



Innovation and Technology Fund Internship Programme for Innovation and Technology Venture Fund Investee Companies Application Guide

The Internship Programme provides funding support to recipients of the Innovation and Technology Fund (“ITF”) to recruit interns to assist in research and development (“R&D”) projects (“IP-ITF”). This Guide sets out the details applicable to the local innovation and technology (“I&T”) start-ups selected for co-investment under the Innovation and Technology Venture Fund (“ITVF investee companies”). Incubatees and I&T tenants of the Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation (“HKSTPC”) and Cyberport should apply under the Internship Programme for Incubatees and I&T Tenants of HKSTPC and Cyberport (“IP-SPC”).

1. Eligibility

Applicant Company

ITVF investee companies¹ are eligible to apply for funding under IP-ITF to recruit interns to assist in R&D projects in their companies. The applicant company should state in the application the scientific/engineering R&D element of which the project is to study and investigate and also describe the project duties to be assigned to the intern.

Intern

The intern to be recruited must be legally permitted to work in Hong Kong; and should be a graduate² with a first-degree or Master’s degree from a local university in the relevant field of the research project to which he/she is to be recruited. The intern should not be employed by the applicant 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 employed as an intern under the programme.

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.

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 internship period for the candidate should be **no less than 6 months**; and should not overlap with any other internship period or

¹ 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.

² The graduate should have successfully completed the undergraduate/postgraduate programme.

engagement period under the Internship Programme or the Postdoctoral Hub programme. Upon completion of the internship in an applicant company, the intern will be allowed to participate in another internship under the Internship Programme³. Unless otherwise approved by the Innovation and Technology Commission (“ITC”), **the total internship period for an intern under the Internship Programme should not be more than 24 months in total**. For the first internship project in which the intern participates, the applicant company is encouraged to offer the intern an internship of no less than 12 months. Two interns can be recruited at any one time to assist in the R&D work of an applicant company. The total internship period for an applicant company should be no more than 48 months. In case the intern recruited for a project resigns/leaves, the applicant company can recruit another intern as replacement if it is still an ITVF investee company.

3. Application Procedure

The applicant company should duly complete the application form which is available from the ITF website (<https://www.itf.gov.hk/l-eng/Forms/ip-itf-itvf201812e.zip>). For each selected intern, the applicant company should submit a separate application. New application should be submitted for employment of an additional/replacement intern, or for transferring an approved intern to another company. The applicant company should also provide certified copies of the following supporting documents:

- (a) Business registration certificate of the applicant company;
- (b) Graduation certificate of the intern;
- (c) Recruitment advertisement for the intern; and
- (d) Employment contract of the intern (when applicable).

ITC reserves the right to request additional information and supporting documents when necessary. If an applicant company fails to respond to ITC’s request for information within two months of such request, the application will be considered withdrawn. ITC reserves the right to decline acceptance of any 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.⁴

Once the application is approved by ITC, the applicant company should comply with the conditions of funding as set out in this Guide as may be amended from time to time throughout the internship period, and keep relevant records for the internship as required in section 7 below. ITC reserves 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 to

³ The internship period under IP-ITF for ITVF investee company should not overlap with any internship period under IP-ITF for ITF projects of the same applicant organisation/company.

⁴ Applicant companies are strongly advised to secure ITC’s approval before commencing employment of the interns to ensure eligibility of their applications. However, ITC would also accept applications lodged within three months after the commencement of the employment of the interns on the condition that the application meets the funding criteria of the Internship Programme. In such cases, the intern recruited should not be employed by the applicant company within the three months preceding the commencement date of employment. For example, if an applicant company employs an intern on 1 September, application can be lodged any time before 1 December, and the intern recruited should not be employed by the applicant company between 1 June and 31 August.

substantiate and process the application, and monitor the approved application where necessary.

4. Remuneration

The ITF will provide a maximum monthly allowance of HK\$16,000 plus the employer's contribution to the Mandatory Provident Fund ("MPF") (i.e. HK\$800 maximum) for each intern who possesses a first degree, and up to HK\$19,000 plus the employer's MPF contribution (i.e. HK\$950 maximum) for those with a Master's degree. The monthly allowance shall only cover the internship period stipulated in the approved application, and 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 open, fair and without prejudice to any candidates;
- ensure that the intern is suitably guided by a supervisor, to whom the intern can report or consult 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 employment;
- 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 a proper workplace for the intern, including allocating a dedicated workstation or a fixed seat inside an office room 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 in general throughout the internship period. ITC will conduct vetting of the report and may visit and interview the applicant company and the intern 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 approved 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 intern, payroll sheets, or certified receipts signed by the intern 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 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 application and may result in deferral or rejection. The applicant company should note that any misrepresentation or omission of information in the application or progress/evaluation reports may lead to rejection of the application 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, the applicant company is required to refund the amount overpaid within one month upon notification.

Innovation and Technology Commission
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