

6 Taxpayer Services

IRD HOMEPAGE www.ird.gov.hk

The public can obtain a wide range of updated information on Hong Kong taxation and the Department through the IRD Homepage, including:

- 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.

To facilitate users to locate the relevant tax information, there are thematic content pages for individuals, businesses, employers, tax representatives etc.

To further enhance services, the Department commenced in 2012-13 to revamp its website to cater for the different needs of all segments of the community, including persons with disabilities, in web accessibility design, and develop an additional mobile version.

ELECTRONIC ENQUIRY SERVICE

Instant electronic enquiry services are provided to eTAX users at <www.gov.hk/etax>. They can view their tax position in relation to their returns, assessments and payments, etc.

ENQUIRY SERVICE CENTRE

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.

Telephone Enquiry Service

The Centre operates an Interactive Telephone Enquiry System (ITES) with 144 telephone lines. Callers can have access on a 24-hour basis to a wide range of tax information by listening to recorded messages and obtaining facsimile copies of information sheets and forms. A “Leave-and-call-back” facility, for recording information requests, and a “Fax-in enquiry” service are also available. The telephones are manned by staff during office hours. Callers can choose to speak to them. The Centre also provides an eTAX help desk hotline to handle enquiries on eTAX services.

The statistics of services provided through ITES during 2012-13 are shown in **Figure 31**.

Figure 31 Statistics of services provided through ITES

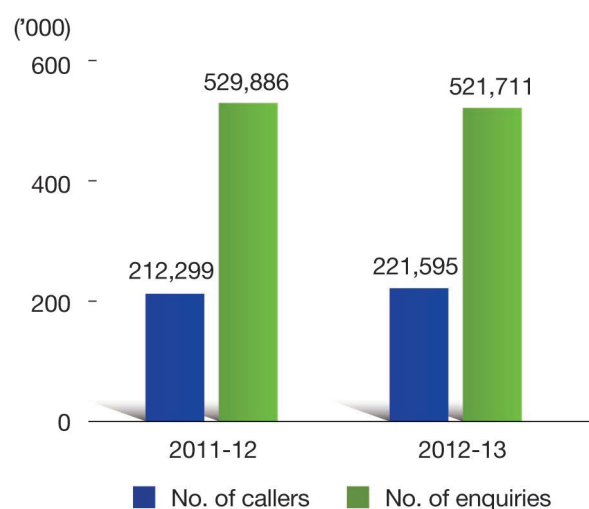
	2011-12 Number	2012-13 Number	Increase / Decrease
Calls answered by staff	736,986	746,414	+1.3%
Calls answered by system	463,082	629,248	+35.9%
Leave-and-call-back messages	34,099	39,574	+16.1%
Documents supplied by fax	4,723	3,955	-16.3%

Counter Enquiry Service

Generally, the counter staff of the Centre is able to handle enquiries, collect mail items and issue forms all by themselves without the need of referring callers to other officers in the Department for assistance. The Centre handled about 0.52 million of counter enquiries during 2012-13 (**Figure 32**).

Information leaflets on topics of general interest are available for collection at the two form stands located on the ground floor and first floor of Revenue Tower. The public may also obtain general tax information and download forms from the Department’s website<www.ird.gov.hk> and GovHK’s website<www.gov.hk>.

Figure 32 Counter enquiries



TAX-HELP SERVICES FOR COMPLETION OF TAX RETURNS

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

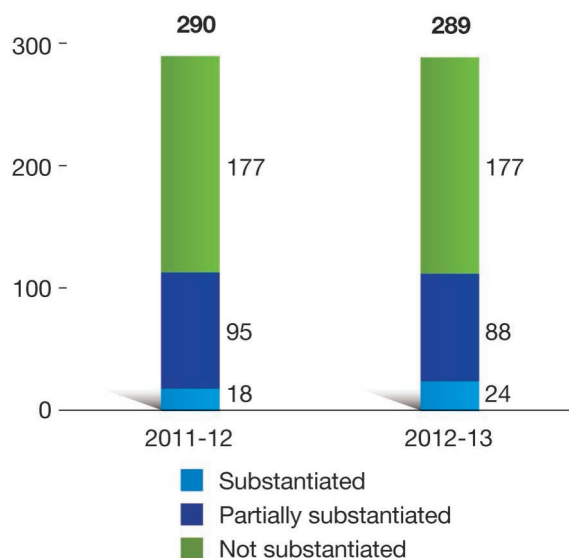
The Department issued 2.16 million Individuals Tax Returns for the year of assessment 2011-12 on 2 May 2012. To cope with taxpayers’ enquiries during the peak season for filing tax returns, the Department extended the service hours for answering telephone enquiries from that date for one month, up to 7 p.m. from Mondays to Fridays, and 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturdays.

COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS

If taxpayers are dissatisfied with the services provided by the Department or their problems cannot be solved 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 impartial manner. During 2012-13, 289 complaints cases were received (**Figure 33**). This represents a decrease of 0.3%, as compared with the previous year.

If taxpayers are dissatisfied with any administrative action taken by the Department, they may refer the matter to the Ombudsman. During 2012-13, the Ombudsman sought written comments from the Department in respect of 26 cases. In the light of these cases, the Department has reviewed relevant operations with a view to improving them.

Figure 33 Complaint cases



Taxpayers may compliment the service of the Department. During the year, 139 Letters of Compliments were received.

PERFORMANCE PLEDGE

The service standards a taxpayer can expect from the Department are set out in the performance pledges. The Department has achieved all the targets of performance pledges and excelled in some of the targeted performance with remarkable results during 2012-13.

