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25 overseas workers have visa applications rejected

By JACQUELINE LEE

ABOUT 25 overseas workers sought under a special government scheme have been rejected after failing to prove they had the skills they claimed.

The Immigration Department has issued 1,305 employment visas so far under the scheme, out of 1,560 applications received.

Twenty-six applications were withdrawn after submission and in 190 cases, employers confirmed they were giving up their quotas. The balance are being processed.

Immigration Department spokesman, Mr Stephen Chan Hin-yau, said

those rejected were sought mainly for the electronics and construction industries.

"They were rejected mostly because the workers failed to back up their claims of job skill and experience," he said.

"We're talking about some skilled workers - there must be some papers available that could prove their expertise, such as certificates of training and work records."

The Executive Council-initiated scheme was launched in May to allow in 3,000 skilled workers to help ease the labour shortage. Employers have complained the measures are a drop in

the ocean and claim much larger numbers should be admitted if the labour problem is to be solved.

About 2,400 applications to bring in workers were approved, but some successful employers chose not to fill the quotas as the local economy slowed.

The Principal Assistant Secretary for Education and Manpower, Mr Stanley Wong Wing-hong, said a steering group overseeing the scheme was now conducting a review of its operation and its impact on the labour market.

The study was expected to be completed in a few weeks.