



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 STEM¹ 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 undergraduate and postgraduate students enrolled in a full-time or major in programme on the list of eligible STEM-related programmes at The University of Hong Kong (HKU) are eligible for the Scheme. The list comprises programmes categorized by UGC as STEM and STEM-related programmes recommended by HKU as approved by ITC on [this list](#).
3. 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.
4. Non-local students from eligible STEM programmes in Hong Kong 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.
5. Legally employable in Hong Kong.
6. Exchange-in students at HKU are not eligible for the Scheme.

¹ STEM refers to the academic disciplines of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics.



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7. 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.
8. The student cannot concurrently benefit from other internship subsidies offered by the HKSAR Government.
9. STEM internship should not be used to fulfil the compulsory requirement of the degree programme for students. However, the excess internship period out of the graduation requirements could be funded by the Scheme, if the other requirements stipulated in the Guidelines are met.
10. Final year local students are eligible for internships before their graduation status is confirmed by the respective Faculty.
11. For internship period beyond summer break, eligible undergraduate students should seek prior approval from School/Department and apply for a “Leave of Absence” (LoA).
12. For final year non-local students, the internship cannot take place after the student has completed all the course/credit requirements for graduation. In other words, non-local students can only do an internship if they have not yet completed their final year of study, or before their Student Visa expire, whichever is the sooner.
13. 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.
Click [ImmD](#) and [HKU website](#) for further information.



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14. According to Hong Kong Immigration Department (ImmD) starting from 1 November 2024, full-time non-local undergraduate 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 2024 shall be issued with the updated NOLs.

Click [ImmD](#) and [HKU website](#) for further information.

Eligibility of Employers

15. All companies/organisations are welcomed to participate in the Scheme to offer STEM-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). Regardless of the business nature, participating employers can join the Scheme as long as the internship places are STEM-related and full-time.

16. The placement must be STEM-related with its actual work containing sufficient STEM 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.

17. 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).

18. 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.



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19. For employers from the five government-funded research and development centres (R&D Centres)² and the Hong Kong Productivity Council (HKPC), please refer to the ITC guidelines on hiring student interns.

Internship Requirements

20. Employers are responsible for ensuring that the placements are I&T-related, selecting and matching eligible students with the I&T-related placements available, ensuring that the interns have the legal right to work as interns, facilitating interns in entry visa and employment arrangements during their study programme where necessary, ensuring that the interns have the necessary insurance coverage, checking that the interns are in compliance with the requirements of the Scheme.
21. The internship places can be outside Hong Kong and only local students are eligible. For overseas 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.
22. A student intern can join 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.
23. 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.
24. Employers are advised to outline probation periods and/or termination notices clearly to ensure mutual understanding and aligned expectations between both parties.

²The 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).



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25. Local or non-local full-time internship placements (no less than 35 working hours per week must have a duration of no less than consecutive 28 calendar days after deducting no paid leave.
26. Maximum eligible internship period for each student is 90 calendar days per academic year.
27. 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.
28. Student interns are required to complete [Annex A](#), in which they must declare that their participation does not exceed a total of 90 days in an academic year and that their internship is not solely intended to fulfill a compulsory graduation requirement. Failure to comply with the aforementioned requirements may result in the withdrawal of any allowances provided by the Scheme, and may also result in disqualification from future participation in the Scheme.
29. Student interns and employers 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.
30. The student interns and the participating employers shall conform in all respects with all legislation, regulations and by-laws of any applicable jurisdiction in carrying out the internship duties or the related activities. HKU may at any time and with immediate effect, 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 HKU on occurrence of any of the nonconformance.

Requirements of Salary Payment (by Employers)

31. 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.



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32. Allowance must be paid on a daily/monthly basis. Hourly rate is not accepted.
33. Employers must pay the student intern(s) first by monthly payment, and reimbursement to employers will be processed 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).
34. Employers should arrange for the student interns to join a registered Mandatory Provident Fund (MPF) scheme (if applicable).
35. Employers’ contributions to MPF are not reimbursable.
36. Subject to the terms and conditions of employment, in general, the student interns are eligible to receive allowance for the intervening non-working Saturdays, General Holidays and Statutory Holidays fallen within the internship period.
37. 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).
38. If the student intern does not entitle paid sick leave in the company, as like other employees in the company, the Scheme will 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).
39. 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). CEDARS reserves the right to request the medical certificate(s) for verification.



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40. Students who take 14 unpaid leave days or more in the whole internship period are not accepted. The duration of internships less than 28 calendar days after deduction of all unpaid leave days (if any) cannot be reimbursed.
41. To avoid confusion and misunderstandings about payment for internships, the employer or institution participating in the scheme must clearly state the remuneration to be paid to the student intern in the employment agreement. This includes any salary, wage, allowance, or payment under the Scheme that the student intern may receive. This agreement must be reached and clearly stated before the student intern begins their work.

Application Procedures

42. 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>). If the job offer is made outside NETjobs, employers must post the job for CEDARS verification and submit intended offer of selected candidates.
43. CEDARS verifies the job duties ensure the job is STEM-related and meet the Scheme requirements. Employers will be notified (within 5 working days) whether the job post is eligible for the Scheme. After verification, job post will be posted on NETjobs, and interested students can follow the instruction and submit applications directly.
44. Employers shall conduct screening and selection of the interested students independently. Once a candidate is selected, employers shall submit intended offer via NETjobs immediately. Any late submissions after job commencement are not accepted, subject to CEDARS approval.
- Once the student is confirmed to be eligible under the Scheme, CEDARS will send approval email the employers that the corresponding allowance amount has been earmarked, provided the supporting documents are furnished upon completion of the internship. Employers should sign an official employment contract with the student after approval and submit to CEDARS within 7 calendar days after the internship commences.



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Reimbursement Arrangement

45. Employers shall provide true and accurate information.
46. Employers must not use personal bank account or cash to disburse salary.
47. Employers cannot use personal bank account or virtual company bank account to receive reimbursement.
48. Employers must submit all the following documents via NETjobs for verification within two months after the completion of internship:
 - a. Signed employment contract with the following terms stated:
 - i. company name,
 - ii. company logo or stamp
 - iii. student's full name,
 - iv. internship period (with start and end date),
 - v. job title of intern,
 - vi. remuneration, and
 - vii. 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 pay slips with pay date)
 - d. MPF remittance statement (mandatory for internship lasts for 60 days or more, applicable for both local and non-local students)
 - e. Work hours and leave record form (downloadable on NETjobs or [here](#))
49. Late submissions are not be accepted for processing and will be considered as withdrawal from the Scheme.
50. If CEDARS requires any clarification regarding the submitted documents, they will notify the employers and/or students via email. Reimbursement will only be processed after CEDARS has successfully verified all the required documents.
51. If any documents require clarifications or further information such as employer's return of remuneration and medical certificate etc., they must be provided within three months of receiving the notification email from CEDARS. Failure to provide the information within this timeframe may result in forfeiting the right to claim the reimbursement.



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52. If the employment ends before completion of the approved internship period with no less than 28 calendar days, the subsidy will be granted on number of days.
53. 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.
54. Employers are responsible for ensuring the proper keeping of books and records, among others, to facilitate HKU to conduct the examination, in accordance with the requirements stipulated in the Scheme.

Points to Note

55. By participating in the Scheme, the employers are regarded to have agreed to, and to have obtained from the student interns, the participating employers and each individual whose information (including personal data) is provided in the application, their consent for the disclosure, use and further disclosure by HKU and the Government of the information (including personal data) as set out in the Scheme by ITC.
56. Both employers and student interns should complete their internship placements as scheduled. Employers should ensure adequate guidance and maintaining clear communication with interns throughout the placement. Early terminations are documented and taken into consideration for future applications. When termination becomes unavoidable, the process must adhere to the practices stipulated in the Employment Ordinance.
57. 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.
58. 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).



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59. 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.
60. 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.
61. 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.
62. 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.



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63. The University of Hong Kong (HKU) and any authorised person acting on behalf of HKU may conduct random checks of the documents, records, etc. of the student interns and participating employers to ensure their compliance with the guidelines and requirements relevant to the ITF funding for the Scheme. HKU may at any time and with immediate effect, 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 HKU on occurrence of any of nonconformance to the Scheme.

***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 published at [HKU ITC STEM Internship Scheme website](#).*

Enquiries: 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.