

HOW TO APPLY FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE UNDER THE TERTIARY STUDENT FINANCE SCHEME – PUBLICLY-FUNDED PROGRAMMES

The Tertiary Student Finance Scheme – Publicly-funded Programmes (TSFS)

The TSFS is a means-tested scheme which provides financial assistance to needy full-time students studying publicly-funded programmes in the City University of Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Baptist University, the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, the Lingnan University, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, the Hong Kong University of Science & Technology, the University of Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Institute of Vocational Education and Hong Kong Design Institute, the Prince Philip Dental Hospital, the Hong Kong Institute of Education and the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts.

The aim of the TSFS is to ensure that no eligible students will be denied access to education because of lack of means. Financial assistance is provided in the form of grant and/or loan. The grant is to cover tuition fees, academic expenses and compulsory students' union fees; the loan is to cover living expenses.

Level of Financial Assistance

The maximum amount of grant is equal to the tuition fee payable to institutions, the compulsory students' union fee and the academic expenses pertaining to the course of study whilst the maximum amount of loan for living expenses is the same for all students. Applicants have to go through an income and asset test. The level of financial assistance is determined with regard to the income and asset levels of the applicants' family. Applicants with family income or assets (the value of the first home is not counted) exceeding a pre-determined limit will not be offered any assistance.

Who are Eligible to Apply

Applicants should be full-time students studying eligible courses in the institutions covered by the TSFS who have the right of abode in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (Hong Kong) or have resided or have had their homes in Hong Kong continuously for three complete years prior to the commencement of the course. This does not cover students staying in Hong Kong holding student visas.

An applicant's eligibility is restricted to only one eligible full-time course at any one time.

How to Apply

Applicants will be required to submit their applications by completing an E-form. The E-form can be downloaded from the homepage of Student Financial Assistance Agency (SFAA). After completing the E-form, applicants have to print and submit the whole E-Form in hardcopies to the respective institutions before the specified deadlines.

How to Complete the Application Form

An applicant is required to furnish the full particulars of his/her family members, including their income and assets in the financial year preceding the application year, together with the relevant copies of documentary proofs (i.e. salary statements / bank statements, etc. covering the period 1.4.2010 – 31.3.2011 when submitting his/her 2011/12 application). Such information will form the basis of determining the level of financial assistance that he/she may obtain. **Any misrepresentation or omission may lead to rejection of his/her application and/or full recovery of overpaid financial assistance and court proceedings. Applicants are reminded that it is an offence to obtain pecuniary advantage by deception. A person who does so commits an offence and is liable on conviction to imprisonment for 10 years under the Theft Ordinance.**

Detailed Guidance Notes and Sample for Completing the Application Form can be found in SFAA homepage to assist applicants in completing the form. Students should study the guidelines and follow the instructions carefully.

Students should submit a new application for each academic year. Their level of financial assistance will be assessed on the basis of the prevailing financial circumstances of their family.

Payment Arrangement

Notification of result will normally be issued within 2 months from the date of receipt on the condition that all the required information has been submitted with the application. Financial assistance will be paid to the successful applicants in two equal instalments. Grant will be paid by direct credit into applicants' bank accounts. Loan will be paid in the same manner upon the receipt of the completed loan documents (see below).

Requirements for Obtaining a Loan

The following loan documents together with other supplementary documents are required to be provided by a successful applicant for the payment of loan:

- (a) Undertaking (to be completed by the applicant) indicating the applicant's agreement to repay the Government the full amount of loan and interest upon graduation or cessation of study, whichever is earlier; and
- (b) Deed of Indemnity (to be completed by the indemnifier) indicating the Indemnifier's agreement to indemnify the Government against any loss resulting from the applicant's failure to honour the undertaking.

Repayment Arrangement

Grants offered under the TSFS need not be repaid under normal circumstances. The loan recipients will be required to repay the loan and interest at 2.5% per annum to the Government in twenty quarterly instalments within a period of 5 years upon –

- (a) graduation; or
- (b) after he/she ceases to be a student at the institution on or before completion of his/her course.

whichever is earlier.

Interest will be charged and calculated from the commencement date of the loan repayment period, which shall normally fall on 1 October of the year of graduation. The first quarterly instalment of loan repayment will fall due on 1 January of the following year.

Deferment/suspension of loan repayment may be granted on grounds of further studies on full-time courses, financial hardship or serious illness upon written application to SFAA. All applications for deferment/suspension of loan repayment will be considered on their individual merits.

Enquiries

All general enquiries about the TSFS should be directed to:

Student Financial Assistance Agency
11/F., Cheung Sha Wan Government Offices,
303 Cheung Sha Wan Road, Kowloon

24-hour enquiry hotline: 2802 2345
Enquiry hotline (office hours): 2150 6000
Homepage: <http://www.sfaa.gov.hk>

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