

Taxpayer Services



The Department aims to provide high quality customer-oriented services. Particular emphasis is placed on making relevant information readily available to taxpayers. Various means are used, such as the Internet, electronic enquiry services and an interactive telephone answering system.

IRD Homepage

www.ird.gov.hk

The IRD Homepage is an important channel for providing tax information and electronic services to the public. With contents expanded and updated regularly, the homepage provides a convenient means for taxpayers to obtain information about taxes in Hong Kong any time, anywhere.

Through the homepage, members of the public can:

- get information on how to complete tax returns, fulfil tax obligations and find solutions to common tax issues;
- download IRD software and tax forms; and
- use the interactive application software to compute their liability under salaries tax and personal assessment.

Other programmes introduced to the homepage include a Tax Representatives' Corner, as well as e-Seminars for employers, property owners and individual taxpayers.

Electronic Enquiry Services

The Department offers a wide range of electronic enquiry services which serve as convenient alternatives to enquiries in person or by post. Electronic enquiry services are not only available on the Internet to holders of digital certificates, they are also available on the telephone to holders of e-Tax Password. By using his Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN) and password, a taxpayer can use a touch-tone phone to check his personal tax information, including tax return lodgement status, assessment status, charge payment status and tax reserve certificate account balances. He can also request duplicate returns or assessment notices, payment confirmations or tax reserve certificate account statements any time, anywhere via the telephone.

Taxpayers can use the same TIN and password as an alternative to digital certificate to access the Interactive Tax Enquiry service under the Electronic Service Delivery Scheme and enquire about their personal tax information on the Internet.

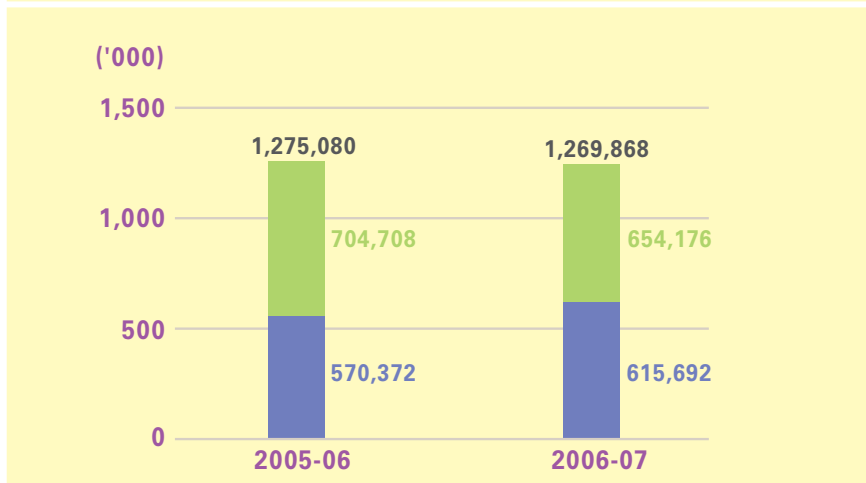
Telephone and Counter Enquiry Services

The Department's Enquiry Service Centre handles telephone and counter enquiries. The Centre, equipped with computer network, provides an immediate "one-stop" service as far as possible.

The Centre makes use of an Interactive Telephone Enquiry System with 120 telephone lines. Callers can, on a 24-hour basis, gain access to a wide range of tax information by listening to recorded messages or obtaining facsimile copies of the information and forms. Callers are able to speak to enquiry officers during office hours. Leave-and-call-back facility and fax-in enquiry service are also available.

About 1.27 million telephone calls were answered by the Centre during the year. The number of calls answered by staff was 0.65 million (**Figures 35 and 36**).

Figure 35 Number of telephone calls answered



■ Answered by staff
■ Answered by system

Figure 36 Telephone Enquiries

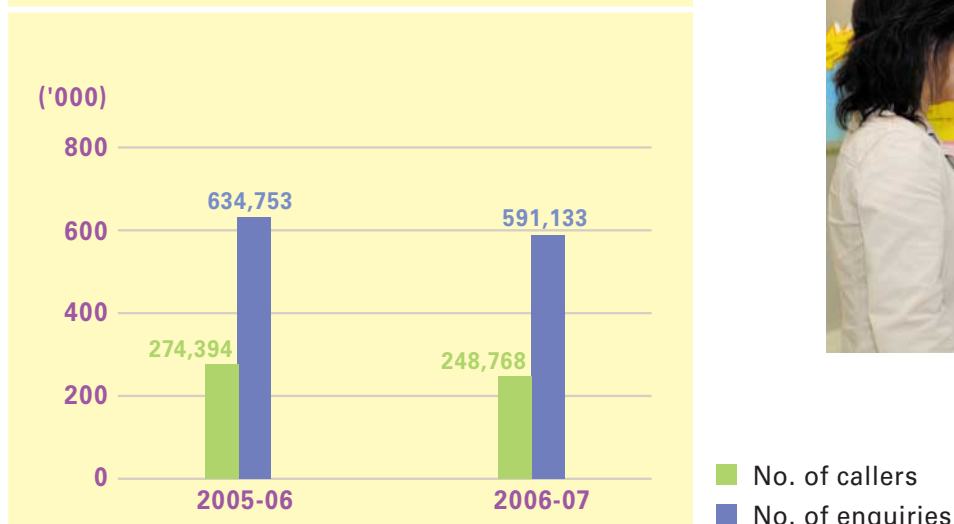
	2005-06	2006-07	Increase/Decrease
No. of calls answered by staff	704,708	654,176	-7.2%
No. of enquiries answered by staff	902,858	717,361	-20.5%
No. of calls answered by system	570,372	615,692	+7.9%
No. of leave-and-call back messages	67,118	58,055	-13.5%
No. of fax supplied by the system	8,481	8,592	+1.3%

Counter staff of the Centre are generally able to handle enquiries, collect mail and issue forms without the need to refer to other officers in the Department.

To facilitate the provision of quality counter enquiry service, the Centre has installed an electronic queuing system to enable taxpayers to be served according to tag numbers in sequence. The number of counter enquiries handled during the year was 0.59 million (**Figure 37**).

To make it easier for taxpayers to obtain tax information and forms, two form stands are installed; one on the ground floor and the other on the first floor of the Revenue Tower.

Figure 37 Counter Enquiries



Tax-help Services for Completion of Tax Returns

On the web we arranged e-Seminars for tax representatives, employers, property owners and individual taxpayers. Information on how to complete tax returns, fulfil tax obligations and overcome difficulties in compliance are uploaded onto the IRD homepage to facilitate unlimited access by interested parties via computer terminals installed at home, office, Home Affairs Department, community halls or public libraries. Enquiries can be raised electronically at the "Q&A Column" on the homepage and replies will be made on a regular basis.

To further facilitate taxpayers' enquiries, the Department extended hours during which the telephone enquiry service was manned in May, until 7 p.m. from Mondays to Fridays and 5 p.m. on Saturdays.

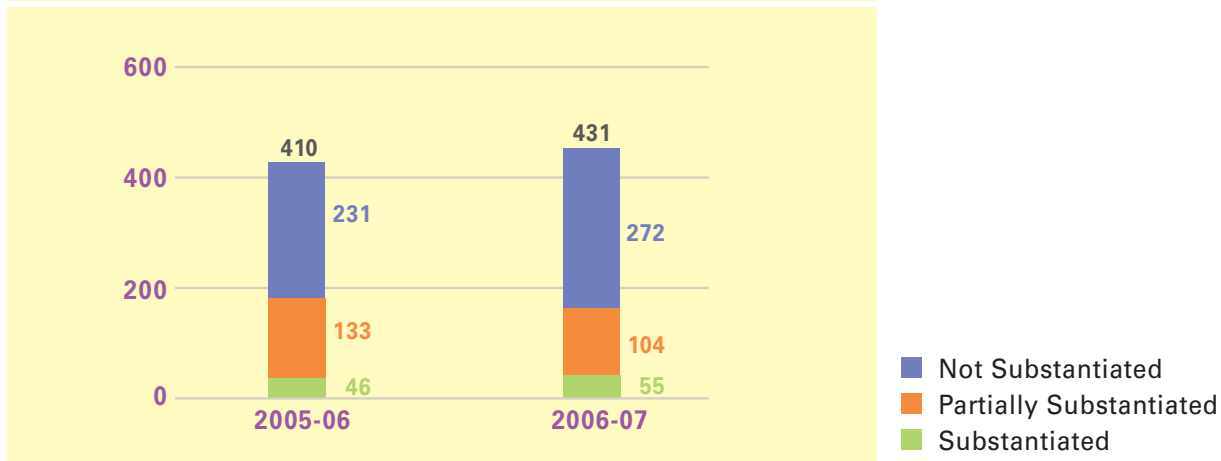
Complaints

If a taxpayer is dissatisfied with the services provided by the Department or cannot solve his or her problem satisfactorily through normal channels, the Complaints Officer may be approached for assistance. The complaint channel provides taxpayers with the means of having individual grievances dealt with independently at a senior level. This ensures that such cases are properly handled in a fair and unbiased manner. During 2006-07, 431 complaints cases were received (**Figure 38**). This represents an increase of 5%, as compared with the previous year.

If a taxpayer is dissatisfied with any administrative action taken by the Department, the person concerned may refer the matter to the Ombudsman. During the year, the Ombudsman sought written comments from the Department in respect of 17 cases. In the light of these cases, the Department has reviewed relevant operations with a view to improving them.

There were 80 Letters of Compliments received during the year.

Figure 38 Complaint cases



Performance Pledges

The service standards a taxpayer can expect from the Department are set out in the Performance Pledges. Through the performance pledge programme, a customer-oriented culture has taken a strong hold within the Department.

