

## Hostels in the City Scheme

### Frequently Asked Questions

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| <b>A Policy Matters</b>  |
| <b>A1 What is the policy objective of the Hostels in the City Scheme (the Scheme)?</b>   |
| <p>To consolidate Hong Kong's status as an international hub for post-secondary education, the Chief Executive announced in the 2024 Policy Address that the Development Bureau (DEVB) and the Education Bureau (EDB) would launch a pilot scheme to streamline development control procedures, so as to encourage the market to convert commercial buildings into student hostels to increase the supply of student accommodation. As such, DEVB and EDB officially launched the Hostels in the City Scheme on 21 July 2025.</p>  |
| <b>B Scheme Arrangements</b>   |
| <b>B1 What application documents should interested applicants refer to?</b>  |
| <p>Interested applicants may visit the dedicated website of the Scheme (<a href="http://www.studenthostel.gov.hk">www.studenthostel.gov.hk</a>) to refer to the Application Guidelines and Application Form. For further questions about the application procedures, applicants may contact EDB directly. Also, the Development Projects Facilitation Office (DPFO) under DEVB will provide one-stop facilitation service for applicants, including enquiries about facilitation measures and application progress, etc.</p> <p>For application matters:<br/>EDB<br/>Tel: 3509 8533<br/>Email: <a href="mailto:studenthostel@edb.gov.hk">studenthostel@edb.gov.hk</a></p> <p>For development facilitation:<br/>DPFO<br/>Tel: 3841 7286<br/>Email: <a href="mailto:dpfo@devb.gov.hk">dpfo@devb.gov.hk</a></p> |
| <b>B2 Is there an application deadline for the Scheme?</b>   |
| <p>No. The Scheme was officially launched on 21 July 2025. Interested applicants may submit applications at any time.</p>  |

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| <b>B3</b> | <b>Is the Scheme only applicable to conversion projects but not newly built and redeveloped student hostels?</b>   |
|           | <p>Yes, the Scheme is only applicable to converting existing buildings into student hostels. The policy objective of the Scheme is to increase the supply of student accommodation in the short run, and conversion works typically take less time than constructing new hostels. Therefore, the Scheme currently focuses on facilitating conversion projects with a view to alleviating the shortage of student hostels as soon as possible.</p>  |
| <b>B4</b> | <b>Why are industrial buildings and buildings in industrial zonings ineligible for conversion into student hostels under the Scheme?</b>   |
|           | <p>As medium- to long-term accommodation option, a certain level of livability is expected for eligible student hostels under the Scheme. Although industrial buildings are not strictly confined to industrial areas, the neighbourhood of industrial buildings are less likely to be as habitable as that of commercial buildings. As such, industrial buildings (including industrial buildings on “Other Specified Use (Business)” (“OU(B)”) sites) are not eligible under the Scheme.</p> <p>Having said that, industrial buildings that have undergone wholesale conversion are in effect not industrial buildings but commercial buildings instead, provided that the relevant land administration procedures have been completed, and are hence eligible under the Scheme.</p>   |
| <b>B5</b> | <b>Is partial conversion of a commercial building into student hostel allowed under the Scheme?</b>  |
|           | <p>Yes, partial conversion is allowed under the Scheme. However, to ensure the quality and livability of hostels, partially converted student hostels must fulfill relevant conditions, including that there should not be excessively multiple uses co-existing in the building; that the student hostel portion should not be scattered across different parts of the building and no half-storey conversion; and that effective access control must be in place at the student hostel portion (e.g. access to student hostel area is guarded by facial recognition system or key cards, etc.).</p> <p>Based on the information submitted by the applicant, including the indicative plans submitted alongside the application and the general building plans submitted to the Buildings Department (BD) subsequently, DPFO will assist EDB in determining whether the proposed partial conversion project fulfills the relevant conditions.</p> |
| <b>B6</b> | <b>What types of students may occupy eligible student hostels under the Scheme?</b>  |
|           | <p>Full-time local or non-local students (including exchange students) enrolled in locally accredited sub-degree (e.g., Associate Degree, Higher Diploma) or degree (e.g., undergraduate, master, and doctorate) programs at specified government-funded or</p>  |

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| <p>self-financing institutions are eligible to occupy student hostels under the Scheme.</p> <p>A list of eligible institutions is promulgated on the Scheme's dedicated website.</p>  |
| <p><b>B7 If student hostels under the Scheme cease operations, how are student tenants' interests protected?</b></p>  |
| <p>The applicants must sign a statutory declaration that should the student hostel ceases operations, the operator must notify the government and tenants at least 12 months in advance and take reasonable measures to assist tenants in finding alternative accommodation. If the operator fails to comply with the requirements under the declaration, the Government will take appropriate enforcement actions, including legal actions, etc.</p>   |
| <p><b>B8 Are there rent level restrictions for student hostels under the Scheme?</b></p>  |
| <p>Since student hostels under the Scheme are self-financing and privately-funded, no rent level restrictions are imposed under the Scheme.</p>   |
| <p><b>C Facilitation Measures</b></p>   |
| <p><b>C1 What facilitation measures can eligible applicants enjoy when converting commercial buildings into student hostels?</b></p>  |
| <p><b>In terms of planning</b>, the Town Planning Board has expanded the definition of 'hotel' use under the planning regime to include eligible student hostels under the Scheme. As a result, no planning procedures would be required for converting commercial buildings into student hostels in most commercial sites; whereas for most "OU(B)" sites, only planning permission is required. <b>Under the buildings regime</b>, eligible student hostels are treated as non-domestic buildings for plot ratio and site coverage calculations; facilities previously exempted from gross floor area (GFA) calculations before conversion can be retained and continued to be exempted from GFA calculations. Developers/operators may flexibly convert these facilities (e.g. gyms, study rooms, etc.) so that the hostel better suits the study and daily needs of the student tenants. For details, please refer to Practice Note PNAP APP-173 promulgated by BD. <b>As for land administration</b>, since it is expected that the leases of most commercial buildings do not prohibit the use of student hostel, we anticipate that converting commercial buildings into student hostels does not require lease modification or waiver application most of the time.</p> |

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| <b>C2</b> | <b>If EDB has confirmed the application’s eligibility, does that mean the applicant is guaranteed to secure approvals under the planning, buildings, and lands regimes?</b>   |
|           | EDB will confirm whether an applicant meets the eligibility criteria laid down by EDB. However, while eligible applicants may enjoy various facilitation under the development control regimes, all applicable development control requirements must also be complied with, so that the relevant student hostel conversion projects may be implemented. In other words, <b>EDB’s policy support does not automatically guarantee approval of all relevant development applications.</b>   |
| <b>C3</b> | <b>For converted commercial buildings under the Government’s “Revitalisation Scheme for Industrial Buildings” (Revitalisation Scheme), is application for lease modification/waiver required for student hostel use?</b>  |
|           | Whether a converted commercial building under the Revitalisation Scheme requires a further lease modification/waiver to be used as a student hostel depends on individual cases and the terms of the lease/waiver to be modified. For industrial buildings having undergone wholesale conversion under the “Revitalisation Scheme for Industrial Buildings” with waiver fee waived, if further waiver application is needed for use as a student hostel under the Scheme, we will continue to waive the relevant waiver fee, provided that the relevant conditions under the Revitalisation Scheme are still met.   |
| <b>C4</b> | <b>Is there a cap for GFA exemption for student hostel facilities?</b>  |
|           | <p>To encourage developers/operators to provide hostel facilities that are conducive to students’ learning and daily needs, these facilities may be exempted from GFA calculations.</p> <p>For projects with redundant GFA-exempted facilities of less than 5% of the total GFA of the student hostel, it can have hostel facilities up to 5% of the total GFA of the student hostel; for projects with redundant GFA-exempted facilities more than 5% of the total GFA of the student hostel, it may be allowed to convert all such redundant facilities into hostel facilities. Exemption of hostel facilities exceeding 5% of the total GFA of an eligible student hostel from GFA calculation would be considered on a case-by-case basis. For details, please refer to Practice Note PNAP APP-173 promulgated by BD.</p> |
| <b>D</b>  | <b>Others</b>   |
| <b>D1</b> | <b>Can private student hostels which do not join the Scheme continue to operate?</b>  |
|           | Yes. The Scheme aims to provide incentives and a clear framework to encourage the market to provide more student accommodation. Existing and future private student hostels not joining the Scheme can continue to operate, just that they cannot enjoy the facilitation measures under the Scheme.   |

**D2 If the applicant plans to convert its licensed hotel into a student hostel, does the Scheme requires the applicant to relinquish the hotel license?**

No, whether a student hostel under the Scheme continues to hold a hotel license is the applicant's own business decision. However, by choosing to run a licensed hotel under the Hotel and Guesthouse Accommodation Ordinance, the developer/operator of the relevant student hostel must continue to comply with the licensing conditions. Otherwise, the license may be cancelled or suspended, or renewal of the license may be refused.