were suspected to have failed to perform their assigned duties seriously and made false attendance records.

The Department took nearly two years to conduct the departmental investigation. The Secretariat on Civil Service Discipline (SCSD) took another two years to process the case, including seeking supplementary information from the Department to substantiate the alleged misconduct acts, devising a new set of procedural guidelines for conducting a joint inquiry hearing for the case, conducting the joint inquiry hearing for the defaulting officers with common case background in one-go and allowing time for them to submit representations, among others. By the time the case was submitted to the Commission for advice on imposing disciplinary punishment against the defaulting officers concerned, some four years had lapsed since the discovery of the misconduct acts.

Whilst appreciating the need to observe the due process which would take time, the processing time of the case was still considered too long. The Department should have taken decisive and prompt action to process the case with a view to imposing the disciplinary punishment timely to achieve the maximum deterrent effect. The Commission has strongly urged SCSD and the Department to take reference of this case and to expedite the processing of similar disciplinary cases in future by –

- (a) closely monitoring the processing of disciplinary cases at different stages to ensure timely processing; and
- (b) arranging briefings and training to equip the Department's staff with the necessary skills in handling disciplinary investigations with a view to ensuring that investigations would be conducted thoroughly and promptly.

Besides, the Commission noted that the Department had taken the initiative to implement various measures to strengthen its monitoring of staff attendance in the offices concerned, including the adoption of a system to record staff attendance electronically. We have further requested the Department to follow through the relevant measures and review their effectiveness regularly with a view to upholding staff discipline in future.



*Early and swift disciplinary action is important to achieve the desired punitive and deterrent effects.*

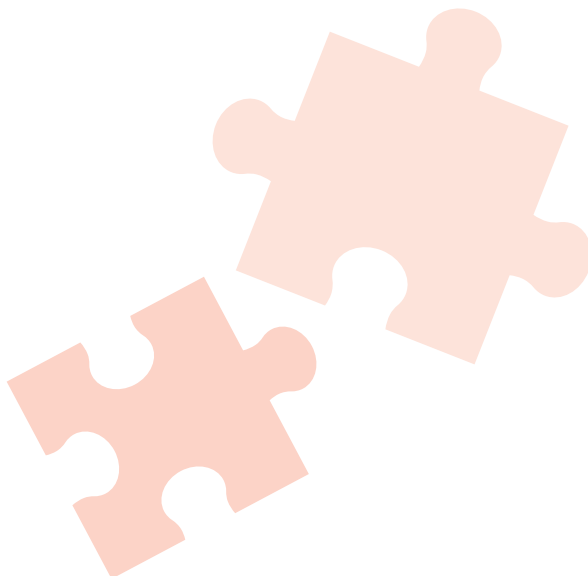


### Measures to help improve the processing of disciplinary cases

5.13 To step up the monitoring of the processing of disciplinary cases and to ensure the consistency in the level of punishment meted out by B/Ds, the Commission is pleased that CSB has rolled out since 2023 various measures for enhancing the civil service disciplinary mechanism. These include requiring B/Ds to report on a half-yearly basis to their senior management and CSB on the progress of their handling of disciplinary cases and to strengthen the monitoring of summary disciplinary actions imposed against officers on probationary or trial terms. Where cases not handled in a proper and timely manner were detected by CSB, it would step in to understand the situations and offer the necessary advice and assistance to B/Ds.

5.14 As mentioned in paragraph 5.11 above, the Commission would request B/Ds to submit review reports for problematic cases so that the B/Ds concerned could identify causes for the problems and map out improvement measures to tackle them. In such review reports, we noted that B/Ds had incorporated the advice given by both the Commission and CSB on the ways to strengthen their handling and monitoring of disciplinary cases. The Commission looks forward to seeing actual improvements being made with the implementation of such measures by the B/Ds concerned.

5.15 In addition, SCSD has maintained its out-reach visits to B/Ds to explore scope to enhance mutual efficiency in processing disciplinary cases. For example, arising from the long processing time of a disciplinary case in the year, SCSD took the initiative to arrange an out-reach visit and dedicated training to the concerned Department to improve the management capability of its responsible officers in handling disciplinary cases.



### Staff training

5.16 The Commission noted that one of the main reasons for the long processing time of disciplinary cases was that supervisors at the middle level were not adequately equipped with staff management skills, as well as the knowledge about the handling procedures and the appropriate level of punishment to be meted out in disciplinary cases. As mentioned in Chapter 1 of this Annual Report (*please see paragraph 1.14*), CSB, taking heed of the Commission’s advice, developed an online training programme for supervisors at the middle level to strengthen their skills in managing subordinates with performance and/or conduct issues. To facilitate the implementation of the

training programme, the Commission had provided CSB with some case study materials to illustrate to participants the need and the ways for supervisors to discharge their supervisory responsibilities properly and diligently so that some acts of misconduct by their subordinates could be detected at an early stage or even totally avoided. We note that CSB had launched the training programme in December 2025. In addition to case studies, simple quizzes are included to help strengthen participants’ supervisory skills as well as their understanding of their role in staff supervision. We are pleased to note that CSB has undertaken to refine the training programme as and when necessary to ensure its effectiveness.



5.17 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 HRM practitioners as well as departmental managers who are responsible for day-to-day staff management.

5.18 The Commission will continue to collaborate with CSB, and provide feedback and suggestions to facilitate its pursuit of the training initiatives.





## CHAPTER 6 VISITS

### Visits to Departments

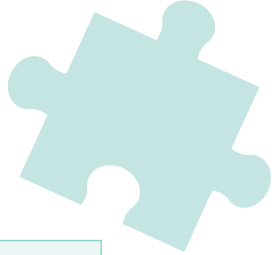
6.1 The Chairman and Members of the Commission visited the Civil Aviation Department (CAD) and the Immigration Department (ImmD) in July 2025 and December 2025 respectively. These visits have facilitated useful exchanges on various issues pertaining to civil service appointments, performance management and staff development of the Departments concerned.

### Civil Aviation Department

6.2 The briefing on the work of CAD and the guided tour to its Control Tower Simulator and the New Air Traffic Control Tower have greatly enhanced the Commission’s understanding of the Department’s work and operations, as well as the vital role it plays in promoting aviation industry development and upholding aviation safety. The Commission also met with CAD’s frontline officers, which provided us with an opportunity to appreciate their work, dedication, and accomplishments in serving the community.



Visit to the Civil Aviation Department in July 2025.



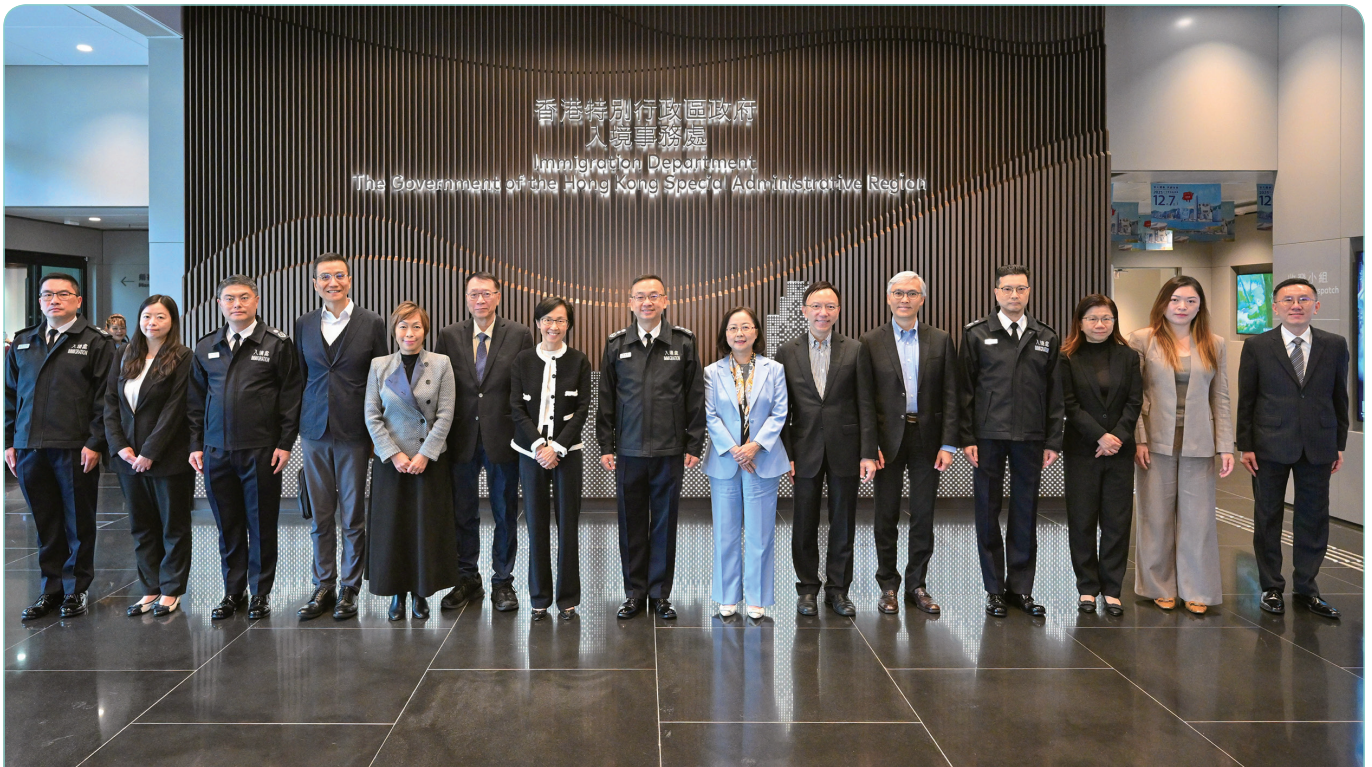
Visit to the Civil Aviation Department in July 2025.



### Immigration Department

6.3 The visit to the Immigration Headquarters enabled the Commission to deepen its understanding of ImmD’s operations as well as its contributions to exercising effective immigration control and enforcing the laws. Additionally,

the Commission had the precious opportunity to meet ImmD’s frontline staff, with fruitful exchanges about their roles, challenges, and the critical services they provide to the community.



Visit to the Immigration Department in December 2025.



Visit to the Immigration Department in December 2025.



## Sharing session between the Commission Secretariat and the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD)

6.4 Separately, the Chairman of the Commission and the Commission Secretariat participated in a comprehensive sharing session hosted by C&SD in December 2025. During this session, valuable insights into the

integration of Artificial Intelligence into daily work were exchanged. The discussion covered a broad spectrum of topics, including enhancements to work efficiency and the associated challenges, facilitating a dynamic exchange of views.



Sharing session between the Commission Secretariat and the Census and Statistics Department, with participation from the Joint Secretariat for the Advisory Bodies on Civil Service and Judicial Salaries and Conditions of Service.



## 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 2025.



## APPENDIX I

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



**Ms Maisie CHENG Mei-sze, GBS, JP**

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).



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

Member, Public Service Commission

(from 1 December 2019 to 30 November 2025)

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 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 and Honorary Fellow of the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology; and Distinguished Guest 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, Chairman of the Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce and Chairperson of the Hong Kong Export Credit Insurance Corporation Advisory Board. She is also a member of the Users' Committee of the Inland Revenue Department, and Member of the Strategic Committee on Commodities, Member of the Trade & Industry Advisory Board, and Member of the Honours and Non-official Justices of the Peace Selection Committee. 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 Hospital Authority, 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, the Data Advisory Committee of Hong Kong Genome Institute, and a non-executive director of EH Plus Digital Technology Limited (a wholly owned subsidiary of Hospital Authority).



**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 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, the Travel Industry 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 a member of the Audit Committee of the University of Hong Kong. He is also a Council Member of the UNICEF Hong Kong. Over the years, he has served as a member of various government boards and committees covering the areas of trade and industry development, 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.



**Mr Samuel CHAN Ka-yan, BBS, JP**

LL.B. (HKU), P.C.LL. (HKU)

Master of Arts (EU Competition Law) (KCL)

Honorary Research Fellow of the Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies, CUHK

Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators

Fellow of the Hong Kong Institute of Arbitrators

Panel Arbitrator of the Shenzhen Court of International Arbitration

Member, Public Service Commission

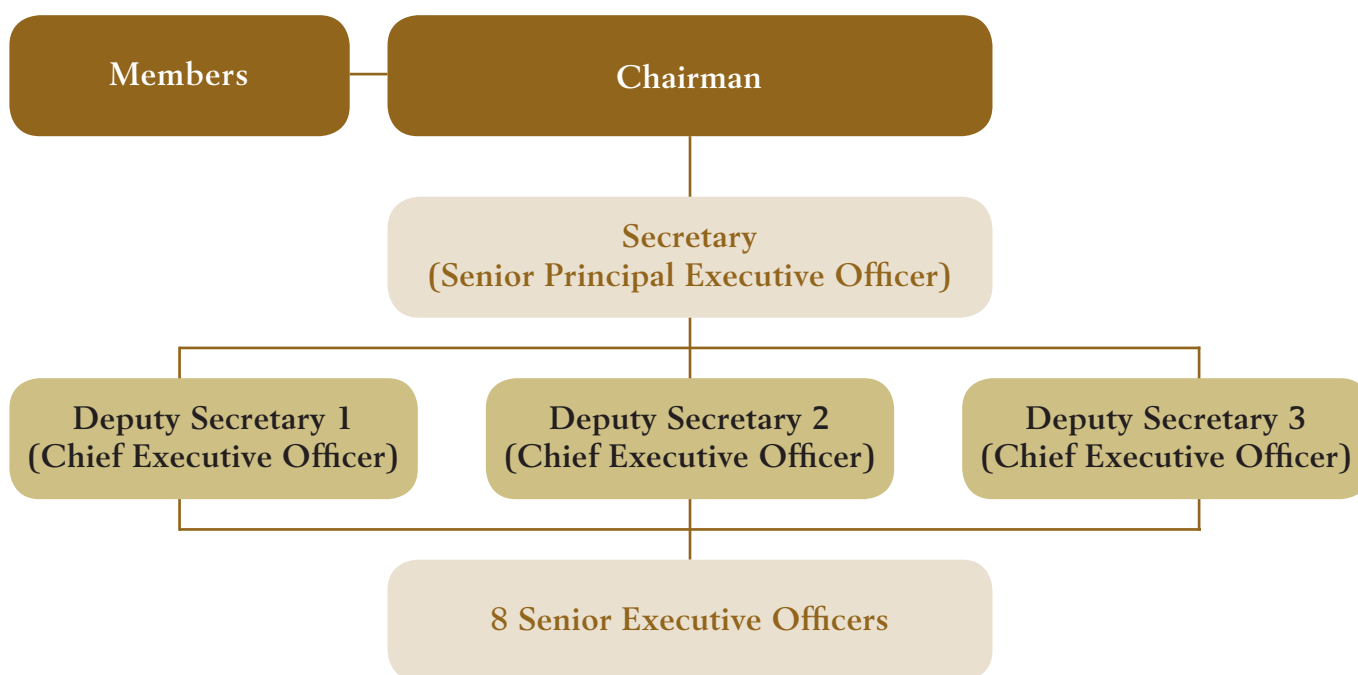
(appointed on 1 December 2025)

Mr Chan has been a practising barrister since 1989. Currently, he is the Chairman of the Competition Commission, and a member of the Operations Review Committee of the Independent Commission Against Corruption and the Working Group on Class Actions of the Department of Justice. Previously, he was the former Vice-Chairman of the Consumer Council, a Non-Executive Director of the Insurance Authority, a member of the Equal Opportunities Commission, the former Chairman of the Consumer Legal Action Fund Management Committee and the former Deputy Chairman of the Town Planning Appeal Board.



## 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
	<b>34</b>



## APPENDIX III

### Submissions Advised by the Commission

Category	Number of Submissions Advised				
	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Recruitment	157	132	168	140	119
Promotion/Acting appointment	742	746	763	732	706
Extension of service or re-employment after retirement	26	23	23	27	22
Extension or termination of probationary/trial service	247	196	225	147	148
Other Civil Service appointment matters	178	96	111	89	54
Discipline	29	72	63	53	48
Total number of submissions advised	1 379	1 265	1 353	1 188	1 097
<i>(a) Number of submissions queried</i>	886	812	874	735	722
<i>(b) Number of submissions with revised recommendations following queries</i>	158	162	135	125	98
<i>(b) / (a)</i>	18%	20%	15%	17%	14%



## APPENDIX IV

### Recruitment Submissions Advised by the Commission

Terms of Appointment	Number of Recommended Candidates in 2025	
	Open Recruitment	In-service Appointment
Probation	1 120	0
Agreement	33	6
Trial	65	30
<i>Sub total</i>	<i>1 218</i>	<i>36</i>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1 254</b>	

	Comparison with Previous Years				
	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Number of recruitment submissions involved	157	132	168	140	<b>119</b>
Number of candidates recommended (all local candidates)	1 597	1 606	1 887	1 845	<b>1 254</b>



## APPENDIX V

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

Category	Number of Submissions Advised				
	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Termination of trial service	3	6	1	3	2
Termination of probationary service	66	40	45	20	36
<b><i>Sub total</i></b>	<b>69</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>38</b>
Extension of trial service	10	7	15	19	12
Extension of probationary service	168	143	164	105	98
<b><i>Sub total</i></b>	<b>178</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>110</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>196</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>148</b>



## APPENDIX VI

### Promotion Submissions Advised by the Commission

Category	Number of Recommended Officers				
	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Promotion	3 178	2 968	3 310	3 426	2 950
Waitlisted for promotion	272	381	316	349	254
Acting with a view to substantive promotion (AWAV) or waitlisted for AWAV	325	313	349	337	281
Acting for administrative convenience (AFAC) or waitlisted for AFAC	5 859	5 850	6 432	6 350	5 727
<b>Total</b>	<b>9 634</b>	<b>9 512</b>	<b>10 407</b>	<b>10 462</b>	<b>9 212</b>



## APPENDIX VII

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

Category	Number of Recommended Officers in 2025		
	Directorate	Non- directorates	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	9	55	64

	Comparison with Previous Years				
	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Number of extension of service or re-employment after retirement submissions advised	26	23	23	27	22
<i>Number of submissions involving directorate ranks</i>	9	10	7	16	9
<i>Number of submissions involving non-directorate ranks</i>	17	13	16	11	13



## APPENDIX VIII

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

Category	Number of Submissions Advised				
	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Non-renewal or termination of agreement	3	2	2	1	1
Renewal or extension of agreement	3	1	0	6	1
Retirement under section 12 of the Public Service (Administration) Order	73	0	1	4	2
Secondment	2	1	1	6	4
Review of acting appointment	5	4	11	8	13
Updating of Guide to Appointment	92	88	95	64	33
Lateral appointment	0	0	1	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>54</b>



## APPENDIX IX

### Disciplinary Submissions Advised by the Commission

#### (a) Breakdown of Submissions in 2025 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	2	11	2	15
Compulsory Retirement + Reduced pension	0	0	0	0
Compulsory Retirement + Fine	3	1	0	4
Compulsory Retirement	6	2	0	8
Reduction in Rank	0	0	0	0
Severe Reprimand + Reduction in Salary	0	0	1	1
Severe Reprimand + Fine	4	3	0	7
Severe Reprimand	1	0	1	2
Reprimand + Fine	7	1	0	8
Reprimand	2	0	1	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>48</b>

**(b) Breakdown of Submissions in 2025 by Category of Criminal Offence/Misconduct**

Punishment	Number of Submissions Advised				
	Criminal Offence			Misconduct <sup>20</sup>	Total
	Traffic related	Theft	Others <sup>21</sup>		
Dismissal	1	2	4	8	15
Compulsory Retirement	0	1	6	5	12
Lesser Punishment	4	4	5	8	21
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>48</b>

**(c) Comparison with Previous Years**

Punishment	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Dismissal	9	32	14	12	15
Compulsory Retirement	6	5	14	13	12
Lesser Punishment	14	35	35	28	21
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>48</b>

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

21 Including assault, sex-related offences, possession of dutiable goods, gambling, 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