



Internship Programme
for Incubatees and SME Tenants of the
Hong Kong Science & Technology Parks Corporation and
Hong Kong Cyberport Management Company Limited
Application Guide

In 2004, the Innovation and Technology Commission (ITC) established an internship programme for organisations undertaking research and development (R&D) projects funded by the Innovation and Technology Fund (ITF) to recruit interns to assist in the R&D projects (“IP-ITF”). Starting from 19 December 2016, the programme has been expanded to cover incubatees and small and medium enterprise¹ (SME) tenants of the Hong Kong Science & Technology Parks Corporation (HKSTPC) and Hong Kong Cyberport Management Company Limited (Cyberport) (“IP-SPC”). Details of the IP-SPC are set out in the following sections.

1. Eligibility

Applicant Company

Incubatees and SME tenants² of HKSTPC and Cyberport, with incubation/tenancy duration covering the proposed internship period, are eligible to apply for funding to recruit interns to assist in R&D projects in their companies. The applicant company should articulate in the application the scientific/engineering phenomena of which the project is to study and investigate and also describe the project duties to be assigned to the intern.

Intern

To qualify for the IP-SPC, the recruited intern should be a graduate³ (including non-local graduates) with a first-degree or higher degree from a local university. He/she should be a graduate in the relevant field of the research project to which he/she is to be recruited. The intern to be recruited should not be employed by the applicant company within the past three months preceding the date of application.

The applicant company and the intern shall not be receiving other internship subsidies provided by any other local public funding for the subject internship under application.

¹ SME refers to manufacturing businesses employing fewer than 100 persons in Hong Kong or non-manufacturing businesses employing fewer than 50 persons in Hong Kong. The number of persons employed shall include proprietors/partners/shareholders actively engaged in the work of the business and all salaried employees of the enterprise.

² This programme is applicable to SME tenants of Cyberport regular office space but not including Smart-Space. The core business activities of the applicant company should be technology intensive and innovation-based. The applicant company’s operations should not be primarily in mass production, although small scale pilot production or high value-added production in support of product and market development and innovation may be permitted.

³ The graduate should have successfully completed the undergraduate/postgraduate programme.

2. Internship Period

In order for the intern to contribute meaningfully to the R&D project on the one hand, and have sufficient time to learn on the job on the other, the intern is to be recruited to assist in the specified R&D works for at least 6 months. Upon completion of internship in an applicant company, he/she will be allowed to participate in another internship under the IP-ITF and the IP-SPC. Unless otherwise approved by ITC, the total internship period under the Internship Programme viz. IP-ITF and IP-SPC for an intern should not be more than 24 months in total. For the first project in which the intern participates, the applicant company is encouraged to offer the intern an internship of no less than 12 months. Each eligible applicant company can recruit up to two interns at any one time. The total internship period for an applicant company should be no more than 48 months (i.e. two interns x 24 months). In case the intern recruited for a project resigns/leaves, the applicant company can recruit another intern during the incubation/tenancy period. The internship period under IP-SPC should not overlap with any internship period under IP-ITF of the same applicant company.

3. Application Procedure

Applicant companies should register for the purpose of the IP-SPC through the Innovation and Technology Commission Funding Administrative System (ITCFAS) at the ITF website (<http://itcfas.itf.gov.hk>). For each selected intern, the applicant company should submit a separate application via ITCFAS. New application should be submitted for additional/replacement intern and for any change of an approved intern. The applicant company should also provide certified copies of the following supporting documents:

- (a) Incubation/tenancy contract of the applicant company;
- (b) Business registration certificate of the applicant company;
- (c) Graduation certificate of the intern; and
- (d) Recruitment advertisement for the intern.

On receipt of a complete application, ITCFAS will notify HKSTPC and Cyberport for conducting of preliminary vetting (e.g. to confirm incubation/tenancy status and eligibility under the IP-SPC). The applicant company will be notified if an application is not recommended for processing by ITC. Applications recommended by HKSTPC and Cyberport will continue to be processed by ITC. ITC reserves the right to decline acceptance of any recommended applications at any time at its sole discretion. Subject to approval by ITC, the applicant company can proceed with the formal recruitment of the intern.

Once the application is approved by ITC, the applicant company should comply with the conditions of funding as set out in this Guide throughout the internship period, and keep relevant records for the internship as required in section 7 below. The ITC and the recommending organisation (i.e. HKSTPC or Cyberport) reserve at all times the right to seek or collect additional information (e.g. intern's attendance records) from the applicant company and the selected intern(s) to substantiate and process the application, and monitor the approved application where necessary.

4. Remuneration for Interns

The ITF will provide a maximum monthly allowance of HK\$14,000 plus the employer's contribution to the Mandatory Provident Fund (MPF) (i.e. HK\$700 maximum) for each intern who possesses a first degree, and up to HK\$16,500 plus the employer's MPF contribution (i.e. HK\$825 maximum) for those with a Master's or higher degree. The monthly allowance shall be paid in full towards the actual lump sum monthly remuneration for the intern and shall not, in whole or in part, be retained by the applicant company for whatever reasons. No other allowances, overhead or fringe benefits, etc. will be payable from the ITF. The monthly allowance will be provided to the applicant company on a reimbursement basis after acceptance of the progress report by ITC (i.e. on a half-yearly basis in general) as detailed in section 7 below.

5. Role of Applicant Company

The applicant company should:

- ensure that the intern selection process is fair and without prejudice to any candidates;
- ensure that the intern is suitably guided by a supervisor, to whom the intern can report on a daily basis;
- assign to the intern relevant R&D duties (not secretarial or administrative duties) and with an appropriate level of workload which warrants a full-time internship;
- comply with the relevant legislative requirements concerning the employment of the intern including the relevant entry/visa requirements for non-local graduates; and
- provide a safe working environment and arrange the placement for the intern.

6. Role of Intern

The intern being recruited should assist in the R&D work of the applicant company on a full-time basis.

7. Reporting Requirement

The applicant company is required to submit progress report(s), signed by both the internship coordinator and the intern on a half-yearly basis throughout the internship period. HKSTPC and Cyberport will conduct vetting of the report and recommend acceptance of it by ITC. In this connection, HKSTPC and Cyberport will visit and interview the applicant companies and interns from time to time during the internship period for monitoring purposes.

Both the applicant company and the intern are required to submit evaluation reports to ITC within one month from the completion or termination of the internship for which the intern is recruited. In case of resignation of the intern during the internship period or if the applicant company intends to terminate the internship, the applicant company should report such to the ITC immediately. The applicant company is also required to keep the relevant financial documents (e.g. copies of cheques issued to the interns, payroll sheets, or certified receipts signed by the interns, etc.) for seven years after completion/termination of the internship, and submit to ITC on request at any time during this period.

8. Handling of Information

Information provided by the applicant company in its application and progress/evaluation reports will be kept in confidence. It may however be disclosed to the recommending organisation (i.e. HKSTPC or Cyberport) and relevant parties to process the application, to conduct research and survey, and if the application is successful, to monitor the internship, to exercise the Government's rights, and for other related purposes.

9. Important Notes

Inaccurate and incomplete information may affect the consideration and processing of the applications and may result in deferral or rejection. Applicant companies should note that any misrepresentation or omission of information in the applications or progress/evaluation reports may lead to rejection of the applications and/or full recovery of the monthly allowances already granted by the ITC, and possible court proceedings.

The ITC reserves at all times the absolute right to review all applications and adjust the ITF approved as necessary. In the event that there is an overpayment due to error in calculation or assessment, applicant companies are required to refund the amount overpaid within one month upon notification.

Innovation and Technology Commission
December 2016