

HKSAR Government Scholarship Fund

Report on the Distribution of Scholarships in the 2023/24 Academic Year

The Government established in 2008 the \$1 billion HKSAR Government Scholarship Fund (the Fund) to provide scholarships for outstanding students pursuing full-time publicly-funded programmes at degree or above level in Hong Kong. With a view to further developing Hong Kong into an international hub for post-secondary education, several subsequent injections were made to the Fund, providing more scholarship places or different types of scholarship, including those for sub-degree students.

2. Participating institutions¹ distributed scholarships to outstanding local and non-local students enrolled in their publicly-funded full-time degree and above level programmes, with selection made having regard to the following considerations –

- (a) excellent performance in academic studies;
- (b) recognised contribution to the institution/society;
- (c) demonstrated leadership and good communication skills; and/or
- (d) strong commitment to the Hong Kong community.

3. Once awarded, a scholarship, which is now known as the Scholarships for Outstanding Performance (SOP), will be tenable for the normal duration of the programme concerned and renewable annually subject to satisfactory academic performance of the awardees. Both local and non-local students are eligible for SOP, with \$40,000 per year for local students and \$80,000 per year for non-local students.

¹ Participating institutions are the eight University Grants Committee-funded institutions (i.e. City University of Hong Kong (CityU), Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU), Lingnan University (LU), the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK), the Education University of Hong Kong (EdUHK), the Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU), the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST), and the University of Hong Kong (HKU)) and the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts (HKAPA).

Injection of \$250 million into the Fund

4. In 2011, the Government injected another \$250 million into the Fund to extend SOP to students of full-time publicly-funded sub-degree programmes offered by five institutions². The following selection criteria are adopted for awarding scholarships –

- (a) high standard of academic performance;
- (b) demonstration of leadership and good communication skills;
- (c) valuable contribution to the institution/community; and/or
- (d) strong commitment to the Hong Kong community.

The scholarship award for the sub-degree students is between \$20,000 and \$30,000 for both local and non-local students.

Targeted Scholarship Scheme

5. Launched in the 2016/17 academic year, and starting from the 2019/20 academic year, Belt and Road Scholarship under the Targeted Scholarship Scheme (TSS) has been expanded via the following –

- (a) Belt and Road Scholarship (Designated Countries) – for students from Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Myanmar, Mongolia and Kazakhstan (starting from the 2024/25 academic year);
- (b) Belt and Road Scholarship (Other Countries) – for students from Belt and Road countries other than Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Myanmar, Mongolia and Kazakhstan (starting from the 2024/25 academic year); and
- (c) Belt and Road Scholarship (Research Postgraduate) – for research postgraduate students from Belt and Road countries.

6. Categories (a) and (b) will be awarded to non-local students pursuing full-time publicly-funded undergraduate studies in Hong Kong, while category (c) supports non-local students from B&R countries

² By then, five institutions [i.e. CityU, PolyU, EdUHK, HKAPA and Vocational Training Council (VTC)] offered full-time publicly-funded sub-degree programmes. Subsequently, CityU and PolyU have ceased to offer full-time publicly-funded sub-degree programmes from the 2022/23 academic year onwards.

pursuing full-time publicly-funded research postgraduate programmes in Hong Kong. The B&R Scholarship covers students applying for first-year studies only. All scholarships under TSS cover the full tuition fees of the scholarship recipients and are tenable for the normal duration of the programmes concerned, and are renewable annually, subject to satisfactory academic performance.

7. Starting from the 2019/20 academic year, Targeted Scholarship (introduced in the 2012/13 academic year for students from ASEAN countries, India, and Korea) has ceased to be offered as this group of students can be well covered by the three sub-types of Belt and Road scholarship. Targeted Scholarship was awarded to the recipients of previous cohorts based on their satisfactory academic performance. All awardees of Targeted Scholarship graduated by the 2023/24 academic year.

Additional injection of \$1 billion into the Fund

8. An additional \$1 billion was injected into the Fund in 2012, and two new scholarships and awards, namely the Talent Development Scholarship (TDS) and Reaching Out Award (ROA) have been established in the 2012/13 academic year to benefit a wider range of students not only with outstanding academic performance, but also achievements and talents in other non-academic fields.

9. The scholarship amount for each awardee in TDS and ROA is \$10,000 for both local and non-local students enrolled in full-time publicly-funded programmes at sub-degree or above levels in Hong Kong.

Further injection of \$20 million into the Fund

10. Another \$20 million was injected into the Fund in 2013 to set up the Endeavour Merit Award (EMA) to give recognition to deserving publicly-funded post-secondary students with special educational needs (SEN³) in the pursuit of excellence in academic and other areas. Starting from the 2019/20 academic year, the award amount has been adjusted to

³ SEN includes specific learning difficulties, intellectual disability, autism spectrum disorder, attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder, physical disability, visual impairment, hearing impairment, speech and language impairment, and others.

\$15,000 for both local and non-local students pursuing full-time publicly-funded sub-degree or above level programmes in Hong Kong.

Additional Injection of \$800 million into the Fund

11. A further injection of \$800 million was approved by the Legislative Council in 2018 for awarding more scholarships from the 2019/20 academic year onwards, with a view to further encouraging students to pursue excellence in academic and non-academic fields.

Another Injection of \$1 billion into the Fund

12. In 2024, the Government injected \$1 billion into the Fund to increase the annual quota of the Belt and Road Scholarship by 50% starting from the 2024/25 academic year.

Distribution of scholarships in the 2023/24 academic year

13. In the 2023/24 academic year, around \$138 million was allocated to 5 618 awardees from the participating institutions. 4 640 awardees were students from full-time publicly-funded programmes at degree and above levels and 978 awardees were from sub-degree programmes. Among them, the number of local and non-local recipients were 4 161 and 1 457 respectively. Distribution by type of scholarships and awards are summarised below –

(a) Scholarships for Outstanding Performance

A total of 846 scholarships was awarded to degree and above students, 372 of whom were new recipients. For sub-degree students, 546 scholarships were awarded with 469 new recipients.

(b) Belt and Road Scholarship

Summaries of the distribution of Belt and Road Scholarship by institution are listed as follows –

Belt and Road Scholarship - Number of awardees (2023/24 academic year)								
Institution	Indonesia (10)	Malaysia (10)	Thailand (10)	Myanmar (10)	Mongolia (5)	Other Countries (30)	Research Postgraduate (25)	Total (100)
CityU	2	-	1	3	1	3	7	17
HKBU	1	1	-	2	-	7	2	13
LU	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	3
CUHK	2	3	4	-	-	5	3	17
EdUHK	-	-	-	-	-	2	3	5
PolyU	-	2	2	-	-	4	3	11
HKUST	3	2	1	1	2	5	1	15
HKU	2	2	2	4	2	4	3	19
Total	10	10	10	10	5	30	25	100

Note: Quotas for individual scholarship schemes are shown in brackets.

(c) Talent Development Scholarship

The Talent Development Scholarship (TDS) has been introduced since the 2012/13 academic year to recognise students not only of outstanding academic performance but also with achievements and talents in non-academic fields. Among the 1 292 TDS recipients in the 2023/24 academic year, 1 172 recipients were studying degree and above level programmes and 120 were from sub-degree programmes. The largest category of the nominations by the institutions was from sports and games. The breakdown by type of non-academic area is as follows –

Non-academic area	No. of recipients (%)
Sports and games (e.g. The 11th National Games for Persons with Disabilities, Hong Kong Roller Freestyle Skating Open Championships, etc.)	702 (54%)
Innovation, science and technology (e.g. World Robot Olympiad (WRO), Hong Kong Cyber Security New Generation Capture the Flag (CTF) Challenge, etc.)	335 (26%)
Culture, arts and design (e.g. International Criminal Court Moot Court Competition, Hong Kong Jewellery Design Competition, etc.)	151 (12%)
Music and performing arts (e.g. Golden Bells International Composition Contest, Hong Kong Ballet Group Stars Award, etc.)	104 (8%)
Total	1 292 (100%)

(d) Reaching Out Award

The Reaching Out Award (ROA) has been introduced since the 2012/13 academic year to support meritorious students who are nominated by institutions to participate in learning, internship or service programmes, as well as national, regional and international events and competitions that are conducted outside Hong Kong. Among the 2 355 ROA recipients in the 2023/24 academic year, 2 120 recipients were studying degree and above level programmes and 235 were from sub-degree programmes. The largest category of the nominations received by the institutions was attending courses (54%), followed by field/study trip (26%), participation in event/competition (11%), and placement/internship (9%).

On the destinations for ROA, a wide variety has been observed. Almost half of the recipients chose to visit Europe, while some activities took place in Asia (including the Mainland) and America. The duration of reaching out activities ranged from less than two weeks to more than two months, and almost half of them were more than two months.

(e) Endeavour Merit Award

To underline the importance in giving recognition to deserving post-secondary students with special educational needs (SEN), the Endeavour Merit Award (EMA) has been introduced since the 2013/14 academic year. Among the 248 EMA recipients in the 2023/24 academic year, 171 awardees were studying degree and above programmes and 77 were from sub-degree programmes. The breakdown by types of SEN is as follows –

Type of SEN	No. of recipients (%)
Specific Learning Difficulties	42 (17%)
Mental Illness	41 (17%)
Attention Deficit / Hyperactivity Disorder	40 (16%)
Hearing Impairment	21 (9%)
Autism Spectrum Disorder	15 (6%)
Physical Disability	13 (5%)
Visual Impairment	6 (2%)
Speech and Language Impairment	2 (1%)
Others*	68 (27%)
Total	248 (100%)

** including multiple types of disabilities and visceral disabilities, etc.*

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