

Information on Financial Assistance Schemes for New Students 2017-2018

- I. Government Grants & Loans (Deadline: September 15, 2017)**
- II. University Financial Assistance (Deadline: September 30, 2017 1 p.m.)**
- III. Talk on "Financing Your University Studies" (August 30, 2017)**

I. Notes for Application for Government Grants / Loans (TSFS) 2017-18

Too many notes! Don't know how or where to start? This note may help.

This note can

- a) direct you to the right sources of information
- b) highlight points / items that can easily be omitted by applicants
- c) remind you of the services provided by Centre of Development and Resources for Students (CEDARS) relating to your Tertiary Student Finance Scheme – Publicly-funded Programmes (TSFS) application

1. **Read the following notes and instructions before completing the application forms**

- a) Guidance Notes for Application
(available on line at <http://www.wfsfaa.gov.hk/sfo/eng/schemes/tsfs.htm>)
- b) Online Demonstration in completing the application
(available on line at <http://ess.wfsfaa.gov.hk/demo/>)
- c) This note

2. **Form Filling – Points to Note**

a) **Online Application Form of TSFS / NLSFT**

Students who wish to apply for TSFS / NLSFT have to complete and submit the online application form at "SFO E-link – My Applications" platform (<http://ess.wfsfaa.gov.hk>).

b) **Declaration**

The applicant and both his / her parents are required to sign the declaration of the application form if he / she is unmarried. (Declaration by parent is not required for married applicants.)

c) **Expediting the processing of applications from students whose families are in receipt of CSSA**

For an applicant whose family received CSSA **throughout the assessment period** 1.4.2016 to 31.3.2017 or is **currently** in receipt of the CSSA, it suffices for him / her to provide the following documents together with his / her online application –

- photocopies of the HKID Cards of the applicant and his / her family members;
- a photocopy of the applicant's student identity card;
- a photocopy of the applicant's bank passbook or statement showing his / her full name and the number of bank account for receiving the payment of financial assistance; and
- a photocopy of the valid Certificate of CSSA Recipients (for Medical Waivers) **OR** the Social Welfare Department Notification Letter which advised the amount of CSSA approved for the applicant's family throughout the assessment period from 1.4.2016 to 31.3.2017 or for the current time.

d) **Income & Asset**

Information with supporting documents on the income and assets of the applicant, and his or her parents are required. Information on income of unmarried siblings living in the same household are also required. Please refer to TSFS RM(2017) form on the list of family assets that need to be reported.

Unemployment or retirement of household members must have full details stated in application form and accompanied by relevant documentary proof.

All kinds of bank accounts under the title of the applicant and his / her parents (including joint accounts) should be reported. Applicants are reminded to report time deposit and club deposit and insurance with savings / investment-linked.

Copy of bank passbook of account for payment of assistance showing the name and balance is needed even if the account was opened after 31.3.2017.

Explanation on bank transactions exceeding \$100,000 in amount, deposits of odd cents or regular deposit / withdrawal deposits should continue to be made to facilitate the processing. Please give details of asset held in trust for others / assets entrusted to others.

All properties (within or outside HKSAR) and registered business owned (solely or partly) by the applicant and his / her parents should be reported.

Contributions from others should be clearly stated as part of the household income.

e) **Supporting Documents**

Applicants should make use of the checklist of supporting documents to ensure that all supporting documents are submitted to SFO. For details, please refer to TSFS RM(2017).

f) **Household Members**

For those who regard grandparents / unmarried siblings studying abroad as household members, copies of their ID cards are also required. Please refer to Part II of the Guidance Notes for definition of household members.

For applicants with parents divorced or separated, full details and documentary proof must be provided.

g) **Music Students**

Students who are major in Music should submit their applications together with letters from their Department certifying the music courses undertaken by the students. There is a different course code for Music major students. Please refer to the course code in the coding sheet.

h) **Students with a Disability**

Applicants with a disability receiving Disability Allowance from the Social Welfare Department should furnish full details and documentary proofs relating to their disability. They may be granted maximum Discretionary Loan without resorting to the appeal mechanism.

i) **Student Travel Subsidy**

All full time students up to their first degree level and who pass the means test under the TSFS or FASP will be eligible for a travel subsidy if the distance between their term time residence and their normal place of study requires the use of public transportation.

You must complete the relevant box in the first page of your online application and provide the address if you intend to apply for the Student Travel Subsidy. Otherwise your request will not be processed.

j) **Community Care Fund — Providing hostel subsidy for needy undergraduate students**

Applicants who have passed the TSFS or FASP and confirmed to have resided in student hostels provided by their institutions* in the semesters of the implementation period are eligible for the hostel subsidy.

* A subsidy recipient should be confirmed by CEDARS as a registered resident of the hostel place concerned for at least 75% of the time during a semester. The hostel subsidy does not cover students who reside in premises other than those student hostels provided by HKU, such as residing solely in or sharing a private flat as tenants. Eligible students need not file separate applications for the hostel subsidy.

k) **Community Care Fund — Enhancing the academic expenses grant for students with special educational needs (SEN)**

Applicants who have passed the TSFS or FASP and confirmed by a relevant professional to have at least one kind of special educational needs including specific learning difficulties, intellectual disability, autism spectrum disorders, attention deficit / hyperactivity disorders, physical disability, visual impairment, hearing impairment, and / or speech and language impairment are eligible for receiving the grant. Please view the SFO's website for details: <http://www.wfsfaa.gov.hk/sfo/en/postsecondary/ccf/sen/overview.htm>.

l) **Provision of Supplementary Information**

You are reminded that it is your responsibility to ensure that the application forms are duly completed and all supporting documents are submitted. Applications not duly completed or without full set of supporting documentary proofs may result in **delay or even rejection of your application**.

But in exceptional cases where the required information is not available by the application deadline, you are required to state the supporting document(s) that is / are not yet available in the application form and to undertake to submit it / them to SFO once available. **Otherwise any information submitted only upon request by SFO will be treated as OMISSIONS, which may lead to rejection of your application.** Please use the standard form TSFS/AP/6 to submit the missing information later.

3. **Form Filling Advisory Service**

For first-time applicants (students who have not applied for government grant / loan before), CEDARS can help to screen your application forms before submission. Please call 2859 2305 for enquiries. SFO also has an automatic telephone enquiry hotline. You can get help by calling 2802 2345.

4. **Collection of Declaration and Supporting Documents**

Applicants should submit the duly signed declaration and supporting documents through the following channels within seven days from submission of online application form.

- Through online upload (about 50 pages)
- By mail or in person to SFO
- Through SFO drop box in CEDARS (3/F Meng Wah Complex)

Centre of Development and Resources for Students (CEDARS)	9:00 a.m. - 5:45 p.m. 9:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.	(Monday - Thursday) (Friday) (Saturday)
Student Finance Office (SFO)	8:45 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. & 2:00 p.m. - 5:45 p.m.	(Monday - Friday)

5. **Submission of Forms**

- a) Students having siblings who are also applying for the TSFS / FASP should submit their application forms separately. Only one sibling is required to submit Full Version of Application for TSFS / FASP with the complete set of supporting documents. The other siblings may choose to submit the simplified version.
- b) After submitting applications, you could download your completed application form in SFO website. Please be advised to copy one for your own record.
- c) You are advised to submit your forms early to ensure early disbursement of awards. Applications received after the deadline will only be accepted with good justification.
- d) Students who cannot meet the requirements of application (e.g. failure to submit some documentary evidence required or complete declaration by parent because of special circumstances) are strongly encouraged to approach CEDARS for advice and assistance before submitting their applications.

6. **Interviews at Student Finance Office (SFO)**

- a) You may or may not be required to attend an interview.
- b) Any applicant who considers that an interview will help the processing of his application may seek an appointment for interview by indicating their wish in the section "Additional Information" of the online application. This will be considered by SFO on a case by case basis. If in doubt, please seek advice from CEDARS.

7. **Change of Circumstances after Submission of Application**

You should inform SFO immediately using the Form TSF/C/18A or TSF/C/18B which are obtainable at the CEDARS or SFO for any change of information or circumstances after submission of the application.

8. **Review Mechanism**

If you are not satisfied with the application result, you may within three weeks from the date of the notification, seek a review of the application. Such request should be submitted to SFO in an 'Application for Review' form obtainable from CEDARS or SFO, together with detailed justification and relevant documentary proofs. **If you are in doubt with regard to your grant / loan entitlements and not sure whether an appeal is justified, advice can be sought from CEDARS.**

9. **Payment**

All government awards (including tuition fee grants, academic expenses grants and loans) will be credited to the applicants' bank accounts directly.

10. **Non-means-tested Loan Scheme for Full-time Tertiary Students (NLSFT)**

- a) Students who wish to wait for your TSFS* results before applying for NLSFT#
 - Students will be notified of their NLSFT entitlements along with their TSFS result. Students who wish to take up the NLSFT loan will have to download the NLSFT loan documents from SFO's website.
- b) Students applying for NLSFT independent of their TSFS application
 - Students should submit their online NLSFT application before deadline.

*TSFS: Tertiary Student Finance Scheme – Publicly-funded Programmes

#NLSFT: Non-means Tested Loan Scheme for Full-time Tertiary Students

II. **Application for University Financial Assistance (UFA)**

Supplementing Government financial assistance schemes, there are a number of bursaries and interest-free loans managed by the University to assist students with financial hardship. These awards, donated by private organizations and individuals, are allocated primarily to full-time local students on the basis of their financial needs.

HKUFresh\$3000

A HK\$3000 subsidy will be provided to eligible students to cover their immediate expenses upon entry to the University. Students must be local full-time undergraduates newly admitted to HKU in 2017-18 and who are in receipt of the HKSAR comprehensive social security assistance prior to entry to the University. For more details, please visit <http://cedars.hku.hk/Finance3000.php>

September Main Exercise Application

At the beginning of the term, students anticipating difficulties in balancing their budget for the academic year should submit an application (via the Student Information System on the HKU Portal) to the CEDARS during the period **September 1 to September 30, 2017 (1:00 p.m.)**.

Results of your application will be available from November onward. For details, please visit <http://cedars.hku.hk/finance/ufa/me.html>

Students with urgent needs at this point in time should however apply for **emergency assistance**.

Emergency Assistance Application

Students with urgent financial needs or needs arising from unexpected change of circumstances may apply for emergency assistance any time during the year.

Please refer to the following website for further details on university financial assistance:
<http://cedars.hku.hk/finance/ufa.html>

III. **Talk on "Financing Your University Studies"**

Date : August 30, 2017 (Wednesday)
Time : 2:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Venue : Lecture Theatre T1, Meng Wah Complex

Students who are in financial need are strongly encouraged to apply for the Government Financial Assistance Scheme. The University also offers financial assistance as a supplement to the Government scheme.

COME and join us to explore more on:

- Types of financial assistance available
- Application eligibility and procedures
- CEDARS's support relating to student finance
- A few tips on financial management
- Part-time / summer jobs
- First in the Family Education Fund
- Scholarship and more

Please register online at http://cedars.hku.hk/finance/ql/1718/talk_register.html