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# Is there glass ceiling for diploma holders?

FROM **KWAN JIN YAO**

With the recent ministerial proclamations that a degree does not necessarily grant one a good job, the Public Service Division's (PSD) letter, "Scholarship holders start work at entry-level positions" (May 24), leaves some questions unanswered, unfortunately.

The letter establishes that scholars must work their way up the public service hierarchy. Many have been involved in community activities. Increasingly, volunteerism and related endeavours have been flagged as crucial in the scholarship application process.

As it has been generally propagated that polytechnic graduates are more competent in vocational or technical professions, the PSD's explanation, that "diploma holders generally engage in different types of work and responsibilities from degree holders", was not surprising.

Nevertheless, it might be meaningful to comprehend these distinctions specifically, and for the PSD to furnish more details on how these differences are determined.

Even so, I feel that Miss Jace Loi's question, in "Scholars should start from bottom, too" (May 20) was not addressed adequately. We can accept the significance for a corporation or an organisation to design recruitment strategies or criteria for deciding who to groom.

Yet, perhaps the popular proposition that one's performance in school — grades, co-curricular activities or leadership participation — is an accurate indicator of what one is capable of

in the workplace should not be taken without question.

Beyond the scholastic rigour typically associated with policy work, empathy and a cognisance of frustrations on the ground would appear to be equally valuable traits.

The PSD argues that the public service's pay structure is pegged to the market, but likewise, the way the public service designs its remuneration packages would also influence how the private sector does so. It would also influence public perceptions.

Are diploma holders given the opportunity to compete with their graduate counterparts, and are they assured of promotion and recognition if

“The popular proposition that one's performance in school is an accurate indicator of what one is capable of in the workplace should not be taken without question.”

their performances are outstanding?

Much has been said about the supposed glass ceiling that confronts non-scholars, but what about the one that seems to keep non-graduates out?

More information on the aforementioned is important, because it would influence how students, especially those aspiring to excel in the public service, chart their education pathway from the get-go.

Ultimately, the PSD's letter is likely to convince more students of the importance of a degree because without that, not to mention the scholarships, an individual is unlikely to engage in the same roles and responsibilities, even if he might be truly proficient.

# Govt should have measures to protect interns

FROM **ADRIAN TAN**

Internship programmes for tertiary students have perhaps evolved from the traditional apprenticeship, when trainees had no skills and hoped to learn one. Nowadays, interns are skilled, as they are mostly in the final year of their tertiary education.

Internships are for students to gain industry experience and to contribute to the organisation to which they are attached. A high proportion of course credits are allocated to the internship, emphasising its importance.

Any bad performance may not only affect one's grades, but may also delay graduation. As such, in-

“Interns typically seek help from their lecturers and are often advised to endure.”

terns typically have to endure if they receive unfair treatment.

Organisations, on the other hand, can dismiss interns any time they deem fit, or deduct their allowances even if the intern was on sick leave. Interns are not covered by the Employment Act. Interns typically seek help from their lecturers and are often advised to endure.

The Government should introduce measures to protect interns from unfair workplace treatments. Legislation may deter some companies from offering internship opportunities to students, but not companies who are sincere in doing so.

As for those who manage interns, they should remember that they were once a student.



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