

Application for Study Sponsorship Scheme

Notes to Applicants

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (“Government”) has set up the Urban Forestry Support Fund (“Fund”) to uplift the professional standards of arboriculture and horticulture practitioners and to strengthen public education and promotion on proper tree care with a view to improving the quality of our urban forest, protecting public safety and enhancing liveability.
- 1.2. The Development Bureau (“DEVB”) of the Government has launched the Study Sponsorship Scheme (“Scheme”) under the Fund to encourage more people to join the arboriculture and horticulture industry as arborists and tree workers. Persons who are interested to pursue a career in tree management and to uplift the professional standard may enrol in the recognised full-time or part-time training programmes (“recognised programmes”) offered by local vocational, tertiary and training institutions (“Programme Providers”) and apply for (a) study sponsorship or (b) scholarship under the Fund. For study sponsorship, the recognised programmes are classified into four programme categories, namely **(1) arboriculture and tree management programme**, **(2) tree work programme** (e.g. chainsaw operation and tree climbing), **(3) training programmes in tree risk assessment** accepted by Tree Management Office as the 'training qualification' of Inspection Officer and the Registration Scheme for Tree Management Personnel and **(4) arboriculture vocational assessment** for undertaking tree pruning works involving the use of chainsaw.
- 1.3. The list of recognised programmes under the Scheme is published on the websites of the Greening, Landscape and Tree Management Section (“GLTMS”) of DEVB.

2. STUDY SPONSORSHIP

- 2.1. To be eligible for study sponsorship, an applicant must satisfy the following criteria:
 - (a) being a Hong Kong resident, i.e. a person who have the right of abode or the right to land or to remain in Hong Kong without restriction, or a holder of one-way permit from mainland China;
 - (b) (i) has successfully enrolled in one of the recognised programmes (arboriculture, tree management and tree work programmes at Level 2 to Level 5 of the Qualifications Framework (“QF”)) for study sponsorship listed on the Scheme’s website (categories (1) and (2)); or (ii) satisfactorily completed one of the professional training and assessment (categories (3) and (4)) or its renewal examination listed on the Scheme’s website on or after 20 June 2024;
 - (c) has not been granted any subsidy from the Scheme for any recognised programme listed on the Scheme’s website under the same programme category or any other form of subsidy, and will not receive any other subsidy or financial assistance from any other existing Government subsidy schemes (e.g. the Continuing Education Fund) or any other financial support (e.g. from employers) for the same programme;
 - (d) has passed the end-of-programme examination or satisfactorily completed the recognised programme.
- 2.2. Each applicant should not submit more than one application form for programmes under the same category at any one time.
- 2.3. Each applicant is entitled to study sponsorship of each programme category ONCE.
- 2.4. ONLY tuition fees will be covered by the study sponsorship. Other administration fees and examination retake fees are not included.
- 2.5. The levels of study sponsorship to be granted to an eligible applicant are set out below:

- (a) recognised arboriculture and tree management programmes (category (1)):
 - 70% of the payable tuition fee or HK\$35,000, whichever is less; and
 - (b) recognised tree work programmes (e.g. chainsaw operation and tree climbing) (category (2)):
 - 70% of the payable tuition fee or HK\$10,000, whichever is less.
 - (c) recognised professional training and assessment (category (3) and (4)):
 - 70% of the payable tuition fee or HK\$10,000, whichever is less.
- 2.6. Successful applicants will be provided with study sponsorship through reimbursement upon satisfactory completion of the recognised programmes (i.e. pass the end-of-course examinations or achieve no less than 70% attendance of the programme, or attendance requirement as prescribed by the programme (whichever is higher) if no examination is needed).

3. SCHOLARSHIP

- 3.1. To be eligible for scholarship, an applicant must satisfy the following criteria:
- (a) being a Hong Kong resident, i.e. a person who have the right of abode or the right to land or to remain in Hong Kong without restriction, or a holder of one-way permit from mainland China;
 - (b) has successfully enrolled in one of the recognised programmes (full-time arboriculture and tree management programmes at Level 5 of QF) for scholarship listed on the Scheme's websites of GLTMS;
 - (c) (i) has attained 20 total grade points or above in his/her best five subjects in the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) Examination; or
(ii) being nominated by Programme Provider, high-caliber students attending recognised programme in any particular academic year;
 - (d) has passed the academic assessments required by the Programme Provider (if applicable); and
 - (e) agrees to join the arboriculture and horticulture industry within six months after satisfactory completion of the recognised programme, and provide related proof of employment
- 3.2. For applicants of (c)(i) above, they should not submit more than one application form at any one time.
- 3.3. Each applicant / nominee is entitled to scholarship ONCE in each academic year.
- 3.4. ONLY tuition fees will be covered by the scholarship. Other administration fees are not included.
- 3.5. The level of scholarship to be granted to an eligible applicant / nominee is set out below:
- The total payable tuition fee or HK\$50,000, whichever is less, for each academic year of a recognised programme.
- 3.6. Successful applicants / nominees will be provided with scholarship subject to satisfactory completion of the respective year of study and provision of proof of employment in the arboriculture and horticulture industry within six months after satisfactory completion of the recognised programme.

4. HOW TO APPLY

- 4.1. For study sponsorship and scholarship, applicants shall submit the following documents directly to the Programme Providers **before the commencement of programme (for category (1) and (2)) or within one year upon the satisfactory completion of the programme or assessment (for category (3) and (4))**:
- (a) for study sponsorship application (category (1) to (4)):
 - a duly completed Study Sponsorship Application Form; and
 - a copy of the tuition / assessment fee receipt

For Lantra Awards recognised under category (3), applicants should submit application directly to GLTMS without programme provider's company stamp on the application form.

- (b) for scholarship application:
- (i) For **applicants of 3.1(c)(i) above**, before the commencement of programme:
- a duly completed and signed Scholarship Application Form (in the first academic year);
 - a copy of the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination result slip confirming that the applicant has attained 20 total grade points or above in his/her best five subjects (in the first academic year); and
 - a copy of the tuition fee receipt for each academic year;
- For **nominees of 3.1(c)(ii) above** - the Programme Provider will provide nomination list and required information to GLTMS
- (ii) Within six months after the completion of recognised programme
- a proof of employment related to arboriculture and horticulture industry (only applicable to final-year applicants)

4.2. Applications with incomplete information or missing documents will not be processed.

4.3. Late applications will not be processed.

4.4. For scholarship application, applicants / nominees who fail to provide the proof of employment are required to repay to the DEVB forthwith upon demand all moneys provided to the applicant and any associated administration fee incurred by the DEVB.

4.5. Applicants / nominees may be required to verify the information submitted and/or to provide additional information for processing the application when requested.

5. REIMBURSEMENT ARRANGEMENT

5.1. The name of the applicant / nominees on the local Hong Kong dollar sole-name savings or current bank account nominated for receipt of reimbursement must be exactly the same as the name on the Hong Kong Identity Card. Credit card accounts, fixed deposit accounts, foreign currency accounts and loans accounts are not acceptable for reimbursement.

5.2. Reimbursement will be made by direct credit to the designated bank account nominated by the applicant / nominees within three months upon complete submissions. Applicants / nominees shall check their study sponsorship or scholarship approval results with the GLTMS.

5.3. All remittance advice will be sent via e-mail. Unless there is no e-mail address provided, it will be sent by post.

6. IMPORTANT POINTS

6.1. It is an applicant's responsibility to complete the application form fully and truthfully and attach all the necessary supporting documents. Any misrepresentation, omission or provision of false or misleading information may, without prejudice to any powers, rights, remedies and claims the Government may have hereunder or in law, entitle the Government to reject or disqualify the application immediately or as the case may be, terminate immediately the provision of study sponsorship and scholarship under the Scheme to the applicant / nominee and require the applicant / nominee to forthwith repay to the Government in full all moneys provided to the applicant and any associated administrative fee incurred by the Government. Applicants / nominees are reminded that it is an offence to obtain property / pecuniary advantage by deception. Any person who does so commits a criminal offence and is liable on conviction to imprisonment for 10 years under the Theft Ordinance (Chapter 210 of the Laws of Hong Kong).

6.2. Applicants / nominees are prohibited from offering any advantages (e.g. money, gift, etc.) as defined in the Prevention of Bribery Ordinance (Chapter 201 of the Laws of Hong Kong) ("PBO") to any

employees of the GLTMS and directors, employees, agents and other personnel of the Programme Providers in the conduct of or in relation to the Scheme. It is also an offence under the PBO to offer any advantages to an employee of the GLTMS or Programme Providers as an inducement to or reward for facilitating or expediting the processing of applications.

- 6.3. Applicants / nominees shall comply with all laws, enactments, ordinances, rules and regulations, including but not limited to the Basic Law, Safeguarding National Security Ordinance and the Law of the People's Republic of China on Safeguarding National Security in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (collectively referred to as the “National Security Law”), in force in Hong Kong for the time being and amended from time to time. Applicants / nominees shall not engage in any act or activity which is likely to constitute or cause the occurrence of an offence endangering national security under the National Security Law or other laws of Hong Kong, or which would otherwise be contrary to the interests of national security.
- 6.4. In the event that there is overpayment due to error of calculation, the amount overpaid must be refunded by the applicant / nominee in one lump sum upon demand.
- 6.5. The personal data and other supplementary information that are provided in the application may be disclosed to Government bureaux and departments and Programme Providers for processing the applications or any other legitimate purposes as may be required, authorised or permitted by law.
- 6.6. In accordance with the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance (Chapter 486 of the Laws of Hong Kong), applicants have the right to request access to and correction of the personal data supplied in their applications.
- 6.7. In the event of any inconsistency between the English and Chinese versions of this “Notes to Applicants” and the application form, the English version shall prevail.

7. GOVERNMENT DISCLAIMERS

- 7.1. Whilst the information provided by the Government in this “Notes to Applicants” and the application form (collectively, the “Application Documents”) has been prepared in good faith, none of them claims to be comprehensive or to have been independently verified. Neither the Government, nor any of its officers, agents or advisors, accepts any liability or responsibility as to, or in relation to, the adequacy, accuracy or completeness of the information contained in the Application Documents or any other written or oral information which is, has been or will be provided or made available to any Applicant; nor do they make any representation, statement or warranty, express or implied, with respect to such information or to the information on which the Application Documents is based. Any liability in respect of any such information or any inaccuracy in the application form or omission from the application form and other Application Documents is expressly disclaimed. Nothing in the application form and other Application Documents nor in any other written or oral information which is, has been or will be provided or made available to any Applicant should be relied on as a representation, statement or warranty as to the intentions, policy or action in future of the Government, its officers or agents.
- 7.2. Neither the application form nor any invitation for submission of applications under the Scheme constitutes an offer.
- 7.3. The submission of an application form by an Applicant shall be taken to be an acceptance of the terms of these disclaimers by the Applicant.

8. CONTRACTS (RIGHTS OF THIRD PARTIES) ORDINANCE

- 8.1. The parties hereby declare that nothing in this “Notes to Applicants” or the application form confers or purports to confer on any third party any benefit or any right to enforce any term of this “Notes

to Applicants” or the application form pursuant to the Contracts (Rights of Third Parties) Ordinance (Chapter 623 of the Laws of Hong Kong).

9. ENQUIRIES

- 9.1. For enquiries relating to the procedures and status of applications of study sponsorship and scholarship, please contact the GLTMS.
- 9.2. For enquiries relating to the procedures and status of applications of professional training and assessment sponsorship, as well as general enquiries regarding the Scheme, please contact GLTMS at ufsf@devb.gov.hk or 2848 2334. Alternatively, applicants may visit the Scheme’s website <https://www.greening.gov.hk/ufsf/en/introduction/index.html> for more information.