



Innovation and Technology Fund (ITF) Internship Programme

Operation Guideline

As part of the efforts in developing human resources on research and development, the Innovation and Technology Commission (ITC) has established an internship programme for organisations undertaking research and development projects funded by ITF, including local universities, Research and Development (R&D) Centres established under the ITF, Hong Kong Productivity Council (HKPC) and private sector companies to recruit interns to assist in the R&D projects. Operational details of the Internship Programme are set out in the following paragraphs.

Aims

The aims of the Internship Programme are:

- to provide opportunities for graduates from local universities to acquire research/industrial experience by participating in R&D projects funded by the ITF;
- to stimulate the interest of university graduates in applied R&D activities and help create a larger pool of research talents; and
- to further support local universities, R&D Centres and companies in undertaking applied R&D activities by funding interns for their ITF projects.

Eligibility

Participating Organisations

All organisations undertaking R&D projects funded by the ITF¹ including local universities, R&D Centres, HKPC and private sector companies may apply for taking on interns under the Internship

Programme for the funded projects on a voluntary basis. In general, the Programme is applicable to all on-going and new R&D projects funded by the ITF.

Participating Interns

To be qualified for the Internship Programme, the recruited intern should be a graduate² with a first-degree or higher degree, including non-local students, 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. For projects undertaken by private companies, the intern to be recruited should not be employed by the company within the past three months preceding the date of application.

Internship Period

In order for the intern to contribute meaningfully to the ITF 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 a particular project for at least 6 months. Upon completion of internship in a project, he/she will be allowed to participate in another project. The internship period should not be more than 24 months in total. For the first ITF project in which the intern participates, the completion date of the project should in general be no less than 12 months from the date of application. Two interns can be recruited at any one time to assist in an ITF project. In case that the intern recruited for a project resigns/leaves, the participating organisation can replace the intern during the project period. The participating organisations can have their own selection criteria of the interns, provided that the selected intern meets the eligibility criteria mentioned in this operation guideline.

Application Procedure

Participating organisations should have their ITF projects approved under the ITF and an intern

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) and Small Entrepreneur Research Assistance Programme (SERAP).

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

selected/ identified before submission of the application form to the ITF Secretariat. Applications should be submitted electronically through ITCFAS at the ITF website <http://www.itf.gov.hk> for each of the interns for the projects. The applicant organisation should provide certified copy of documents on the academic qualification of the intern to be recruited. New application should be submitted for additional/replacement intern and for any change in the ITF project of an approved intern. Subject to approval by ITC, the participating organisation can proceed with the formal recruitment of the intern. Once approved by ITC, the conditions of funding as set out in this operation guideline would form part of the project agreement of the respective ITF project. Expenses of and payment to the intern 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 internship payment is allowed.

Remuneration for Interns

The ITF would cover a maximum monthly allowance of \$10,000 for each intern plus the employer's contribution (i.e. \$500 maximum) to the Mandatory Provident Fund (MPF) (if any) for those who possess a first degree, and up to \$12,000 for those with Master or higher degrees plus employer's MPF contribution (i.e. \$600 maximum). The monthly allowance should be paid in full towards the actual lump sum monthly remuneration for the intern who participates in the ITF project and should not, in whole or in part, be retained by the participating organisation for whatever reasons. No other allowances, overhead or fringe benefits etc. would be payable from the ITF. The monthly allowance would be provided to the participating organisation concerned as part of the ITF project instalment payment (i.e. on a half-yearly basis).

Role of Participating Organisations

The participating organisations 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 (preferably the project

coordinator/deputy project coordinator/principal investigator of the ITF project), to whom the intern can report on a daily basis;

- assign to the intern relevant R&D duties (not secretarial or administrative duties) related to the ITF project and with appropriate level of workload which warrants a full-time internship;
- comply with the relevant legislative requirements concerning the employment of the interns including the relevant entry/visa requirements for non-local graduates; and
- provide a safe working environment and arrange the placement for the interns.

Role of Interns

The interns being recruited for the ITF project should assist in the R&D work of the funded project on a full time basis.

Reporting Requirement

Both the participating organisation and the intern are required to submit evaluation reports to ITC within one month from the completion or termination of the internship in each of the ITF project for which the intern is recruited for evaluation purposes. In case of resignation of the intern during the internship period or if the participating organisation intends to terminate the internship, the participating organisation should report such to the ITC immediately. The participating organisation is also required to submit, upon request, the relevant financial documents (e.g. copies of cheques issued to the interns, payroll sheets, or certified receipts signed by the interns etc.) to ITC at any time during or after the internship period.

Return of Fund

The participating organisations 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 internship.