

Key Features of the Hong Kong Scholarship
for Excellence Scheme (HKSES)

Duration

The HKSES will benefit three cohorts of students, with up to 100 students per cohort, starting from the 2015/16 academic year and then its effectiveness will be reviewed by the Steering Committee.

Application Deadline

Students who wish to apply for the scholarship for studies commencing in the 2015/16 academic year have to upload the completed application form and supporting documents, including the written confirmation of receipt by the relevant universities/institutions, onto the HKSES website on or before 31 January 2015.

Considering that the application period for universities/programmes in Mainland would normally start from mid February to April 2015, applicants will need to provide written confirmation of receipt by the relevant universities/institutions in the Mainland on or before end April 2015.

Eligibility

To be eligible for the HKSES, applicants are required to meet the following two criteria:

- (a) have right of abode or right to land, or have entered Hong Kong on One-way Permits; and
- (b) have resided in Hong Kong continuously for three complete years immediately prior to the commencement of the academic programme outside Hong Kong.

For undergraduate programmes, only students receiving their formal school education in Hong Kong are eligible. This would cover all Hong Kong students who receive senior secondary education in Hong Kong, including those studying local (e.g. Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education) and non-local (e.g. International

Baccalaureate) curricula in Hong Kong.

For postgraduate programmes, which may cover those of master and doctoral degrees or equivalent levels, students who have obtained their undergraduate qualifications either in or outside Hong Kong are eligible, provided that they meet the criteria set out in (a) & (b) above.

Applicants may indicate up to three universities and programmes in their applications and provide documentary proofs showing that they have already applied for the chosen universities and programmes in support of their applications for scholarship.

Selection

The Steering Committee will adopt a merit-based approach to selection, targeting the best and most outstanding Hong Kong students who are admitted to world renowned universities or programmes. Selection will be based on the academic achievements and other attributes such as leadership qualities and potential, contribution and commitment to the society, etc. To facilitate an objective and rigorous selection, the Steering Committee will adopt a three-stage selection process – preliminary screening, shortlisting and interview.

1. *Preliminary screening (February to April 2015)*: Upon receipt of the applications, the Secretariat will conduct preliminary screening based on the academic results and choices of university/programme. Each applicant is allowed to list 3 universities/programmes in order of priority in their applications. When assessing the choices of universities/programmes, reference will be made to the top 100 universities/institutions in each of the 4 world university ranking tables lately published by QS, Shanghai Jiao Tong University, Times Higher Education and US News and World Report respectively; and the top 30 colleges in the latest National Liberal Arts Colleges Rankings published by the US News and World Report. Choices not listed in these lists will still be considered subject to justification provided by the applicants. Consolidated details of the applications will be ranked in priority order for consideration and shortlisting by the Steering Committee at the second stage.
2. *Shortlisting (April to May 2015)*: The shortlisting process will involve assessment of both academic achievements and non-academic attributes of the

applicants with a view to coming up a pool of selected applicants for interview. Other factors such as the reason for choosing their areas of study and universities/programmes, their personal statement on how the scholarship could help them realise their aspiration, their career plan after graduation and how they could contribute to Hong Kong's future development will also be considered. Shortlisted applicants will be notified individually.

3. *Interviewing (May to August 2015)*: Shortlisted applicants who have received confirmed offers from the chosen universities and programmes will be invited to attend interviews during which the overall credential of the applicants will be assessed by face-to-face interviews. Selection of the final awardees will rest with the Steering Committee having regard to the assessment given by the interview panels on individual applicants.

Initially up to 100 scholarships will be awarded each year. Whilst there will be no pre-determined split of or quotas for awardees at undergraduate and postgraduate levels, the HKSES will primarily benefit students pursuing studies at undergraduate level. The selection will also cover applications for study in design, arts, sports or other unconventional disciplines in reputable specialised institutions.

Scholarship and Bursary

All awardees of HKSES will receive a non-means-tested scholarship to cover their tuition fees, subject to a ceiling of \$250,000 per student per annum, whichever is lower. Financially needy students may also apply for the means-tested bursary, subject to a ceiling of \$200,000 per student per annum. The bursary will consist of two components, i.e. up to \$50,000 per annum for covering tuition fee in excess of \$250,000; and up to \$150,000 per annum for covering living and other study-related expenses. The value of the award may be correspondingly reduced if an awardee also receives other awards to finance his/her same studies overseas.

For the means-tested bursary, the same means test formula of the Student Financial Assistance Agency applicable to local tertiary students would be adopted. However, as awardees will be away from Hong Kong during their studies, the means test will be conducted only once, before their departure and applicable throughout the entire period of study rather than on an annual basis, unless the awardees encounter significant changes in their family circumstances which warrant reassessment.

Once awarded, a scholarship will last for the normal duration of the concerned programme in respect of undergraduate studies and up to two years in respect of all postgraduate studies. It will be renewable annually subject to the provision of satisfactory documentary proof of the awardees' good academic performance.

Undertaking to Return to Work in Hong Kong

Awardees would be required to complete the specific study programme and undertake to return to Hong Kong upon graduation to work for at least two years or a period equivalent to the duration of receiving the scholarship, whichever is longer. However, the Steering Committee will have the flexibility to decide, upon application on a case-by-case basis, whether the requirement to undertake to return to and work in Hong Kong could be suitably deferred or waived under exceptional circumstances.