

Taxpayer Services

The Inland Revenue 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 effective platform for disseminating various tax information. It includes:

- information on tax law, tax returns, tax obligations and other hot topics;
- answers to frequently asked questions;
- IRD software and tax forms;
- interactive programs to calculate salaries tax and tax under personal assessment.

The Homepage also provides thematic contents through the Tax Representatives' Corner and e-Seminars for employers, property owners and individual taxpayers.

Electronic Enquiry Services

The Department continues to provide a wide range of instant electronic enquiry services to eTAX users at <www.gov.hk/etax>.

Telephone and Counter Enquiry Services

The Department's Enquiry Service Centre handles telephone and counter enquiries. The Centre is equipped with a computer network linked to the Department's Knowledge Database to enable it to provide, as far as possible, an immediate "one-stop" service.

The Centre makes use of an Interactive Telephone Enquiry System, with 144 telephone lines, to provide service. Callers can gain access on a 24-hour basis to a wide range of tax information by listening to recorded messages and obtaining facsimile copies of the information and forms. Callers can choose to speak to operators during office hours. A "Leave-and-call-back" facility, for recording information requests, and a "Fax-in enquiry" service are also available. The Centre also provides an eTAX help desk hotline to support users of eTAX services.

After the enhancement of the Interactive Telephone Enquiry System last year, the Centre can arrange officers from other units to assist answering telephone calls through the System during busy periods. The number of calls answered by staff through the System during the year was consequentially increased to about 0.68 million. The total number of telephone calls answered was over 1.16 million (Figures 32 and 33).

Figure 32 Number of telephone calls answered

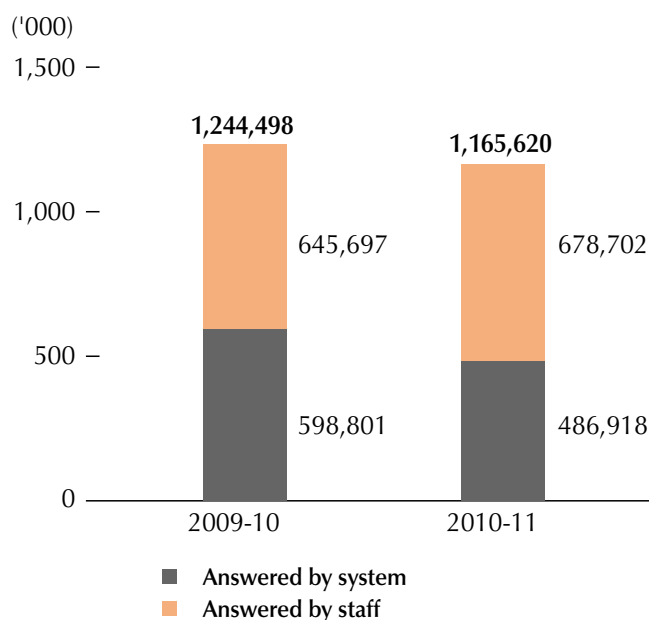


Figure 33 Telephone enquiries

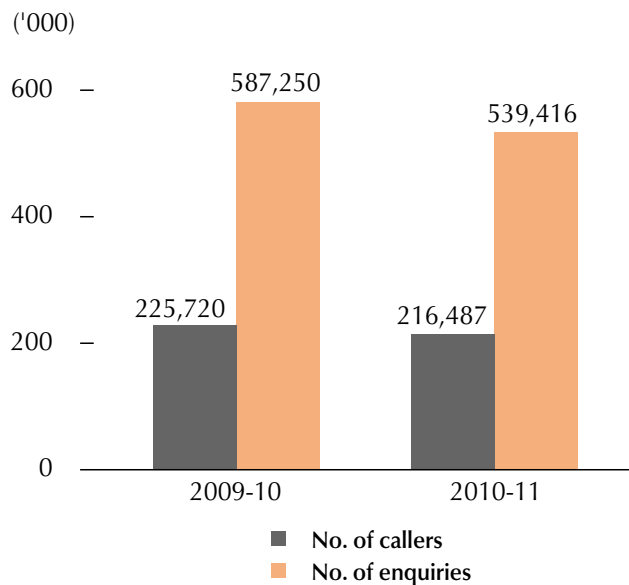
	2009-10	2010-11	Increase/Decrease
No. of calls answered by staff	645,697	678,702	+5.1%
No. of calls answered by system	598,801	486,918	-18.7%
No. of leave-and-call-back messages	28,522	34,963	+22.6%
No. of fax supplied by the system	9,103	5,085	-44.1%

Generally, the counter staff of the Centre is able to handle enquiries, collect mail items and issue forms collectively without the need of referring the callers to other officers in the Department for assistance.

Counter enquiries are attended within the shortest possible time. The Centre's electronic queuing system ensures that taxpayers are served in the order of their arrival time. The number of counter enquiries handled during the year was 0.54 million (Figure 34).



Information leaflets on topics of general interest are available at the two form stands located on the ground and first floors of Revenue Tower. The public may also obtain tax information and download forms from the Department's web site <www.ird.gov.hk>.

Figure 34 Counter enquiries

Tax-help Services for Completion of Tax Returns

On the IRD Homepage we provide e-Seminars for tax representatives, employers, property owners and individual taxpayers. Information on how to complete tax returns, fulfill tax obligations and overcome difficulties in compliance are uploaded to the website. After reading the information, taxpayers can raise enquiries electronically at the “Q&A Column”. IRD will reply the questions on a regular basis.

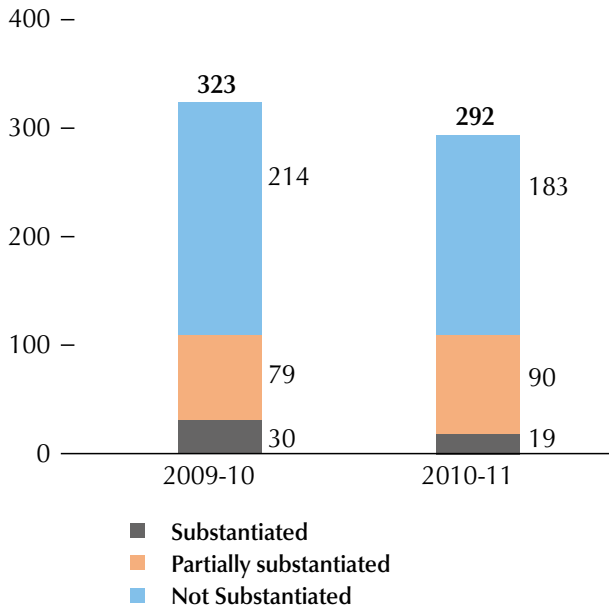
IRD issued tax returns to all individual taxpayers on 3 May 2010. To answer taxpayers’ enquiries on tax filing, the Department extended service hours of telephone operators from that date for one month, up to 7 p.m. from Mondays to Fridays, and 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturdays.

Complaints and Compliments

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 2010-11, 292 complaints cases were received (**Figure 35**). This represents a decrease of 10%, 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 12 cases. In the light of these cases, the Department has reviewed relevant operations with a view to improving them.

Figure 35 Complaint cases



Taxpayers may compliment the service of Inland Revenue Department. During the year, 127 Letters of Compliments were received.

Performance Pledges

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

