

**The University of Hong Kong
Innovation and Technology Commission (“ITC”) – STEM Internship Scheme**

Frequently Asked Questions (“FAQ”)

Internship Placement and Period

Q1: Is internship placement with remote working allowed under the Scheme?

A1: Student interns are encouraged to work in offices to have direct interaction with supervisors/ colleagues for at least part of their internship time, so as to gain diversified work experience and develop better communication skills. Nevertheless, remote working in certain business sectors such as information technology has become more common. For internship placement with mostly remote working, the university has to put in place measures to ensure that the participating employers provide enough supervision to the student interns. In general, remote working where the participating employer and the internship are in different territories are not allowed under the Scheme. Notwithstanding the above, work-from-home arrangement due to severe pandemic situation is allowed.

Q2: Is internship undertaken outside summer or winter break eligible under the Scheme?

A2: For full-time internships undertaken during the semester, students are required to apply for Leave of Absence from Faculty/Department for Scheme application. This requirement does not apply to summer or winter break.

Q3: What does I&T-related jobs mean?

A3: The Scheme adopts a broad definition of I&T for the internship, e.g. technology-related intellectual property work, digital marketing, data analysis for the manufacturing industry, are all considered as I&T for the Scheme.

Q4: Are students undertaking internship to fulfil a compulsory graduation requirement be eligible to receive allowance under the Scheme?

A4: In general, the Scheme does not cover an internship arranged to meet the compulsory requirement for graduation of a degree programme. However, if the subject internship period is longer than the duration of the compulsory requirement, the portion of period in excess could be covered by the Scheme, if the other requirements as stipulated in this Guidelines are met.

Q5: What is the eligible internship period under the Scheme?

A5: The minimum eligible internship period is four consecutive weeks (i.e. 28 consecutive calendar days). While the maximum amount of allowance received by a student intern under the Scheme is capped at three months (i.e. 90 days) in one academic year (from 1 September to 31 August of the following year).

Q6: Are holidays within the internship period be eligible for allowance?

A6: 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. The start and end days of the contract of internship should be working days. If the start/end days fall on Saturday, General Holiday or Statutory Holiday, they will be regarded as unpaid leave unless there is a deliberate agreement between the employer and the student intern.

Q7: Are unpaid leaves allowed during the internship?

A7: Student interns may take unpaid leaves during the internship. For instance, students may take unpaid leaves to handle other university commitments. Unpaid leaves will not be taken into consideration in the calculation of allowance under the Scheme. The relevant university should exercise due diligence to follow up on any unreasonable and excessive unpaid leaves taken and follow up as necessary.

Q8: If a student intern fails to complete an internship, is the student intern still eligible to receive allowance under the Scheme?

A8: In general, a student intern should complete the internship satisfactorily to receive the allowance under the Scheme. If an internship is terminated prematurely due to unforeseeable circumstances, the student may receive allowance under the Scheme if the completed period is 28 consecutive days or more and other conditions as stipulated in the Guidelines are met. On the other hand, any honorarium owed to the student intern by the employer will be bound by the employment contract between the employer and student intern, and the requirements of the relevant laws and regulations. ITC will not reimburse the university any allowance which does not meet the requirements of the Scheme.

Q9: Can a student have more than one internship under the Scheme in the same academic year?

A9: In general, a student intern may receive the allowance under the Scheme for more than one internship place in the same academic year, provided that the participating employers are not the same and the internship periods do not overlap.

Allowance and Honorarium

Q10: Can the actual allowance received by a student intern be less than the current allowance rate under the Scheme?

A10: The monthly allowance received by the student intern during the eligible internship period should not be less than the current monthly allowance rate under the Scheme which is \$10,500 (i.e. \$350 per day) for 2021.

Q11: Is the allowance cover the contributions to Mandatory Provident Fund (“MPF”)?

A11: The allowance under the Scheme should cover both the actual salary paid to the student intern and, if any, the students’ contributions to MPF during the eligible internship period. The participating employers’ contributions to MPF should not be deducted from the allowance under the Scheme.

Q12: What is the mechanism of allowance calculation under the Scheme?

A12: For the purpose of calculating allowance under the Scheme, every 30 consecutive calendar days constitute a month (i.e. \$10,500/30 days; \$350/day).

Formula for allowance calculation under the Scheme

Allowance = (Internship period – Unpaid leave) in days × \$350/day

Example 1: The employer pays daily salary.

Internship period: 2 Jul 2021 (Fri) - 30 Jul 2021 (Fri)	
No. of calendar days	29 days
Unpaid leave taken	Nil
Monthly salary	\$350 per day
Student’s contribution to MPF	Nil
Total salary paid by the employer	\$10,150
Eligible no. of days included	29 calendar days
Allowance disbursed to the employer	\$350 x 29 days = \$10,150

Example 2: The student intern has taken unpaid leave.

Internship period: 2 Jul 2021 (Fri) - 30 Jul 2021 (Fri)	
No. of calendar days	29 days
Unpaid leave taken	1 day
Monthly salary	\$10,500
Student's contribution to MPF	Nil
Total salary paid by the employer	\$9,800
Eligible no. of days included	28 calendar days
Allowance disbursed to the employer	\$350 x 28 days = \$9,800

Example 3: The internship period is more than 90 days (allowance capped at 3 months or 90 days in once academic year). Student's contribution to MPF is included.

Internship period: 1 Jun 2021 (Tue) - 31 Aug 2021 (Tue)	
No. of calendar days	92 days
Unpaid leave taken	Nil
Monthly salary	\$10,500
Student's contribution to MPF	\$1,050 (for Jul and Aug)
Total salary paid by the employer	\$32,200 (including student's contribution to MPF)
Eligible no. of days included	90 calendar days
Allowance disbursed to the employer	\$350 x 90 days = \$31,500

Example 4: The internship period is more than 90 days, and the student intern has taken unpaid leave. Student's contribution to MPF is included.

Internship period: 1 Jun 2021 (Tue) - 31 Aug 2021 (Tue)	
No. of calendar days	92 days
Unpaid leave taken	3 days in June
Monthly salary	\$10,500
Student's contribution to MPF	\$1,050 (for Jul and Aug)
Total salary paid by the employer	\$31,150 (including student's contribution to MPF)
Eligible no. of days included	89 calendar days
Allowance disbursed to the employer	\$350 x 89 days = \$31,150