CHAPTER 4

GRADES WITH STUDENT RANKS

4.1   The term 'grades with student ranks' refers to a group of civil service grades in which the basic entry ranks are intended to provide secondary school leavers with suitable training to enable them to perform the functional duties of the grade concerned. During the training period staff are usually required to pass either internal or external examinations, success in which is a requirement for appointment to the first functional rank of the grade. Also included in the grades with student ranks group are a few structurally related grades, entry to which requires a qualification from the Hong Kong Polytechnic or an overseas institute.

4.2   In our Second Report on Civil Service Pay (Report No. 5), we expressed the view that the present arrangements for determining the pay scales of grades with student ranks were unsatisfactory. We were particularly concerned about the arrangement whereby pay scales for grades with student ranks are set by reference to the educational standards required for entry to the training rank. As a result the pay scales of the first functional ranks of these grades have little or no regard to the post-training qualifications required to perform the full duties of the grade concerned. We indicated our intention of conducting a review of grades with student ranks in order to establish whether their pay scales should be adjusted in the light of the qualifications obtained on completion of training, taking into account the other factors used in setting pay scales; we also proposed to consider the introduction of a separate training pay scale.

The Pay of Student Ranks

4.3   Essentially student ranks are filled by staff under training; only part of their time is therefore spent in carrying out functional duties. In our opinion, the present system of relating their pay to the benchmark entry points for functional ranks requiring the same educational qualifications does not adequately recognise this situation and we therefore recommend that it should be discontinued. We consider that it would be more appropriate for a separate training pay scale to be introduced which would take account of the trainee status of the staff concerned.

4.4   In addition to student ranks there are three other
civil service ranks designed to accommodate trainees. These
are the ranks of Technical Apprentice, Craft Apprentice and
Printing Apprentice. While the terms of employment of
apprentices are somewhat different from those applicable
to students, the same general principles apply and we see
no reason why they too should not be paid from the proposed
training pay scale.

4.5   Our proposed Training Pay Scale is set out in
Table B at the end of this Chapter. Bearing in mind the
need to construct a rational incremental scale, we have
set the benchmark entry points in the Scale at between 64%
and 82% of the corresponding points on the Master Pay Scale,
the lower percentages being in respect of the Apprentice
ranks. As training proceeds the rank pay scales attract a
higher percentage of their MPS equivalents, in most cases
between 80% and 90%, in recognition of the fact that in
the later stages of a student's training the functional
element of his work increases.

4.6   Our recommendations for the application of the
Training Pay Scale to individual student ranks are contained
in Table C at the end of this Chapter. In arriving at these
recommendations we have continued the present practice of
awarding additional points for job factors, such as the
requirement to work shifts. We have used the prefix TPS to
refer to points on the new scale.

4.7   We have also included pay scales for the apprentice
ranks in Table C. These take account of the educational
qualifications required for the certificate courses which
apprentices take. In referring to the apprentice ranks we
have taken the opportunity to change their titles to accord
with general practice in Hong Kong. Thus, Technical
Apprentice becomes Technician Apprentice and Printing
Apprentice should be treated as a stream within the Craft
Apprentice rank.

4.8   If our proposal for a separate Training Pay Scale
is accepted we also recommend that the student and apprentice
ranks should form a separate group within the civil service to
be known as Training and Apprentice Ranks. This will have the
advantage of divorcing the student ranks from the grades to
which they at present belong thus enabling the pay scales of the
functional ranks of these grades to be established on their
own merits. This proposal need not, of course, affect the
existing arrangements whereby student ranks form a combined
establishment with the first functional rank of their parent
grade.

The Pay of Functional Ranks

4.9   In Report No. 5 we expressed the view that the pay scales of the functional ranks of grades with student ranks should be set by having regard to the qualifications required for the job undertaken by the fully trained officer rather than by reference to the qualifications required to become a student. With this objective in mind we sought information on the nature of the training given to each of the student ranks, including details of any examinations taken. At our request this information was assessed by the Civil Service Examinations Unit in order to relate the standard achieved by the students at the end of their training to external qualifications, particularly those awarded by the Hong Kong Polytechnic. The Unit's assessments were then scrutinised by a specially constituted Panel of Advisers, which included members nominated by the Vice-Chancellors of the University of Hong Kong and the Chinese University of Hong Kong and the Director of the Hong Kong Polytechnic.

4.10   The Panel's assessments indicated that the standards achieved in the student ranks varied widely, with only a few courses being regarded as fully equivalent to a Polytechnic Higher Diploma, while the majority were considered as approximating to Diploma or Certificate level. Because of the different nature of many of the civil service training courses when compared with Polytechnic courses, we took the view that it would not be appropriate to rely entirely on the results of the assessment in order to determine the starting pay of the functional ranks. We therefore also took into account the additional practical value of the on-the-job training given in the student ranks, as well as the nature of the functional jobs performed by each grade, when viewed in the context of the civil service as a whole. Taking into account all these factors we reached the conclusion that our proposed benchmark entry points for the Polytechnic Diploma and Higher Diploma should be used to determine the starting pay of the first functional ranks of the majority of grades with student ranks.

4.11   We therefore propose that the bulk of grades with student ranks, that is to say those requiring two or three years' training after school certificate, should be divided into two categories, with the starting pay of the first functional ranks set by having regard to either the Polytechnic Diploma or Higher Diploma benchmark. In making this division, we have departed from the existing practice of classifying grades according to the length of the training period. We have found that in a number of cases the period of training has been arbitrarily decided and does not necessarily reflect the essential training requirements; in our opinion it is the quality and level rather than the length of training

which is important. We have therefore grouped the grades
by having regard to the level of training afforded to each
student rank, as assessed by the Panel of Advisers, and
after taking into account the other factors referred to in
the previous paragraph. Our proposed grouping of grades
with student ranks is set out in Chapter 5.

4.12   In the course of our review, we encountered a
further unsatisfactory feature of the pay scales of grades
with student ranks. Having regard to the level of their
starting pay, the maximum of the first functional ranks of
grades requiring two or three years' training after school
certificate is low in comparison with other civil service
pay structures. In our proposals for individual grades
with student ranks, we have therefore generally recommended
some improvement in pay scales, especially in so far as
first rank maxima are concerned. The revised pay scales will,
we believe, provide a more realistic pay range for the ranks
involved.

4.13   There are several categories of grades with student
ranks other than those requiring two or three years' training
after school certificate; for example grades for which the
qualification for entry to the student rank is Form IV or
matriculation. There are also a number of other grades
whose pay scales are related to pay scales in this group,
notably certain Education grades. We have dealt with these
on an individual basis and our proposals are contained in
Chapter 5.

General

4.14   The Panel of Advisers' examination of the training
given to student ranks has brought to light certain additional
matters which we feel are deserving of comment.

4.15   First, the quality of training given to students
varies appreciably between departments and even within
departments for different programmes. This is understandable
since different departments or grades have different needs.
We suggest, however, that departments should review their
training programmes, some of which were introduced quite
some years ago, to see if there is any scope for improvement.
We would add that, in a number of cases, training programmes
appear to be entirely satisfactory.

4.16   Secondly, we consider that where suitable courses
exist at the Polytechnic or in Technical Institutes, better
use of these courses could be made for the training of
student ranks. Indeed where there is an appropriate
Polytechnic or Technical Institute course, consideration
should be given to making the successful completion of such
a course a requirement for appointment to the functional
rank of the grade concerned, for example in the case of
Laboratory Technician type grades.

4.17   Finally, the normal period of training for student
ranks is two or three years. In some cases it would appear
that the duration of the training has been fixed in order
to achieve a particular functional rank pay scale rather
than by regard to the actual period of training necessary.
We feel that in any examination of the training programmes
of student ranks, consideration should be given to the
period of training actually required to obtain the qualifi-
cations necessary to perform the functional job.

TRAINING PAY SCALE (TPS)

Qualification	Point	$	Increment
	16	3980	-
	15	3630	350
	14	3355	275
	13	3080	275
Matriculation	(12)	2855	225
	11	2630	225
	10	2430	200
	9	2230	200
	8	2055	175
	7	1880	175
	6	1705	175
School Certificate	(5)	1530	175
4 E's in HKCE/ Technician Apprentice	(4)	1405	125
Form IV	(3)	1280	125
	2	1155	125
Form III/ Craft Apprentice	(1)	1030	125

Note : Principal qualification benchmark
points are shown in brackets.

TABLE C

TRAINING AND APPRENTICE RANKS

TRAINING RANKS

Grade	Training Rank	Existing	Proposed
Aeronautical Communications Officer	Student Aeronautical Communications Officer	MPS 6 - 7	TPS 6 - 7
Agricultural Laboratory Technician	Student Agricultural Laboratory Technician	MPS 5 - 7	TPS 5 - 7
Air Traffic Control Assistant	Air Traffic Control Assistant III	MPS 6 - 7	TPS 6 - 7
Air Traffic Control Officer	Student Air Traffic Control Officer	MPS 17 - 25	TPS 13 - 16*
Computer Operator	Student Computer Operator	MPS 6	TPS 6
Co-operative Supervisor	Assistant Co-operative Supervisor	MPS 5 - 7	TPS 5 - 7
Dental Hygienist	Student Dental Hygienist	MPS 5	TPS 5
Dental Technician	Student Dental Technician	MPS 5 - 7	TPS 5 - 7
Dental Therapist	Student Dental Therapist	MPS 5 - 7	TPS 5 - 7
Dispenser	Student Dispenser	MPS 5 - 7	TPS 5 - 7
Enrolled Nurse	Pupil Nurse	MPS 3 - 4	TPS 4 - 5
Enrolled Nurse (Psychiatric)	Pupil Nurse (Psychiatric)	MPS 5 - 6	TPS 6 - 7

* Scales shortened to bring them into line
  with the length of training period.

Grade	Training Rank	Existing			Proposed		
Environmental Protection Assistant	Enviornmental Protection Assistant II	MPS	5 -	7	TPS	5 -	7
Explosives Officer	Assistant Explosives Officer	MPS	6 -	7	TPS	6 -	7
Field Officer	Assistant Field Officer	MPS	5 -	7	TPS	5 -	7
Fisheries Laboratory Technician	Student Fisheries Laboratory Technician	MPS	5 -	7	TPS	5 -	7
Fisheries Supervisor	Assistant Fisheries Supervisor	MPS	5 -	7	TPS	5 -	7
Health Inspector	Student Health Inspector	MPS	5 -	7	TPS	5 -	7
Laboratory Assistant	Student Laboratory Assistant	MPS	5 -	7	TPS	5 -	7
Laboratory Assistant (PWD)	Student Laboratory Assistant (PWD)	MPS	5 -	7	TPS	5 -	7
Laboratory Technician	Laboratory Technician III	MPS	5 -	7	TPS	5 -	7
Medical Laboratory Technician	Student Medical Laboratory Technician	MPS	5 -	7	TPS	5 -	7
Midwife	Student Midwife	MPS	3 -	4	TPS	4 -	5
Mould Laboratory Technician	Student Mould Laboratory Technician	MPS	5 -	7	TPS	5 -	7
Pest Control Assistant	Student Pest Control Assistant	MPS	5 -	7	TPS	5 -	7
Printing Officer	Student Printing Officer	MPS	5 -	7	TPS	5 -	7
Prosthetist	Student Prosthetist	MPS	5 -	7	TPS	5 -	7
Radiographer	Student Radiographer	MPS	5 -	7	TPS	5 -	7
Registered Nurse	Student Nurse	MPS	6 -	8	TPS	6 -	8

Grade	Training Rank	Existing	Proposed
Registered Nurse (Psychiatric)	Student Nurse (Psychiatric)	MPS 8 - 10	TPS 8 - 10
Scientific Assistant	Student Scientific Assistant	MPS 6 - 8	TPS 6 - 8
Social Work Assistant	Student Social Work Assistant	MPS 5 - 7	TPS 5 - 7
Statistical Officer	Student Statistical Officer	MPS 5 - 6	TPS 5 - 6
Survey Officer	Survey Officer Trainee	MPS 5 - 10	TPS 5 - 7*
Technical Officer	Technical Officer Trainee	MPS 5 - 10	TPS 5 - 7*
Valuation Officer	Valuation Officer Trainee	MPS 5 - 7	TPS 5 - 7
Veterinary Laboratory Technician	Student Veterinary Laboratory Technician	MPS 5 - 7	TPS 5 - 7

APPRENTICE RANKS

Grade	Apprentice Rank	Existing	Proposed
Craft Apprentice	Craft Apprentice	CA 1 - 4	TPS 1 - 4
Technician Apprentice	Technician Apprentice	TA 1 - 4	TPS 4 - 7

* Scales shortened to bring them into line with the length of training period.