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Increasing Retention of Outstanding Overseas Compatriot/Foreign Students: Comment System Form Revised to Include Internship Experience

The Ministry of Labor (MOL) recently announced that it will amend the review criteria for foreigners in white-collar jobs. The Overseas Compatriot/Foreign Student Graduated in Taiwan Comment System Form will be revised to include an evaluation item to count internship experience, and points allocated for those who received government scholarships while studying will be increased from 10 points to 20 points, with the total number of points increasing from 190 to 200. Eligibility is reached when 70 points are accrued, as per current regulations. The MOL stated that on July 3, 2014, in conjunction with the National Development Council's Action Plan to Encourage Outstanding Overseas Compatriot and Foreign Students to Work in Taiwan, a quota system was implemented that evaluates the criteria of overseas compatriot and foreign students studying in Taiwan. The number of such students retained has continued to increase year on year, and their quota has been adjusted on an annual basis. In the past three years, the number of students approved has reached about 90% of the annual quota. In 2023, the quota was 6,000 and 5,354 applications were approved. The quota for 2024 has thus been increased to 7,000.

As there is competition around the world to recruit outstanding talent, retaining talent who pursued a higher education in Taiwan has become a top priority. In addition to revising the Overseas Compatriot/Foreign Student Graduated in Taiwan Comment System Form and adding 10 points for "internships taken in Taiwan lasting one year or more while studying in Taiwan," the MOL is cooperating with the Ministry of Education's (MOE) International Industrial Talents Education Special Program (INTENSE Program), aimed at increasing incentives for recruiting overseas Compatriot/Foreign students for new special programs and encouraging enterprises to comply with policies and invest in resource retention. This revision therefore also increases the points allocated for "Those who received government scholarships or made the top 30% of their class while studying" from 10 points to 20 points, with the total number of points increasing from 190 to 200. After the revision, it will be possible to increase the retention of overseas compatriot and foreign students graduating from the MOE's INTENSE Program in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics), finance, and semiconductor-related fields.

This revision of the review criteria for foreigners in white-collar jobs also includes expanding the scope of specialized technical work in the manufacturing and financial industries and adding social work as specialized technical work. The details will be announced on the MOL website for public inquiry after revision.



The Ministry of Labor Proactively Assists Labor and Management in "Building Dispute Resolution Mechanisms Within Enterprises" to Achieve Autonomous and Stable Relations

The Ministry of Labor (MOL) has promoted its Building Dispute Resolution Mechanisms within Enterprises program, proactively assisting both labor and management by establishing dispute resolution mechanisms within enterprises to achieve autonomous and stable labor relations. Labor and management can foster dispute handling skills and mechanisms in the enterprise through inter-enterprise experience sharing and exchanges and individual counseling, thereby improving communication and negotiation capabilities of trade unions and industry establishments. This may, in turn, help resolve potential conflicts within enterprises, prevent labor disputes, and stabilize labor relations.

The MOL stated that keeping steady labor relations has always been one of its important tasks. Currently, most labor disputes are still resolved through external dispute resolution mechanisms. However, enterprises should attach more importance to day-to-day employee relations before labor disputes arise. A good communication mechanism can ensure timely responses and adjustments to prevent the parties involved from seeking mediation or resorting to litigation.

Against this backdrop, the MOL plans to implement its Labor-Management Partnership Building program. Activities include experience-sharing symposiums on establishing employee relations and dispute resolution mechanisms within enterprises, as well as training for internalizing these mechanisms and individual counseling courses. This will help prevent the occurrence of labor disputes in enterprises and improve the possibility of resolving such disputes internally when they occur.

The MOL further stated that mentoring applicants included those in the manufacturing, accommodation, medical, wholesale, and retail industries. They responded that the program was very helpful for team communication and negotiation skills, earning an overall satisfaction rate of over 90%.

The MOL calls on representatives of industry establishments, labor unions, and labor-management meetings interested in participating in this program to take advantage of this resource. Information can be obtained from the organizer at the China Productivity Center (CPC) website. You are welcome to apply.



During Periods of Hospitalization for Ordinary Injury or Sickness, Workers Who Have Received Their Original Salary from Taking Annual Paid Leave Can Still Claim Labor Insurance Injury or Sickness Benefits

Labor insurance injury or sickness benefits are a form of wage compensation for the loss or reduction of income of insured persons who suffer injury or sickness and must cease work to receive treatment. Article 33 of the Labor Insurance Act stipulates that, "In case an insured person is not receiving salary payment on account of an ordinary injury or sickness for which he is hospitalized and under medical treatment, he shall be paid ordinary injury or sickness benefits beginning from the fourth day on which he is incapacitated for work."

In practice, insured persons occasionally request annual paid leave from the employer to undergo hospitalization, which means they still receive their original salary. Since annual paid leave stipulated in the Labor Standards Act is a right granted to workers, the Ministry of Labor issued a circular explaining that if the insured person takes annual paid leave during a period of ordinary injury or sickness, it will still be counted as loss of "original salary," and thus the insured person may still claim ordinary injury or sickness benefits in accordance with regulations.

For checking whether the insured person's wages were reduced due to being unable to work during hospitalization, there is a field for "Situations in which the insured received salary (or remuneration) while being unable to work during hospitalization due to injury or sickness" on the Labor Insurance Injury or Sickness Benefit Application Form and Payment Receipt. If the insured person takes annual paid leave, check "Annual paid leave (special leaves)" in the "Received original salary or remuneration" field. For detailed qualifications, application forms, and example forms, please visit the Bureau of Labor Insurance's global information website.



OSHA Joins Forces With Occupational Hygiene and Medicine Groups to Hold the 2024 International Conference on Occupational Hygiene and Occupational Medicine to Help Create a Sustainable and Healthy Workforce

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), Ministry of Labor joined forces with the Taiwan Environmental and Occupational Medicine Association, Taiwan Occupational Hygiene Association, and China Medical University to hold the 2024 International Conference on Occupational Hygiene and Occupational Medicine at China Medical University from April 19 to 21, 2024. Scholars and experts from the United States, Finland, Singapore, Republic of Korea, Malaysia and Japan, as well as professionals in the fields of occupational health and occupational medicine from Taiwan were invited to participate in the conference, which took as its theme "Promoting Sustainability in the Workplace: A Holistic Approach to Achieve the SDGs." The conference included speeches, special forums, and academic presentations, with about 300 people in attendance.

In his speech, Deputy Minister of Labor Hsu Chuan-Sheng thanked the international honored guests for attending, and also expressed gratitude to domestic professional organizations for their long-term efforts in promoting the development of occupational health and occupational medicine in Taiwan. He also encouraged all sectors of society to use comprehensive strategies to promote the sustainable development of a healthy workforce, continue to improve workplace safety and health management, and ensure the safety and health of workers. Deputy Minister Hsu mentioned that the April 3 earthquake in Hualien caused heavy casualties and financial losses. While it was not strictly speaking an occupational disaster, it did highlight the importance of disaster prevention, response, and reconstruction, as well as how the government works with enterprises of different industries to maintain industrial resilience and sustainable development.

OSHA stated that in line with the theme of the conference, they jointly planned several topics, such as "Occupational Health Performance and SDGs," "Current Status and Prospects for Ergonomics and Prevention of Occupational Musculoskeletal Diseases," "Forum on Cross-Agency Collaboration to Promote Occupational Health Services in Taiwan," and "Initial Achievements and Prospects of Public-Private Collaboration on Occupational Hazard Prevention and Reconstruction." During the conference, a session titled "Reports on the Achievements of Occupational Accident Prevention Network in Taiwan" was held to recognize outstanding accredited medical institutions and network hospitals, as well as to facilitate learning and experience exchange. All sectors were encouraged to actively participate in the promotion and implementation of the identification, assessment, and risk control of workplace hazards, in order to ensure that employees work in a dignified and safe environment, and help achieve corporate sustainable development goals.



Group photo of honored guests (Deputy Minister of Labor, Hsu Chuan-Sheng is in the middle of the back row - 8th from the right)

Effective Use of Assistive Technology Can Reduce Workloads for Nurse Assistants

According to surveys, nurse assistants are prone to occupational injuries, which is one of the main reasons for labor shortages and low motivation for employment in the field. At present, nurse assistants still mainly work directly with their hands. The use of assistive technology to help in care is still not common in actual on-site work. However, making good use of assistive technology to replace manual labor can be incredibly helpful to reduce the workloads of nurse assistants and prevent occupational musculoskeletal disease. Therefore, the Institute of Labor, Occupational Safety and Health (ILOSH), Ministry of Labor has produced Education and Training Materials on the Use of Assistive Technology for Nurse Assistants to help them effectively use such technology to reduce their workload.

The Education and Training Materials on the Use of Assistive Technology for Nurse Assistants compiled by ILOSH contains text and audio-visual content. In addition to providing nurse assistants with information on protection from labor laws under the Occupational Safety and Health Act, it also offers more comprehensive occupational safety and health protection for nurse assistants in long-term care institutions, helping prevent occupational hazards. Furthermore, it includes suggestions on the practicality and feasibility of assistive technology use by nurse assistants. It also aligns with the national long-term care policy, serving as a basis for guiding long-term care institutions in the implementation of work safety protection measures for workers, in the hopes of creating a friendly and dignified working environment.



Monthly Earnings Statistics for Inexperienced Employees in 2023

In order to understand the earnings level of employees who have just entered the workforce (inexperienced employees), the Ministry of Labor compiles monthly earning statistics of these inexperienced employees based on Big Data, which includes graduates of senior high schools and above; monthly labor pension contributions; and civil servant and teacher insurance. Key results are summarized as follows:

- I. There were 156 thousand inexperienced employees in 2023, of which 45.7% were male and 54.3% were female. The main industries they were employed in included manufacturing and wholesale/retail trade, each accounting for 18.4%; 90.2% of them had university education or higher degree, in which 16.8% had a master's or higher degree; 57.7% of inexperienced employees who had graduated from university were female, while 59.6% of those with a master's or higher degree were male.
- II. The average monthly earnings for inexperienced employees in 2023 was 35 thousand NT dollars, an increase of 2.9% from 2022; this included averages of 33 thousand NT dollars for university graduates and 49 thousand NT dollars for master's or higher graduates.
- III. The median monthly earnings for inexperienced employees in 2023 was 31 thousand NT dollars, of which the median was 30 thousand NT dollars for college and university graduates and 47 thousand NT dollars for master's or higher graduates.
- IV. In 2023, the average monthly earnings of female inexperienced employees was 92% of that of male, which means the gender pay gap was 8%. The gender pay gap at each education level is lower than 1.9%, with the exception of master's or higher graduates, which was 12.9%.
- V. Based on observation of the main industries which inexperienced employees engaged in, in 2023, the average monthly earnings of university graduates was the highest in human health and social work activities, at 38 thousand NT dollars; and the highest average month earnings of those with a master's or higher degree was 57 thousand NT dollars in manufacturing.
- VI. The average monthly earnings for inexperienced employees graduated from university in 2023 was the highest in the majors of health and social welfare, at 38 thousand NT dollars; for those with a master's or higher degree, it was the highest in majors of the information and communications technology, at 57 thousand NT dollars.
- VII. In 2023, 23.4% of inexperienced employees earned the basic wage (the minimum wage) (NT\$26,400) as their starting earnings, which is 0.7 percentage points lower than that in 2022 (the basic wage was NT\$25,250). This proportion declined across higher education level: 58.3% for senior high schools and vocational high schools, 23.9% for universities, and 4.4% for graduate schools.
- VIII. Of those who were still employed in December 2023 after first entering the workforce in 2022, their average monthly earnings in December 2023 was 40 thousand NT dollars, an increase of 15.1% compared to when they first entered the workforce in 2022. Upon entering the workforce in 2022, 21.5% of those employees earned the basic wage of NT\$25,250 as their starting earnings. By December 2023, the proportion of those who earned the basic wage of NT\$26,400 had dropped to 15.5%.

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