



# The University of Hong Kong

## Innovation and Technology Commission (“ITC”) – STEM Internship Scheme

### Guidelines for Employers and Students

#### **Introduction**

1. The Innovation and Technology Commission (ITC) launched the ITC STEM Internship Scheme (“Scheme”) in 2020 under the Innovation and Technology Fund (ITF) to subsidise students taking STEM<sup>1</sup> programmes in local universities to enroll in short-term internships, with a view to encouraging STEM students to gain innovation and technology (I&T)-related work experience during their studies and to foster their interest in pursuing a career in I&T after graduation, so as to enlarge the local I&T talent pool.

#### **Eligibility of Students**

2. Local and non-local full-time undergraduate and postgraduate students enrolled at The University of Hong Kong (HKU), and
3. Major in a full-time programme on the lists of eligible STEM related programmes, which comprises programmes categorized by UGC as STEM and STEM-related programmes recommended by HKU as approved by ITC on [this list](#).
4. Current full-time Year 1 undergraduates can apply for summer internship under the Scheme. Certain programmes require students to declare major to be eligible, Year 1 students under those programmes are not eligible.
5. Final year local students are eligible so as long as the internship commences before the expiry of student status and subject to the requirements stipulated in the Guidelines.  
For final year non-local students, the study/curriculum-related internship cannot take place when the student concerned has already fulfilled all the course/credit requirements for graduation (e.g. a student who has just finished his/her final year of study).
6. Legally employable in Hong Kong.

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<sup>1</sup> STEM refers to the academic disciplines of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics.



香港大學

THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

[Updated as of May 2024]

7. Local students who are defined as paying the local student tuition rate in accordance with the classification of the Education Bureau for the purpose of admission to post-secondary programme listed in Appendix 1.
8. **Non-local students from eligible STEM programmes undertaking I&T internship in Hong Kong only** are eligible for the Scheme, capped at a quota of 40% of all HKU participants by this Scheme per financial year (from 1 April to 31 March of the following year). Applications will be put on hold once quotas are filled and subject to CEDARS approval.
9. **For internship period during term time, eligible students should seek prior approval from School/Department and apply for a “Leave of Absence” (LoA).**  
Non-local students should also seek endorsement from School/Department and apply for separate NOL via the Immigration Department before job commencement. **Students should reserve adequate lead time (4 to 6 weeks) for the School/Department and Hong Kong Immigration Department) to process required documents.**  
Click [ImmD](#) and [HKU website](#) for further information.
10. **According to Hong Kong Immigration Department (ImmD) starting from 1 November 2023, full-time non-local postgraduate students would be temporarily exempted from the restrictions on taking up part-time jobs.** The ImmD will issue to eligible students through the institution new NOLs setting out the relaxation. Eligible students are NOT required to submit such applications separately. Current Students should contact their Faculty Office to obtain the updated NOLs. Students approved of visas/entry permits on or after 1 November 2023 shall be issued with the updated NOLs.
11. The student CANNOT concurrently benefit from other internship subsidies offered by the HKSAR Government.
12. The internship funded by the Scheme SHOULD NOT be a compulsory requirement of the degree programme to which the student is admitted. However, the excess internship period of that the graduation requirements could be funded by the Scheme, if the other requirements stipulated in the Guidelines are met.
13. Exchange-in students at HKU are NOT eligible for the Scheme.

#### **Eligibility of Employers**

14. All companies/organisations are welcomed to participate in the Scheme to offer I&T-related internship places which are not cross-boundary in nature (i.e. work from home in Hong Kong as the principle nature of the internship while the company is in the Mainland/overseas, or vice versa). Participating employers need not be I&T companies, so long as the internship places are I&T-related and full-time.



15. The placement must be I&T related with its actual work containing sufficient I&T elements (e.g. science and technology-related intellectual property work, biotechnology, engineering, digital marketing, data analytic, and computing technology etc.), subject to the vetting of Centre of Development and Resources for Students (CEDARS), HKU.
16. Employers have to hold a valid Business Registration Certificate, Certificate of Registration of a School or other recognised license (payee of the allowance will tally with the name of employer as appeared on such certificate or license).
17. Participating employers offering the placement should meet any additional requirements as set by HKU of the student intern. The company/organisation should not receive other subsidies from the HK Government for engaging any student interns under the Scheme, e.g. five R&D Centres funded by government and HKPC.
18. For employers from the five government-funded research and development centres (R&D Centres)<sup>2</sup> and the Hong Kong Productivity Council (HKPC), please refer to the ITC guidelines on hiring student interns.

### **Internship Placement and Period**

19. The internship places can be in Hong Kong, Mainland China or other places. For non-local internship placements, student interns may receive other subsidies to cover the travelling expenses, accommodation and subsistence from the universities or other parties, in addition to the allowance under the Scheme (please check with HKU CEDARS in advance if this is applicable).
20. Local or non-local full-time internship placements (no less than 35 working hours per week) with duration of no less than four consecutive weeks (i.e. 28 calendar days).
21. Maximum eligible internship period for each student is 90 calendar days per academic year, reimbursement amount capped at HK\$33,570.
22. The duration of an internship period is the number of calendar days in the contract period and the start/end days MUST BE working days for the intern. If the start or end date falls on a Saturday, Sunday, or public holiday, the employer must provide justifiable reasons upon application, subject to approval from CEDARS.

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<sup>2</sup>The five R&D Centres refer to – (a) Automotive Platforms and Application Systems R&D Centre (APAS); (b) Hong Kong Applied Science and Technology Research Institute (ASTRI), designated as the R&D Centre for Information and Communications Technologies; (c) Hong Kong Research Institute of Textiles and Apparel (HKRITA); (d) Logistics and Supply Chain MultiTech R&D Centre (LSCM); and (e) Nano and Advanced Materials Institute (NAMI).



香港大學

THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

[Updated as of May 2024]

23. A student intern may receive the allowance under the Scheme for more than one internship place in the same academic year, provided that the participating employers (including R&D Centres and HKPC) are not the same and the internship periods do not overlap. There is no restriction if the student intern has separate internships with the same participating employer over two academic years.
24. In general, the Scheme does not cover an internship arranged to meet the compulsory requirement for graduation of a degree programme. However, if the internship period is longer than that duration of the compulsory requirement, the portion of period in excess could be covered by the Scheme, if the other requirements as stipulated in this Guidelines are met.
25. The student intern shall be required to make a declaration that he/she has not participated in the Scheme beyond the requirement of no more than 90 days in an academic year and the internship is not to meet compulsory graduation requirement by filling in the [Annex A](#) before approval of internship. Students found to have breached the conditions and requirements of the Scheme may have their allowance withdrawn and/or will be debarred from joining the Scheme in future.

#### **Allowance Amount and Arrangement**

26. Upon satisfactory completion of the internship, employers will receive allowance reimbursement of HK\$11,190 per month (i.e. 30 calendar days) or HK\$373 per day, capped at maximum HK\$33,570 (i.e. 90 calendar days) per student in an academic year from the University.
27. Employers must pay the student intern(s) first, and reimbursement to Employers will be processed by HKU AFTER CEDARS has received and confirmed verification of all the required documents at the end of the internship (please refer to “Reimbursement Arrangement” section in this document).
28. Employers’ contributions to MPF is not reimbursable.
29. If the student intern entitles paid sick leave in the company, the Scheme will reimburse the Employer for the intern’s sick leave days. The Employer should pay the pro-rata amount from the monthly rate divided by 30 days (at minimum 0.5-day intervals).
30. If the student intern DOES NOT entitle paid sick leave in the company, as like other employees in the company, the Scheme SHALL NOT reimburse the employer for the intern’s sick leave days. The employer should deduct the pro-rata amount from the monthly rate divided by 30 days (at minimum 0.5-day intervals).
31. Students who take 14 unpaid leave days or more in the whole internship period shall NOT be accepted. The duration of internships less than 28 calendar days after deduction of all unpaid leave days (if any) shall NOT be reimbursed.



香港大學

THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

[Updated as of May 2024]

32. The Scheme does NOT cover any other entitled leave days (e.g. paid annual leave) and/or allowance arranged by the company. No-pay leave days taken by the student intern during the internship period are NOT covered by the Scheme, and the Employer should deduct the pro-rata amount from the monthly rate divided by 30 days (at minimum 0.5-day intervals).
33. Allowance must be paid on a daily/monthly basis. NO hourly rate is acceptable.
34. For the avoidance of doubt and any complications on the understanding of remuneration to be provided by the participating employer/ institution to the student intern for the internship, agreed remuneration to be paid and received by the student intern, including salary, wage and any expected allowance, including the allowance under the Scheme, where applicable, must be clearly stated in the employment agreement for the internship and agreed between the employer and the intern, before commencement of work.

#### **Application Procedures**

35. The internship opening should be registered with Centre of Development and Resources for Students (CEDARS) via HKU job board, NETjobs (<https://www.cedars.hku.hk/NETjobs>).
36. CEDARS verifies the job description to ensure the job is I&T related. Employers will be notified (within 5 working days) whether the job is eligible for allowance under the Scheme.
37. After verification, job post will be released in NETjobs, and interested students would follow the instruction and submit their applications to the employers directly.
38. Employers will conduct screening and selection of the interested students independently. Once a candidate is selected, employers shall report intended offers via NETjobs immediately, and CEDARS will verify and confirm with the employers whether the student is eligible under the Scheme based on the student's status and academic programme in which the student is enrolled. **Any late submissions after job commencement may not be accepted, subject to CEDARS approval.**

Once the student is confirmed to be eligible under the Scheme, CEDARS will then inform the employers that the corresponding allowance amount has been earmarked, provided the supporting documents are furnished upon completion of the internship. Employers shall sign an official employment contract with the student and submit to CEDARS within 7 calendar days after the internship commences.



### **Reimbursement Arrangement**

39. Employers must submit all the following documents via NETjobs and online for verification **within two months after the completion of internship**:
- a. Signed employment contract with the following terms stated:
    - i. company name,
    - ii. student's full name,
    - iii. internship period (with start and end date),
    - iv. job title of intern,
    - v. remuneration, and
    - vi. working hours per week
  - b. Online assessment forms (both Employer's and Student's versions)
  - c. Payment proofs (e.g. bank transaction advice, bank statement or monthly payslips with pay date)
  - d. Work hours and leave record form (downloadable on NETjobs)
40. In any circumstance, claim application must be submitted via NETjobs **within two months after the completion of internship**. Late submissions may not be accepted for processing and will be considered as withdrawal from the Scheme.
41. If any clarification is required regarding the above documents, CEDARS will notify employers and/or students via email. Reimbursement will only be processed after all documents are successfully verified by CEDARS. In the event that any documents require clarification, necessary information must be successfully provided **within three months after receiving the notification email from CEDARS** or the right to claim may be forfeited.
42. If the employment ends before completion of the approved internship period with no less than 28 calendar days, the subsidy will be granted on a pro rata basis.
43. If the salary and/or other employment terms and conditions of the job are different from the information provided at the time of job application/confirmation and contract issuance, CEDARS reserves the right to determine whether to grant the subsidy or to decline the claim application.



### **Employers' Responsibility**

44. Employers shall manage and supervise the student interns like other employees and pay the student interns on a timely manner as stipulated in the employment contract.
45. Employee must be directly hired by the employer or recruited through an officially appointed agency authorized by the employer. Employers must undertake all legal responsibilities as an employer under the Minimum Wage Ordinance, the Employment Ordinance, the Employee's Compensation Ordinance and other applicable ordinances.
46. **Employers shall provide true and accurate information.** CEDARS will require the employers to submit relevant documents, such as Business Registration Certificate, employment contracts, wage and attendance records, MPF records, training records, employer's return of remuneration and pensions, and other information for examination and verification.

### **Points to Note**

47. **Employers have to guarantee that the student interns recruited for the post would come under the protection of the Employment Ordinance as an employee.** In addition, employers must also ensure that the information provided during the application is true, correct and based solely on genuine recruitment needs, and the terms of employment as well as job descriptions, etc. are consistent with the actual employment offer.
48. **Under the Employees' Compensation Ordinance, all employers are required to provide employees' compensation insurance to cover their liabilities both under the Ordinance and at common law for work injuries sustained by their employees (including full-time and part-time employees).**
49. The terms of employment, entry requirements and job descriptions of the internship post must **NOT** violate the Sex Discrimination Ordinance, the Disability Discrimination Ordinance, the Family Status Discrimination Ordinance and the Race Discrimination Ordinance. Employers should consider the genuine job requirements of the post and follow the relevant codes of practice against discrimination in employment. **Please do not specify any requirements on gender, age or race of the job applicants or any other discriminatory terms. Otherwise, we will not accept the application.**
50. **When Employers collect personal data from job applicants (e.g. resumes), they should observe the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance, and provide the contact person's name and contact means for job applicants to obtain Personal Information Collection Statement.**
51. Employers should arrange for the student interns to join a registered Mandatory Provident Fund (MPF) scheme (if applicable).



香港大學

THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

[Updated as of May 2024]

52. Employers must not solicit money or other advantages in any form or under any title, no matter for reasons of provision of services or training, selling of goods, referral of service, guarantee deposit and so on from job applicants. **We will not process or display any vacancy orders which involve pre-employment or unpaid training.**
53. The student interns and the participating employers shall conform in all respects with all legislation (including the Law of the People's Republic of China on Safeguarding National Security in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region), regulations and by-laws of any applicable jurisdiction in carrying out the internship duties or the related activities. The Government may at any time and with immediate effect, including through the respective participating institution, revoke an approved participation in the Scheme and the related reimbursement claimed under the Scheme, withhold disbursement of allowance under the Scheme, debar relevant parties' participation in the Scheme and require refund of any funding disbursed under the Scheme to ITC on occurrence of any of the following events:
- a. the student intern and/or the participating employer has engaged or is engaging in acts or activities that are likely to constitute or cause the occurrence of offences endangering national security or which would otherwise be contrary to the interest of national security;
  - b. the continued engagement of the student intern and/or the participating employer is contrary to the interest of national security;
  - c. the Government reasonably believes that any of the events mentioned in (a) or (b) above is about to occur.

*\*\*Remark: The terms and conditions in this Guideline, including the internship eligibility and claims requirements/procedure, may be subject to change as they will be reviewed from time to time. CEDARS reserves the right to exercise final discretion in these matters. Any updates or changes to the guidelines will be communicated to employers accordingly.*

**Enquiries: [stem@cedars.hku.hk](mailto:stem@cedars.hku.hk)**





**Appendix 1**

**Definition of Local students (Classification of the Education Bureau for the purpose of admission to post-secondary programme)**

According to the Education Bureau, holders of the following documents are classified as LOCAL STUDENTS –

- Hong Kong Permanent Identity Card;
- Documents issued by the Hong Kong Immigration Department certifying the right of abode / right to land in Hong Kong;
- Document of Identity / One-way permit for entry to Hong Kong;
- Dependant visa / entry permit (for students who were below 18 years old when they were issued with such visa / entry permit by the Director of Immigration);
- Full-time employment visa / work permit (for part-time study);
- Visa / entry permit for Quality Migrant Admission Scheme;
- Visa / entry permit for Capital Investment Entrant Scheme;
- Visa / Entry permit for Admission Scheme for the Second Generation of Chinese Hong Kong Permanent Residents; or
- Visa label for unconditional stay.