

Standing Commission on Civil Service Salaries and Conditions of Service Report
No. 57: Grade Structure Review for Marine Officer and Surveyor of Ships Grades

The following is issued on behalf of the Standing Commission on Civil Service Salaries and Conditions of Service:

The Standing Commission on Civil Service Salaries and Conditions of Service today (October 31) submitted its report on a Grade Structure Review (GSR) for the Marine Officer and Surveyor of Ships grades to the Chief Executive.

At the invitation of the Secretary for the Civil Service, the Standing Commission carried out the GSR for the Marine Officer and Surveyor of Ships grades, which are facing serious recruitment difficulties. The report sets out the Standing Commission's findings and recommendations.

"We conducted the GSR through an in-depth analysis of the two grades, including the nature of the duties that they have to discharge and their respective manpower situations. Treasuring the value of staff engagement, we met with staff representatives of the two grades, and visited various facilities under the charge of the Marine Department to gain a better understanding of staff views and sentiments. In the report, we put forth a series of recommendations to the Government, which we believe, if accepted and implemented, will help address the manpower problems faced by the Marine Officer and Surveyor of Ships grades and be conducive to the long-term development of the two grades," the Chairman of the Standing Commission, Dr Wilfred Wong Ying-wai, said.

The Marine Officer and Surveyor of Ships grades are the two core professional grades in the Marine Department, responsible for discharging the statutory functions relating to all navigational matters in the waters of Hong Kong and safety standards of all vessels. At the entry rank, the Surveyor of Ships grade is divided into three streams, namely the Engineer & Ship stream, the Nautical stream and the Ship stream. The Marine Officer grade is not streamed.

Having examined relevant manpower statistics, the Standing Commission agrees that the two grades have been facing persistent recruitment difficulties, which will, over time, translate into succession problems. The Standing Commission

considers it necessary to put in place arrangements to attract younger candidates with good potential to join the two grades.

"We recommend the creation of a new tier of rank (i.e. Assistant Marine Officer and Assistant Surveyor of Ships) each for the two grades, amid the limited supply of home-grown trained and experienced seafarers and the global competition for maritime professionals," Dr Wong added.

In setting the entry requirements of the new assistant ranks, the Standing Commission is conscious of the necessity of an appropriate balance between the need to attract candidates and the professional requirements of the job. The Standing Commission recommends that a degree in a relevant discipline and a professional qualification at Class 3 level (vis-à-vis the present requirement at Class 1, which is the highest level attainable, for the existing entry ranks) be set as the entry requirements for Assistant Marine Officer, the Engineer & Ship stream and the Nautical stream of Assistant Surveyor of Ships, and that a degree in naval architecture or related technology be set as the entry requirement for the Ship stream of Assistant Surveyor of Ships.

The Standing Commission recognises that for the proposed creation of the assistant ranks to be a success, the Marine Department must train and groom assistant rank officers to take up the full range of professional duties as they progress along the career path.

"We are pleased to note that the Marine Department is already taking steps to devise designated training programmes to enable these young officers to acquire the necessary professional knowledge and attain the required level of competency. I understand that the department will have the training programmes accredited by relevant professional institutions," Dr Wong said.

As for the pay, the Standing Commission recommends that the pay scales of Assistant Marine Officer, the Engineer & Ship stream and the Nautical stream of Assistant Surveyor of Ships be set at Master Pay Scale (MPS) Points 19 to 27, and that the pay scale of the Ship stream of Assistant Surveyor of Ships be set at MPS points 16 to 27.

The Standing Commission has also examined the existing ranks and recommends that a degree in a relevant discipline be introduced as an academic entry requirement for the Marine Officer rank, which will better tie in with the international trend and more accurately reflect the job requirements of the rank. The Standing Commission further recommends that the starting pay of the Marine Officer rank be increased from MPS Point 29 to Point 32 to address the proven serious and persistent recruitment difficulties of the rank. Such an improvement in pay would also be in step with the higher academic entry requirement.

"We are confident that our recommendations when implemented will help alleviate the manpower shortage of the two grades, which will in turn enhance the delivery of services to the public by the Marine Department," Dr Wong added.

"We would like to express our sincere gratitude to both the management of the Marine Department and the staff bodies for providing us with information and written submissions which have been of great assistance to our deliberation," Dr Wong said.

The Standing Commission Report No. 57 can be viewed on the website of the Joint Secretariat for the Advisory Bodies on Civil Service and Judicial Salaries and Conditions of Service at www.jsscs.gov.hk/reports/en/57/57.pdf.

The Standing Commission advises the Chief Executive on the structure, salaries and conditions of service of the non-directorate civilian grades in the civil service. The Standing Commission is chaired by Dr Wilfred Wong Ying-wai. Its members are Mr Chan Tze-ching, Mr Lee Luen-fai, Mr Lee Ming-kwai, Ms Angela Lee, Mr Joseph Lo, Ms Elaine Lo, Professor Suen Wing-chuen, Mr Tony Tse, Dr Carrie Willis and Mr Wilfred Wong Kam-pui.

Ends/Tuesday, October 31, 2017