

# **Student Mobility Scheme (SMS) Guideline**

## **I. Overview**

The ACUCA Student Mobility Scheme was established in 2002, which aims to foster a better understanding of Asian Communities and culture among the students of the member institutions.

One of the objectives of the Association is to promote and facilitate the exchange of students. Institutions that have courses taught in English during the regular semesters agreed to waive tuition and other fees from the host institution. Financial assistance from the Association comes in the form of an airfare and living allowance subsidy.

Each member institution is entitled to have a maximum of two (2) slots under the scheme annually, i.e. one (1) nominee every semester.

## **II. Participating Institution**

All member institutions are presumed to be participants of the SMS. Newly accepted members of the Association, are expected to signify their intent to join in the program by completing the REPLY PROFORMA and GENERAL MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING. These documents shall be sent to the Secretariat.

There are a few member institutions at present that opted not to participate in the program anymore, i.e., whether they stopped sending outbound or receiving inbound students. In this case, termination of the agreement requires written notification at least one year before the date of termination, and students already admitted to and participating in the exchange program shall be allowed to complete the program.

## **III. Application Process**

There are three steps in nominating the qualified students to the program:

- 1) Eligibility
- 2) Nomination to SMS participating institution
- 3) Application for subsidies

Any participating institution ensures that the students are qualified and have the potential capability of finishing the program as evidenced by their respective academic track records. The selection process is left to the discretion of each sending institution.

The sending institution shall contact the host institution directly for the necessary admission requirements such as application deadline, cumulative grade point average (GPA), level of language competency, and other needed documents such as a student visa.

To ensure a successful application, the outbound exchange coordinator shall constantly communicate with the inbound coordinator of the host institution. Upon acceptance of the application, the sending institution shall furnish a copy of the nomination form to the Secretariat to confirm the number of students sent in the

exchange program. In addition, a LETTER of ACCEPTANCE from the host institution must be sought by the sending institution. Normally, the issuance of such a document takes time. Hence, the status of the student applicant to the SMS program shall be deemed *conditional*.

Those who are successfully accepted by the host institution are qualified to apply for both travel and living subsidies. The sending institution shall submit a duly accomplished SUBSIDY APPLICATION to the Secretariat.

#### **IV. Subsidy**

The participating students in the exchange program are responsible for providing their personal needs, such as accommodation fees, transportation expenses, books, insurance, and the like while studying abroad. The responsibility of the Association is limited only to the following subsidies:

- 1) Living Expenses
- 2) Travel

Host universities shall endeavor to provide or assist the exchange student in finding appropriate housing accommodation for the period of exchange. Living expenses subsidy is provided up to a maximum period of four (4) months. The amount of living expenses subsidy which is USD 500.00 per month is uniform regardless of the country of origin the recipient comes from or is going.

Travel Subsidy is limited to a maximum amount of USD 750.00 or the actual airfare, whichever is lower.

##### **a) Deadline for Nomination and Subsidy Request**

Period of Study	Application Deadline	Notification Date
Fall Semester	March 15 of the same year	May of the same year
Spring Semester	August 15 of the preceding year	October of the preceding year

Illustration:

Fall Semester 2024 - Application deadline March 15, 2024 – Notification May 2024  
Spring Semester 2025 – Application deadline August 15, 2024 – Notification October 2024

##### **b. Selection Process**

Upon receipt of the Nomination Form, Subsidy Application, and Letter of Acceptance, the Secretariat verifies all documents. The same shall be collated for ExCo approval. In any case where an applicant lacks any of the 3 documents, the same shall be deemed to be classified as a *conditional application*.

The Secretariat shall email the application's result to the respective home institutions.

##### **c. Method of Payment**

As practiced, the approved subsidies were paid as reimbursement to ensure that all the necessary documents were submitted, including the Student Activity Report.

To expedite the subsidy reimbursement, which shall be requested from the Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU) through the Secretariat, the participating/sending institution through its SMS coordinator shall send a digital copy with English translation of the following documents:

1. Letter of Acceptance or Certificate of Eligibility
2. Receipt/proof of payment and itinerary of flight tickets
3. SMS Student Report
4. Close-up photo, preferably 2 x 2 inches
5. Selected photos during the program – classroom, on campus, fieldwork, activity photo, and the like. These photos will be uploaded on the website along with the report.

The sending institution shall indicate the bank details to which HKBU shall send the total subsidy amount