

Application for Study Sponsorship Scheme

Notes to Programme Providers

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. Programme Providers which are interested in having their relevant programmes be listed as recognised programmes shall submit applications to the Greening, Landscape and Tree Management Section (“GLTMS”) of the DEVB (except categories (3) and (4) of study sponsorship).

2. ENLISTING AS RECOGNISED PROGRAMMES

(Only applicable to categories (1) and (2) of study sponsorship and scholarship)

- 2.1. Programmes fulfilling all the following criteria are eligible for enlisting as recognised programmes:
 - (a) For study sponsorship, qualified programmes are full-time or part-time programmes at Level 2 to Level 5 of the Qualifications Framework (QF) related to arboriculture, tree management and tree work (e.g. chainsaw operation and tree climbing), and which have not been covered by other forms of government subsidy to the students. Examples to be excluded are programmes covered by the Study Subsidy Scheme for Designated Professionals/Sectors or the Vplus Engineering, and programmes offered by the Employees Retraining Board.
 - (b) For scholarship, qualified programmes are full-time programmes at Level 5 of the QF related to arboriculture and tree management.
- 2.2. Programme Providers, if interested, shall submit a duly completed Recognised Programme Application Form (UFSFRP06 (5/2024)) to the GLTMS via e-mail at ufsf@devb.gov.hk.
- 2.3. The GLTMS may individually approach Programme Providers directly for further information in relation to their applications.
- 2.4. The GLTMS accepts applications throughout the year. Programme Providers shall submit their applications in advance to avoid delayed commencement of programme.
- 2.5. The GLTMS will issue result notifications within one month after receipt of complete set of application documents submitted by the Programme Providers.

- 2.6. Officially recognised programmes will be listed on the Scheme's website.
- 2.7. Unsuccessful applications will be notified in writing.

3. ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENT *(for Study Sponsorship category (1) and (2)) and Scholarship)*

- 3.1. Each Programme Provider shall authorise a responsible staff as representative to oversee all related matters under the Scheme. The responsible staff will also serve as a contact point between the Programme Provider and the GLTMS.

Before commencement of the recognised programme

- 3.2. Programme Providers shall collect completed application forms and all the necessary supporting documents from the applicants before commencement of the recognised programmes. Late applications will not be processed.
- 3.3. The GLTMS will assign a reference number to each application. Programme Providers shall take the responsibility to acknowledge receipt of each application to the applicants and notify them of the corresponding reference numbers.
- 3.4. For scholarship nomination, Programme Providers are required to develop their own selection criteria and mechanisms to the satisfaction of the GLTMS for nomination of high-calibre students attending recognised programme for scholarship in each academic year. The GLTMS will notify the Programme Provider the number of quota for scholarship to be allocated for each academic year.

Within one month after commencement of the recognised programme

- 3.5. Programme Providers must exercise due diligence to verify the information in the application forms as well as the supporting documents provided by the applicants.
- 3.6. For the eligibility of applicants and application procedures, please refer to the "Notes to Applicants" (UFSFNA05 (5/2024)).
- 3.7. Programme Providers are required to prepare and send a consolidated list of applicants to the GLTMS via e-mail by using a prescribed form for advance information and budgeting purpose within one month after commencement of each recognised programme.

Upon completion of the recognised programme

- 3.8. Programme Providers shall submit the documents listed below of each applicant to the GLTMS by the corresponding due dates –
 - (a) for study sponsorship application (within four months from the completion date of the recognised programme):
 - (i) a duly completed and signed Study Sponsorship Application Form (UFSFSP05 (5/2024)) with an authorised stamp chop of Programme Provider;
 - (ii) a copy of the tuition fee receipt; and
 - (iii) a copy of the transcript / assessment record and certificate.
 - (b) for scholarship application (within four months from the end of each semester /academic year, subject to the mode of scholarship):
 - (i) a duly completed and signed Scholarship Application Form (UFSFSC05 (5/2024)) with an authorised stamp chop of Programme Provider (in the first academic year) **AND** 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/or

a list of nominees following the agreed criteria and mechanism with their relevant information as requested by the GLTMS;

- (ii) a copy of the tuition fee receipt of that particular semester / academic year;
- (iii) a copy of the transcript / assessment record and certificate; and
- (iv) after satisfactory completion of the recognised programme, a proof of employment in support of having relevant work experience in the arboriculture and horticulture industry (within six months after completion of the recognised programme).

4. ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENT

(for Study Sponsorship category (3) and (4))

- 4.1. Each Programme Provider shall authorise a responsible staff as representative to oversee all related matters under the Scheme. The responsible staff will also serve as a contact point between the Programme Provider and the GLTMS.
- 4.2. Programme Providers shall submit the documents listed below within one year after the completion of recognised professional training and assessment to the GLTMS –
 - (a) a consolidated list of applicants (submit via e-mail);
 - (b) applicants' duly completed and signed Study Sponsorship Application Form (UFSFPTA01 (5/2024)) with an authorised stamp chop of Programme Provider;
 - (c) a copy of the tuition / assessment fee receipt; and
 - (d) a copy of the transcript / assessment record and certificate.
- 4.3. The Programme Provider should contact the GLTMS directly if arrangement cannot be made in accordance to 4.2 above,

5. REIMBURSEMENT ARRANGEMENT FOR INDIVIDUAL APPLICANTS

- 5.1. ONLY tuition / assessment fee will be covered by the study sponsorship or scholarship. Application fees are not included.
- 5.2. Applications with incomplete information or missing documents will not be processed.
- 5.3. The GLTMS will process all applications and grant the study sponsorship or scholarship by direct credit to the bank account nominated by the applicant / nominee.
- 5.4. The name of the applicant / nominee 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.
- 5.5. Reimbursement will be made by direct credit to the designated bank account nominated by the applicant / nominee within three months upon complete submissions.
- 5.6. All remittance advice will be sent via e-mail. Unless there is no e-mail address provided, it will be sent by post.
- 5.7. According to individual recognised programmes, the GLTMS will notify the respective Programme

Providers of (i) the list of successful applications, (ii) the approved amounts of scholarship or study sponsorship, and/or (iii) the list of unsuccessful applications via the consolidated list.

6. IMPORTANT POINTS

- 6.1. Programme Providers shall prohibit their directors, employees, agents and other personnel who are in any way involved in the Scheme from offering to or soliciting or accepting from any person any advantages (e.g. money, gift, etc.) as defined in the Prevention of Bribery Ordinance (Chapter 201 of the Laws of Hong Kong) (“PBO”) in the conduct of or in relation to the Scheme. It is an offence under the PBO to offer any advantages to an employee of the GLTMS as an inducement to or reward for facilitating or expediting the processing of applications.
- 6.2. The Programme Provider agrees and undertakes -
- (a) to 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;
 - (b) to ensure the observance by its employees, agents, sponsors, promoters, contractors, licensees and all other persons engaged of the National Security Law and any other laws of Hong Kong in relation to the safeguarding of national security; and
 - (c) not to 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.
- 6.3. 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.
- 6.4. In any event of any inconsistency between the English and Chinese versions of this “Notes to Programme Providers”, the English version shall prevail.

7. GOVERNMENT DISCLAIMERS

- 7.1. Whilst the information provided by the Government in this “Notes to Programme Providers” 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 Programme Providers” 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 Programme Providers” 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 on matters related to the Scheme, please contact GLTMS at ufsf@devb.gov.hk or 2848 2334.
- 9.2. Programme Providers may visit the Scheme’s website at <https://www.greening.gov.hk/ufsf/en/introduction/index.html> for more information.