



Immigration Department
The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region

Guidebook for Entry for Study in Hong Kong

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I. Introduction

This guidebook sets out the entry arrangement for persons who wish to enter the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) for study.

II. Eligibility Criteria

2. An application for a visa/entry permit to enter the HKSAR for study may be favourably considered if :

- (a) the applicant:
 - (i) is admitted to a private school registered under the Education Ordinance (Cap. 279) or Post Secondary Colleges Ordinance (Cap. 320). Except for post-secondary education, entry for study in public or aided schools (other than English Schools Foundation Schools and Direct Subsidy Scheme Schools) is not permitted;
 - (ii) takes up studies in a full-time locally-accredited post-secondary programme including short-term course or part-time locally-accredited taught postgraduate local programme¹;
 - (iii) is admitted on exchange in full-time locally-accredited local programmes at sub-degree level for not more than 6 months or on exchange in full-time locally-accredited local or non-local programmes for not more than one year at undergraduate or above level; or
 - (iv) is enrolled in a full-time course on the register of non-local higher education or professional courses as set up under the Non-local Higher and Professional Education (Regulation) Ordinance (Cap. 493);
- (b) the applicant is:
 - (i) from the age of 5 years and 8 months to 11 for primary education; or
 - (ii) below the age of 20 for secondary education;
- (c) the applicant holds a school acceptance letter to confirm that he/she has been accepted for a course of study; and
- (d) the applicant is able to meet the fees for the course, the living expenses for his/her maintenance and accommodation without working and without recourse to public funds.

¹ Local programmes refer to programmes leading to degrees awarded by local degree-awarding institutions whereas non-local programmes refer to programmes leading to degrees awarded solely by non-local institutions, irrespective of whether the programmes are jointly run by local and non-local institutions.

3. This entry arrangement does not apply to:
- (a) Chinese residents of the Mainland of China (the Mainland) and Taiwan;
 - (b) former Mainland Chinese residents settled in Macao Special Administrative Region (SAR) who were not settled there by 14 January 1979; and
 - (c) nationals of Afghanistan, Cambodia, Cuba, Laos, Korea (Democratic People's Republic of), Nepal and Vietnam.

4. However, provided that the conditions in sub-paragraphs 2(c) & (d) above are met, Chinese residents of the Mainland, Macao SAR and Taiwan as listed in sub-paragraphs 3(a) & (b) above may apply for entry to take up:

- (a) studies in full-time locally-accredited post-secondary local or non-local programmes^{2&3};
- (b) studies in part-time locally-accredited taught post-graduate local programmes⁴;
- (c) exchange in full-time locally-accredited local programmes at sub-degree level for not more than 6 months or exchange in full-time locally-accredited local or non-local programmes at undergraduate or above level for not more than one year³; or
- (d) full-time short-term studies, subject to the following conditions:
 - (i) the programme concerned is offered by Hong Kong higher education institutions with degree-awarding powers (excluding their continuing and professional education arms); and
 - (ii) the cumulative duration of short-term studies taken up by any student should not exceed 180 days within any 12-month period.

In addition, Chinese residents of the Mainland may also apply to attend secondary school level short-term exchange programmes approved by the Education Bureau of not more than 2 weeks, if accompanied by Mainland teachers.

² The agreement between the Mainland and the HKSAR on mutual recognition of degree awards in higher education is not applicable to sub-degree qualifications (i.e. associate degree and higher diploma). Mainland students may come to attend sub-degree level local programmes in the HKSAR since there is no restriction in the Mainland prohibiting them to pursue further studies at education institutions outside the Mainland on a personal basis.

³ Mainland students are only allowed to study in full-time locally-accredited local programmes.

⁴ The programmes to be taken up by Mainland students must be offered by the University Grants Committee (UGC)-funded institutions.

III. Application Procedures

Application Forms

5. Applicants should complete application form ID 995A. Sponsors should complete application form ID 995B. The application forms (ID 995A and ID 995B) can be obtained free of charge from the following offices:

- (a) Immigration Department Headquarters;
- (b) Immigration Branch Offices;
- (c) Overseas Chinese Diplomatic and Consular Missions; and
- (d) HKSAR Government offices outside Hong Kong.

The forms can also be downloaded from the Immigration Department's website at www.immd.gov.hk.

Sponsor in the HKSAR

6. To apply for entry for study, the applicant should nominate a local sponsor. A local sponsor can either be the education institution granting the acceptance or an individual. If the local sponsor is an individual, he/she should be:

- (a) of the age of 18 or above;
- (b) a bona fide Hong Kong resident;
- (c) acquainted with the applicant; and
- (d) financially capable to support the applicant and provide him/her with accommodation.

7. Besides, if the applicant is under the age of 18, one of the applicant's parents should authorise the sponsor or his/her relative/friend in the HKSAR to be the guardian of the applicant. A consent letter duly signed by both the guardian and one of the applicant's parents should be produced.

Supporting Documents

8. Please refer to the checklist in Part VIII.

Submission of Application

9. All the forms must be duly completed and signed. Where there are accompanying dependants (please refer to information in Part VI below), each dependant must complete and sign Part B of application form ID 995A. For an applicant or a

dependant under the age of 16, it must be signed by the parent or legal guardian. Completed application forms, i.e. ID 995A and ID 995B, and all supporting documents should be submitted in one of the following ways:

- (a) By post directly or through the local sponsor in the HKSAR to:
Receipt and Despatch Sub-Unit
Hong Kong Immigration Department
2/F, Immigration Tower
7 Gloucester Road
Wan Chai, Hong Kong
- (b) Applicants residing in overseas countries or territories may submit their application forms together with the relevant supporting documents and their travel documents in person to the nearest Chinese diplomatic and consular missions in their place of domicile.
- (c) Holders of foreign passports who are living in the Mainland may submit the application forms together with all supporting documents to the Immigration Division of the Office of the Government of the HKSAR in Beijing (Beijing Office). Applicants are required to produce their travel documents to the Immigration Division of the Beijing Office so that a visa/entry permit could be issued if the application is approved. The address of the Beijing Office is:

No. 71, Di'anmen Xidajie, Xicheng District
Beijing 100009
People's Republic of China

10. Applications from Chinese residents of the Mainland should be submitted to the Immigration Department through the education institution (the sponsor) granting the acceptance.

IV. Travel Documentation Requirement

11. A visa/entry permit label will be issued upon successful application. It should be collected by the sponsor from the Immigration Department for onward transmission to the successful applicant. For applications submitted to Chinese diplomatic and consular missions or the Immigration Division of the Beijing Office, visas/entry permits will be issued through the relevant Chinese diplomatic and consular mission or the Immigration Division of the Beijing Office as appropriate.

12. The visa/entry permit label should be affixed onto a blank visa page of the applicant's travel document for presentation to the immigration officer upon arrival in the HKSAR.

13. The successful applicant who is a Chinese resident of the Mainland should apply for an Exit-entry Permit for Travelling to and from Hong Kong and Macao (EEP) and a relevant exit endorsement from the Public Security Bureau office where his/her household registration is kept. The entry permit label should be affixed onto a blank endorsement page of the applicant's EEP on which his/her relevant exit endorsement has been obtained. The applicant should present the EEP for immigration examination upon arrival in the HKSAR. In case the applicant's EEP bearing the relevant exit endorsement is an electronic EEP, it should be presented together with the entry permit label issued to him/her for immigration arrival clearance.

V. Extension of Stay

14. In general, non-local students admitted to take up studies in full-time locally-accredited local and non-local post-secondary programmes will be granted a length of stay in line with the normal duration of their study programmes, subject to a maximum period of six years upon entry and the validity of the travel document held. For those studying other courses, they will normally be granted permission to stay for 12 months upon entry or in accordance with the duration of their studies, whichever is shorter.

15. Persons admitted for study may apply for extension of stay, if necessary, within 4 weeks before their limit of stay expires. Such applications will be considered only when the applicants continue to meet the eligibility criteria for entry for study. Extension of stay, if approved, will normally be on a yearly basis or in accordance with the duration of their studies, as appropriate.

VI. Entry of Dependants

16. Applicants admitted for study (in full-time undergraduate or post-graduate local programmes in local degree-awarding institutions) may apply to bring in their spouse and unmarried dependent children under the age of 18 to the HKSAR under the prevailing dependant policy. Persons admitted or applying for admission for study will be the sponsors of their accompanying dependants to the HKSAR. An application for admission of a dependant may be favourably considered if:

- (a) there is reasonable proof of a genuine relationship between the dependant and the sponsor;
- (b) there is no known record to the detriment of the dependant; and
- (c) the sponsor is able to support the dependant's living at a standard well above the subsistence level and provide him/her with suitable accommodation in the HKSAR.

17. This entry arrangement does not apply to:

- (a) former Mainland Chinese residents residing in the Macao SAR who have acquired residence in the Macao SAR through channels other than the One-way Permit Scheme; and
- (b) nationals of Afghanistan and Korea (Democratic People's Republic of).

18. Such dependants will normally be granted an initial stay of 12 months upon entry which is subject to annual extension upon application. Such application will be considered only when the applicant continues to meet the eligibility criteria for entry for residence as dependants and the sponsor remains a bona fide Hong Kong resident living in the HKSAR. Under the existing policy, while dependants whose sponsors have been admitted into the HKSAR for study may take up study in the HKSAR, they are prohibited from taking up employment in the HKSAR unless they have obtained prior permission from the Director of Immigration.

VII. Other Information

19. In general, unless a person has the right of abode or right to land in the HKSAR, he/she requires a visa/entry permit to study in the HKSAR. While each application is determined on its individual merits, an applicant should meet normal immigration requirements (such as holding a valid travel document with adequate returnability to his/her country of residence or citizenship; be of clear criminal record and raise no security or criminal concerns to the HKSAR; have no likelihood of becoming a burden on the HKSAR, etc.) as well as the relevant specific eligibility criteria detailed above before he/she may be considered for the grant of a visa/entry permit. It should be noted that the eligibility criteria may be subject to change from time to time.

Conditions of Stay

20. In general, a person who is admitted as student in the HKSAR shall be subject to the following conditions of stay:

- (a) he/she shall become a student only at a specified school, university or other education institution and undertake such course of study as may be approved by the Director of Immigration; and
- (b) he/she shall not:
 - (i) take up any employment, whether paid or unpaid; or
 - (ii) establish or join in any business.

21. Notwithstanding the employment restrictions as mentioned in paragraph 20(b) above, non-local students of full-time locally-accredited local or non-local programmes at undergraduate level or above whose study period is not less than one academic year may take up internship subject to the following conditions:

- (a) the internship must be study/curriculum-related and be arranged or endorsed by the institutions they are studying in⁵; and
- (b) the duration of the internship is up to one academic year, or one-third of the normal duration of the relevant full-time academic programme, whichever is shorter⁶.

There is no restriction on the nature of work, level of salary, location, number of working hours and employers for the internship arrangements.

22. As regards non-local students enrolled in full-time locally-accredited sub-degree local programmes with a study period not less than 2 academic years, they may also apply to take up an internship if the following conditions are met:

- (a) the internship must be mandatory, study/curriculum-related and be arranged / endorsed by the institutions they are studying in⁵; and
- (b) the duration of the internship is up to 6 months^{6 & 7}.

23. Moreover, non-local students (excluding exchange students) of full-time locally-accredited local programmes at undergraduate level or above whose study period is not less than one academic year may, during the currency of their limit of stay, take up:

⁵ The study/curriculum-related internship must be endorsed by designated officers of the relevant institution, not by individual offices, schools, faculties or faculty members.

⁶ The internship cannot take place before a non-local student has officially registered with the institution and begun attending any scheduled classes of his/her registered programme in the HKSAR, or when the student concerned has already fulfilled all the course/credit requirements for graduation (e.g. a student who has just finished his/her year of study).

⁷ The 6 months' duration is calculated on a cumulative basis of 26 weeks and is counted by calendar week as a unit regardless of the actual days being engaged in the internship within a week. The cumulative duration of 26 weeks need not be continuous.

- (a) part-time on-campus employment⁸ for not more than 20 hours per week⁹ throughout the year; and
- (b) employment during the summer months from 1 June to 31 August (both dates inclusive) without any limit in relation to work hours and location.

24. Eligible students will be notified of the internship, part-time on-campus employment and/or summer job arrangement individually by a “No Objection Letter” (NOL) which will spell out the type(s) and conditions of employment which the student may take up.

Termination of Study

25. If the education institution or student for any reason terminates studies before the completion of such a study course as approved by the Director of Immigration, the education institution should notify the Director of Immigration of the date of termination of study in writing with reasons for termination or provide the Director of Immigration with a completed “Notification of Termination of Studies” (ID 977) within 7 working days following the termination.

Re-entry into the HKSAR

26. Non-permanent residents of the HKSAR, irrespective of their nationality and type of travel document held, do not require a re-entry visa/entry permit to enter the HKSAR provided that they return within the currency of their permitted limit of stay and that the circumstances upon which they have acquired their residential status remain unchanged.

Payment of Fees

27. If the application is submitted to the Hong Kong Immigration Department directly, payment of fees should be made upon collection of the visa/entry permit in cash, by EPS or by cheque. The cheque should be crossed, made payable to “The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region”, properly dated and signed.

28. If the application is submitted to an overseas Chinese diplomatic and consular mission or the Immigration Division of the Beijing Office, the visa/entry permit fee should

⁸ The employment must take place within the campus of the institution (including only the campus of the institution which the non-local student is enrolled in, and excluding the campus of any subsidiary and associated bodies of the relevant institution proper or its self-financing arms) where the non-local student is studying or, if the work location is outside the campus of the institution, the employer is the institution itself.

⁹ Students are not allowed to roll over unused hours from one week to another.

be paid directly to the Chinese diplomatic and consular mission or the Immigration Division of the Beijing Office as appropriate.

Processing Time

29. It normally takes six weeks to process a visa/entry permit application for study upon receipt of all the required documents. The Immigration Department will not be able to start processing the application unless all the required documents and information have been received. Please refrain from making enquiries about the progress of the application unless it is absolutely necessary, as it may delay the processing of the application.

30. All applications are processed and determined by the Immigration Department. Approval of applications is entirely discretionary and is subject to changes in government policies. The Director of Immigration reserves absolute discretion to refuse any application even if the application meets all eligibility criteria.

Warning

31. It is an offence to make false statements or representations to an immigration officer. A person who knowingly and wilfully makes a statement or gives information which he/she knows to be false or does not believe to be true shall be guilty of an offence under the Laws of Hong Kong and any such visa/entry permit issued or permission to enter or remain in the HKSAR granted shall have no effect.

Disclaimer

32. The information in this guidebook serves as reference only. The Immigration Department of the HKSAR is not responsible for any loss or damage whatsoever arising out of or in connection with any information in this guidebook. The Immigration Department reserves the right to omit, suspend or edit any information in this guidebook at any time in its absolute discretion without giving any reason or prior notice. The Immigration Department further reserves the right to change the eligibility criteria and details of the arrangement set out above from time to time without prior notice.

Enquiries

33. For more information, please contact the Immigration Department by enquiry hotline at (852) 2824 6111, by fax at (852) 2877 7711 or by email to enquiry@immd.gov.hk; or visit the Immigration Department's homepage at www.immd.gov.hk.

VIII. Checklist of Forms and Documents to be Submitted

(A) Forms and Documents to be Submitted by the Applicant

Forms/Documents Required
Application for Entry for Study in Hong Kong (ID 995A)
The applicant's recent photograph (affixed on page 2 of the application form ID 995A)
Photocopy of the applicant's valid travel document containing personal particulars, date of issue, date of expiry and/or details of any re-entry visa held (if applicable). For an applicant who is currently staying in the HKSAR, photocopy of his/her travel document page containing the latest arrival stamp/extension of stay label in the HKSAR. A Chinese resident of the Mainland who has not been issued with a travel document may submit a photocopy of his/her People's Republic of China resident identity card.
Photocopy of the applicant's Hong Kong identity card (if any)
A letter of acceptance from the education institution
One of the applicant's parents should authorise the sponsor or his/her relative/friend in the HKSAR to be the guardian of the applicant. A consent letter duly signed by both the guardian and one of the applicant's parents should be produced. <i>[if the applicant is under the age of 18]</i>
Photocopy of proof of the applicant's accommodation arrangement <i>[if the applicant is under the age of 18]</i>
Photocopy of proof of the applicant's financial support, e.g. bank statements, savings account passbooks, tax receipts and salary slips <i>[if the sponsor is the education institution]</i>
Photocopy of the applicant's Macao identity card <i>[for Macao SAR residents only]</i>
Photocopy of the applicant's household registration in Taiwan and Taiwan identity card <i>[for Taiwan residents only]</i>

(B) *Forms and Documents to be Submitted by the Sponsor*

Forms/Documents Required
Application for Entry for Study (Sponsor) in Hong Kong (ID 995B)
An undertaking that the sponsor is prepared to provide accommodation to the applicant during his/her period of study in the HKSAR <i>[if the applicant is under the age of 18]</i>
Photocopy of the sponsor's Hong Kong identity card #
Photocopy of the sponsor's travel document containing personal particulars, date of issue, date of expiry, and the latest arrival stamp/extension of stay label in the HKSAR <i>[for non-permanent resident of the HKSAR only]</i> #
Photocopy of proof of the sponsor's financial standing, e.g. bank statements, savings account passbooks, tax receipts and salary slips; and an undertaking that the sponsor is prepared to provide financial support to the applicant during his/her period of study in the HKSAR #

Submission of the documents is not required if the sponsor is the education institution granting the acceptance.

(C) *Forms and Documents to be Submitted by Each Accompanying Dependant of an Applicant for Entry for Study*

Forms/Documents Required
The applicant's application form, Application for Entry for Study in Hong Kong (ID 995A) with Part B duly completed by the dependant
The dependant's recent photograph (affixed on page 2 of the application form ID 995A)
Photocopy of the dependant's valid travel document containing personal particulars, date of issue, date of expiry and/or details of any re-entry visa held (if applicable). For a dependant who is currently staying in the HKSAR, photocopy of his/her travel document page containing the latest arrival stamp/extension of stay label in the HKSAR. A Chinese resident of the Mainland who has not been issued with a travel document may submit a photocopy of his/her People's Republic of China resident identity card.
Photocopy of evidence of the applicant's relationship with the dependant, e.g. marriage certificate, birth certificate, family photographs, family letters (with envelopes), census record book and Privilege Card for Single Child (if applicable)
Photocopy of the dependant's Macao identity card <i>[for Macao SAR residents only]</i>
Photocopy of the dependant's household registration in Taiwan and Taiwan identity card <i>[for Taiwan residents only]</i>

(D) Forms and Documents to be Submitted by the Applicant for an Extension of Stay Application

Forms/Documents Required
Application for Extension of stay (ID 91)
Original and photocopy of the applicant's valid travel document and, where applicable, his/her previous travel document page showing the latest visa/entry permit label/arrival stamp/landing slip/extension of stay label in the HKSAR
Photocopy of the applicant's Hong Kong identity card
Current school letter addressed to the Immigration Department confirming that the student requires extension of stay to continue study

Important Notice:

1. Notwithstanding that the documents and information required have been furnished, applicants, accompanying dependants and sponsors may still be required to submit further supporting documents and information in connection with the applications when necessary.
2. Where a document is not in Chinese or English, it must be accompanied by a Chinese or English translation certified as a true translation by a sworn translator, court translator, authorised public translator, certified translator, expert translator or official translator.



Addendum

For the 2016/17 to 2020/21 academic years, Chinese residents of the Mainland may apply for entry to take up studies in full-time locally-accredited non-local programmes at undergraduate or above level which have been approved by the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China.

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