



Technology Talent Scheme – Postdoctoral Hub Programme for ITF projects

Application Guide

To nurture and bring together more technology talent and encourage them to pursue a career in innovation and scientific research, the Innovation and Technology Commission launched the Postdoctoral Hub programme under the Technology Talent Scheme in August 2018. The programme provides organisations undertaking ITF projects¹ (“PH-ITF”) as well as incubatees and innovation and technology (I&T) tenants of the Hong Kong Science & Technology Parks Corporation (HKSTPC) and Hong Kong Cyberport Management Company Limited (Cyberport) (“PH-SPC”) with funding support for the recruitment of postdoctoral talent to conduct research and development (R&D) work. This guide set out the details of the PH-ITF.

1. Eligibility

Applicant Organisation / Company

All organisations/companies undertaking R&D projects funded by the ITF¹, including R&D Centres set up under the ITF, designated local public research institutes² and private companies, may apply for engaging postdoctoral talent under the PH-ITF. In general, the PH-ITF is only applicable to all on-going and new R&D projects funded by the ITF.

Postdoctoral Talent

To qualify for the Postdoctoral Hub programme, the candidate must be legally permitted to work in Hong Kong; and in possession of a doctoral degree of STEM³-related discipline obtained from a local university. For candidate with relevant qualification obtained from non-local institution, he/she is eligible to participate in the Postdoctoral Hub programme if the qualification awarding institution is among the top 100 institutions for STEM-related subjects in the *latest publication* of any of the following world university ranking tables:

¹ R&D projects funded by the ITF include projects funded under the Innovation and Technology Support Programme (ITSP), the Matching Grant for Joint Research Scheme (UIM) of the University-Industry Collaboration Programme (UICP), Enterprise Support Scheme (ESS), and the Midstream Research Programme (MRP).

² They are local universities, self-financing degree-awarding institutions registered under the Post-Secondary Colleges Ordinance (Cap. 320), Hong Kong Productivity Council, Vocational Training Council, Clothing Industry Training Authority and Hong Kong Institute of Biotechnology.

³ STEM (i.e. Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics).

Ranking tables	STEM-related subjects
Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Engineering and Technology - Life Science and Medicine - Natural Sciences
Shanghai Jiao Tong University (Academic Ranking of World Universities)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Life and Agriculture Sciences (LIFE) - Natural Sciences and Mathematics (SCI) - Engineering/Technology and Computer Sciences (ENG) - Clinical Medicine and Pharmacy (MED)
Times Higher Education World University Rankings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Engineering and Technology - Computer Science - Life Sciences - Physical Sciences - Clinical, Pre-clinical and Health

For qualification obtained from other non-local institution, the candidate should provide relevant document(s) (such as the qualification assessment report issued by the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications) supporting that the specific skills possessed by the candidate or the equivalence of the qualification concerned being assessed is on the doctoral level for consideration.

The postdoctoral talent should be a graduate⁴ in the relevant field of the research project to which he/she is to be recruited.

For private company applicant, the postdoctoral talent to be recruited should not be an employee with the company within the past three months preceding the date of application. Moreover, the proprietor, partner or shareholder of the applicant company is not eligible to be engaged as a postdoctoral talent under the programme.

2. Engagement Period

In order for the postdoctoral talent to contribute meaningfully to the R&D project, the engagement period for the candidate should be **no less than 6 months**; and should not overlap with PH-SPC, or the internship period under the Internship Programme, if any.

Upon completion of his/her engagement with an applicant organisation/company for a particular ITF project, the postdoctoral talent may be engaged again under the PH-ITF and PH-SPC. Unless otherwise approved by ITC, **the total engagement period for a postdoctoral talent under the Postdoctoral Hub programme viz. PH-ITF and PH-SPC should be no more than 24 months in total.**

Two postdoctoral talent can be engaged at any one time to assist in an ITF project. In case the talent recruited for a project resigns/leaves, the applicant organisation/company

⁴ The graduate should have successfully completed the doctoral programme.

can recruit another talent as replacement during the ITF project period. The applicant organisation/company should follow its established human resources practice in the recruitment of postdoctoral talent.

3. Application Procedure

Applicant organisation/company should have its ITF project approved under the ITF and a postdoctoral talent selected/identified before submission of the application form to the ITF Secretariat. Applicant organisations/companies should submit separate application for each postdoctoral talent through the Innovation and Technology Commission Funding Administrative System (ITCFAS) at the ITF website (<http://itcfas.itf.gov.hk>). Relevant supporting document(s), including certified copies of academic qualification certificate of the talent should also be attached to the application. New application should be submitted for engagement of an additional or replacement talent; or for transferring an approved talent to another ITF project.

Subject to approval by ITC, the applicant organisation/company can proceed with the formal recruitment of the talent. Once approved by ITC, the conditions of funding as set out in this Guide would form part of the project agreement of the respective ITF project. Expenses of and payment to the talent would be additional to the approved project budget, but would also form part of the project account for accounting and auditing purposes. No virement into or out of the approved funding for engagement of talent is allowed.

4. Remuneration for Postdoctoral Talent

A maximum monthly allowance of HK\$32,000 plus the employer's contribution to the Mandatory Provident Fund (MPF) (i.e. HK\$1,500 maximum) for each postdoctoral talent will be provided. The monthly allowance should be paid in full towards the actual lump sum monthly remuneration for the talent who participates in the ITF project and shall not, in whole or in part, be retained by the applicant organisation/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 organisation/company concerned as part of the ITF project instalment payment.

5. Role of Applicant Organisation/Company

The applicant organisation/company should:

- ensure that the talent selection process is fair and without prejudice to any candidates;
- ensure that the talent is suitably supervised (preferably by the project coordinator/deputy project coordinator of the ITF project), to whom the talent can report or consult on a regular basis;
- assign to the talent relevant R&D duties related to the ITF project and with an appropriate level of workload which warrants a full-time engagement;
- comply with the relevant legislative requirements concerning the employment of the talent including the relevant entry/visa requirements for non-local talent; and
- provide a safe working environment and arrange a proper workspace for the talent.

6. Role of Postdoctoral Talent

The postdoctoral talent being recruited should assist in the R&D work of the funded project on a full-time basis.

7. Reporting Requirement

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

8. Return of Fund

The applicant organisation/company should return all unused fund and accrued interest to the Government together with the evaluation reports to ITC within one month upon completion or termination of the engagement.

9. Handling of Information

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

10. Important Notes

Inaccurate and incomplete information may affect the consideration and processing of the applications and may result in deferral or rejection. Applicant organisations/companies should note that any misrepresentation or omission of information in the applications or 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 organisations/companies are required to refund the amount overpaid within one month upon notification.