

Social Work Training Fund (SWTF)

Guide to Applications for Partial Sponsorship in 2026-27

Part A – General

(1) Background of SWTF

The Social Work Training Fund (SWTF) is a trust fund established under the SWTF Ordinance (Cap. 1100). The amount of sponsorship allocated each year is subject to the financial situation of the SWTF.

(2) Purpose of SWTF partial sponsorship

Organisations not operating Social Welfare Department (SWD)-subvented welfare services¹ and individual social workers² may apply for grants from SWTF for training activities within the scope specified by SWTF primarily to enhance the knowledge and skills of social workers in Hong Kong.

(3) Types of training activities supported by SWTF

SWTF will support the following **two types** of training activities:

Type A	I. Partial sponsorship for organisations to organise study tours to the Chinese Mainland for social workers; or
	II. Partial sponsorship for organisations to arrange courses ³ held in Hong Kong for social workers.
Type B	Partial sponsorship for individual social workers ⁴ to attend short-term courses held in Hong Kong.

¹ Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) operating subvented welfare services can apply for Dedicated Fund. The scopes of the Dedicated Fund related to staff training cover training to enhance NGOs' management capacities and professional services, and understanding of national affairs (including Chinese Mainland exchange tours and national studies programmes). For details, please browse the following link – <https://www.swd.gov.hk/en/ngo/subventions/suballoc/dedifund>

² “Social workers” in the Guidance Notes and the Annexes shall mean “registered social workers (RSW)” as defined under Section 2 Interpretation of the Social Workers Registration Ordinance (Cap. 505).

³ Include training programmes of varied nature, such as seminars, workshops, lectures or conference.

⁴ Individual Social workers from organisations operating SWD-subvented welfare services and other organisations can apply.

(4) Scope of training activities supported by SWTF under Type A

SWTF will support the following types of training activities in 2026-27 –

- Type AI activities are to enhance the versatility and the competence of the social workers in Hong Kong in handling social welfare issues through professional exchange with their counterparts in the Chinese Mainland, and the activities could be study / interflow / training activities on (i) or (ii) below.
- Type AII / Type B training activities supported by SWTF are confined to the following two categories:
 - (i) **Specialised or advanced social work knowledge and skills**, include clinical social work techniques (e.g. family therapy and cognitive-behavioural therapy) and programmes addressing pressing social issues (e.g. child abuse prevention and suicide crisis intervention); or
 - (ii) **management skills for social work practice** (e.g. programme planning and evaluation, resource and financial management, leadership and team building, and human resource management in social service settings).

(5) Submission of applications

- (i) For Type A activities, applications should be made prior to the commencement of the programmes and during the prescribed application period, which should be held between November 2026 and August 2027.
- (ii) For Type B activities, individual social workers are required to submit applications through their nominating organisations. The organisations are requested to ensure that the applicants have completed the courses and passed the examination or attained at least 70% attendance (if no examination is required). They are also requested to confirm that the programmes are relevant to the present job of the applicants or are essential to the professional development of the applicants before putting up the applications. SWTF Committee Secretariat (hereafter “the Secretariat”) **accepts two rounds of applications in 2026-27**. Submission of application forms should reach the Secretariat not later than the deadline specified below.
- (iii) The schedule of processing applications for 2026-27 is as follows:

Type (Application Form)	Activities	Deadline for application	Announcement of result
Type A (Form A)	Partial sponsorship for organisation to organise study tours to the Chinese Mainland, or arrange courses held in Hong Kong	31 August 2026	November 2026

Type (Application Form)	Activities	Deadline for application	Announcement of result
Type B (Form B)	Partial sponsorship for social workers to attend short-term courses held in Hong Kong completed between: (a) 1 February 2026 and 31 August 2026 (b) 1 September 2026 and 31 January 2027	30 September 2026 26 February 2027	June 2027 June 2027

- (iv) All applications using the prescribed forms should reach the Secretariat at the following address by the above prescribed deadlines:

Social Work Training Fund Committee Secretariat
 Staff Development and Training Section
 Social Welfare Department
 Room 925, 9/F Revenue Tower
 5 Gloucester Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong

Late applications will not be considered. The forms can be downloaded from the Homepage of the Social Welfare Department, as listed below -

<https://www.swd.gov.hk/en/ngo/socialwork/>
(English version)

<https://www.swd.gov.hk/tc/ngo/socialwork/>
(Chinese version)

(6) Forms to be used in application

- (i) Type A activities - Form A (*please read **Part B** below in completing the form*); and
- (ii) Type B activities - Form B (*please read **Part C** below in completing the form*).

(7) SWTF grant

- (i) Applicants should note that all applications are subject to review and approval by the SWTF Committee. The Committee's decision on whether to approve an application and the amount approved is final.
- (ii) Grants are, unless otherwise specified, released by means of reimbursement after the completion of the training activities.

- (iii) All applications for reimbursement for Type A activities should be made **within 60 days** after the activities have been completed.

Part B – Application Details for <u>Type A</u> Activities
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(1) Scope of Activities

Sponsorship will be provided to organisations to organise study tours to the Chinese Mainland **or** arrange courses held in Hong Kong for their social workers.

(2) Target beneficiaries

- (i) The training activities should be organised **primarily for the social workers of the applicant organisations**. Collaboration among organisations and joint applications by more than one organisation are welcome to promote cross / inter-organisational learning.
- (ii) The applicant organisations may, provided that no marginal cost will be incurred, enrol on top of the social worker an extra 20% of non-social work staff. For instance, if the number of social workers is 25, providing that no marginal cost is incurred, the number of non-social work staff should not exceed 5 (i.e. 25 x 20%). However, **SWTF will not provide funding support for these non-social work staff**. The amount of grant will be adjusted according to the proportion of this group of participants in the programme.

(3) Level of sponsorship

- (i) To ensure a fair distribution of available resources, SWTF will sponsor only **one** study tour or local course for each organisation in 2026-27.
- (ii) For study tours to the Chinese Mainland (Type AI), 50% of the cost of each tour or a maximum grant of HK\$50,000, whichever is the less, will be sponsored. The study tour should have a delegation of **at least 10 social workers in Hong Kong** from the applicant organisation.
- (iii) If approved, the maximum grant will not exceed 50% (Type AI & AII activities) of the recognised budget plus central administrative cost, if applicable. The amount reimbursed for each item will not exceed 50% of the amount approved by SWTF or 50% of the actual amount incurred by the applicant for items previously approved by SWTF, whichever is lower. In case that the total sum of applications for SWTF grants exceeds the amount earmarked for the year, the sponsorship for the approved applications will be adjusted proportionally to the budget approved by the SWTF.
- (iv) For courses held in Hong Kong (Type AII), the maximum grant will not exceed 50% of the recognised budget plus the central administrative cost, if

applicable. For instance, out of the estimated expenditure of HK\$4,200 with the non-supported expenditure items amount to HK\$400, the recognised amount of expenditure will be HK\$3,800 and the maximum SWTF grant will not exceed HK\$1,900 (i.e. HK\$3,800 x 50%) plus the central administrative cost, if applicable.

- (v) In case that the total amount recognised for SWTF grants exceeds the amount earmarked by SWTF for that round of applications, the sponsorship for the approved applications **will be adjusted proportionally** to the budget approved by SWTF.

(4) Items covered by the sponsorship

All justifiable items directly related to the proposed training will be considered. The major items considered for sponsorship are listed below:

(I) For study tours to the Chinese Mainland –

The following items will be considered for sponsorship -

- (i) *Passage* – includes air passage (economy class only), departure tax, airport security charge, fuel-surcharge, high speed rail ticket (second class only), or cross border coach / bus fee
- (ii) *Accommodation*
- (iii) *Transportation* – transportation cost in the Chinese Mainland
- (iv) *Central administrative cost* – the central administrative cost is notional to cover the administrative costs in organising the tours. If approved, the level of grant on this item will be at 10% of the total amount of grant for the items supported by SWTF or the amount requested by the applicant organisations, whichever is the less.

The following items will NOT be sponsored -

- (v) Expenses on “travel insurance”, “long-distance call”, “internet service”, “postal charges”, “medical treatment”, “meals”, “drinks”, “refreshments”, “venue decoration”, “tips for the tour guide”, “souvenirs” etc.
- (vi) All Sight-seeing activities.

(II) For courses held in Hong Kong –

- (i) *Honorarium for trainer* – the sponsorship will normally cover only one trainer at any time of the programme. Lunch hours are not considered as part of the training hours. The maximum hourly rate of honorarium for trainer supported by SWTF is **HK\$800** (i.e. HK\$1,600 x 50%).

- (ii) *Hire of venue and equipment* – justifications should be provided for choosing the venue and equipment. Applicant organisations which choose their own venue for the training programme should provide sufficient proof to show that the selected venue is not subsidised by the government or other organisations.
- (iii) *Accommodation allowance for overseas trainer* – applicant organisations should provide justifications on the proven need for this, such as lack of local experts, overseas trainer’s expertise in the specialised area, the level and the number of beneficiaries.
- (iv) *Miscellaneous items (such as photocopying of teaching notes)* – the level of grant on the item of “Miscellaneous” is capped at the supported level of HK\$500 per application (i.e. 50% of the maximum recognised level of HK\$1,000 per application)⁵.
- (v) *Central administrative cost* – the central administrative cost is notional to cover the administrative costs of the applicant organisations in organising the programmes. If approved, the level of grant on this item will be at 10% of the total amount of grant for the items supported by SWTF or the amount requested by the applicant organisations, whichever is the less.
- (vi) Expenses on the items of “publicity”, “drinks”, “refreshments”, “venue decoration”, “transportation”, “souvenirs”, “postage” and “accommodation” are **not** supported.

(5) Income / other funding support

- (i) The applicant organisations may use their own means to cover the expenses not supported by SWTF. For instance, the applicant organisations may charge fees on the participants to cover part of the expenses and if so, the amount charged on all participants should be the same.
- (ii) SWTF will not provide grants to applications with funding support from other publicly-funded bodies, public funds and commercial sponsors promoting smoking and alcoholic drinks. Besides, it does not sponsor any applications that are profit earning. Profit is defined as total income of the programme, i.e. SWTF grant plus other income or donation, less the running costs of the programme.
- (iii) If the applicant organisations have applied / will apply for funds from other sources and the result is unknown at the time of application to SWTF, the applicant organisations should indicate this in the application. Incomes

⁵ If the total miscellaneous cost is \$700, \$350 can be applied for sponsorship, if the total miscellaneous cost is \$1,200, the sponsored amount will be capped at \$500.

generated from the training activities under application should be used solely for the same training activities. All anticipated / actual incomes received for the activities, including fees from participants and funding from sources other than the applicant organisations, will be deducted in the calculation of the grant unless they are used to cover the non-supported items or the non-covered amount of the supported items.

(6) Information required for application

- (i) The information required for preparing an application is listed in the application form (i.e. Form A).
- (ii) Applicant organisations are requested to inform the Secretariat of any changes in the proposed training programmes. Once the applications are endorsed, the concerned organisations should obtain **prior approval from the Secretariat** for any alterations before implementing the revised programme (such as deferment of the programme, change in the trainer, etc.). Otherwise, the approved grant may be lifted or adjusted.
- (iii) The successful applicant is required to submit a written evaluation report to the Secretariat afterwards. For study tour, the applicant organisation, on top of the evaluation report, is encouraged to provide a short video clip highlighting the learning experience to the Secretariat and it will be put onto the E-learning Centre of SWD for sharing with other social workers.

Part C – Application Details for Type B Activities

(1) Scope of Activities

The courses held in Hong Kong attended by individual social workers should fall within the scope below:

- (i) **Specialised or advanced social work knowledge and skills**, include clinical social work techniques (e.g. family therapy and cognitive-behavioural therapy) and programmes addressing pressing social issues (e.g. child abuse prevention and suicide crisis intervention); or **management skills for social work practice** (e.g. programme planning and evaluation, resource and financial management, leadership and team building, and human resource management in social service settings). General courses aimed at self-healing or self-enhancement such as mindfulness, horticulture, massage and painting are not eligible for sponsorship. Similarly, language courses (e.g. Putonghua, English) and interest classes (e.g. Yoga, Tai Chi) fall outside the scope of sponsorship, as they do not directly relate to professional social work practice or service delivery.

- (ii) Eligible courses should be organised by incorporated organisations or statutory bodies such as universities, professional societies or NGOs providing training, etc.
- (iii) The courses should be **short-term, i.e. not more than 4 months** in total duration. The duration of a course means the whole duration of a programme from its commencement till its completion, including all parts / sessions / modules within the programme as a whole. For award-bearing programme, the entire duration from commencement to the final credential-granting part / session / module should fall within this time frame. A part / session / module of the award-bearing programme is NOT considered as a short-term course. For example, a four-month module within the Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Social Work is **NOT** considered as a short-term course. For non-award-bearing programme, the whole duration should count from its commencement till completion of the course-end examination, or if course-end examination is not required, till completion of the last session of the course.
- (iv) The courses should be conducted primarily through direct tuition through in-person or online. Purely self-learning courses are not supported. **For online training, only those courses which could provide proper documentary proof of successful completion of the courses by the participants (such as a certificate confirming completion of the course or passing the end-of-course examination(s)).**
- (v) The grant is limited to the courses fees only. Other expenses such as application fees, registration fees, membership fees, payment handling charge, certificate fees, material / textbook costs and travel expenses, etc. are **not** reimbursable.

(2) Level of sponsorship

- (i) The sponsored amount for each application will be 50% of the course fee or **HK\$2,500**, whichever is the less.
- (ii) The amount applied for sponsorship should be at least HK\$100 per application. Applications for sponsorship of less than HK\$100 will not be processed.
- (iii) The course fee refers to the actual course fee paid by an applicant as evident by receipt, and any deducted amount (irrespective of the reasons such as discount, early bird registration, etc) should be excluded from the amount applied for sponsorship. **If the receipt covers the course fees of two programmes, both of which are given discount but without any breakdown by programmes in the receipt, the applicant should enter the pro-rata amount in the application form.** For instance, if the original course fees of programme A and programme B are HK\$1,000 and HK\$1,500 respectively and the discounted lump sum for both programmes is HK\$2,200,

the pro-rata amount for programme A and programme B should be as follows:

$$\textit{Programme A: } \$1,000 / (\$1,000 + \$1,500) \times \$2,200 = \$880$$

$$\textit{Programme B: } \$1,500 / (\$1,000 + \$1,500) \times \$2,200 = \$1,320$$

If the applicant would like to apply for sponsorship for programme B, the amount applied for should then be **HK\$1,320**.

- (iv) In case that the total sum of applications for SWTF grants exceeds the amount earmarked by SWTF for the year, the sponsorship for the approved applications will be adjusted proportionally to the budget approved by SWTF.

(3) Other sponsorship requirements

- (i) Applicants and nominating organisations should pay attention to the following guidelines and note that applications which contravene these guidelines will **NOT** be further processed by the Secretariat:
- (a) **one application should contain only ONE training programme requesting for sponsorship:** applications which include more than one stand-alone training programme in one application form will **NOT** be further processed;
 - (b) **an applicant can only apply for sponsorship of ONE training programme completed during the period from 1 February 2026 to 31 January 2027:** subsequent application(s) of the same applicant who has already submitted one application during the prescribed period will **NOT** be further processed, irrespective of the outcome of the first application including withdrawal by the applicant; and
 - (c) applications including all the required information and documents should reach the Secretariat by the prescribed deadlines: applications which are **late** or **fail to include the required information or documents** by the prescribed deadlines will **NOT** be further processed. **The stamp-chopped dates on the envelopes will be taken as the receipt dates of applications. *Applications arrive the Secretariat late because of insufficient postage will also not be processed.***
- (ii) The Secretariat will issue emails as reminders to applicants who had omitted / doubtful information or documents. Such email reminders will only be issued **ONCE**. The application will **NOT** be further processed if the required information or documents do not reach the Secretariat by the prescribed deadlines stated in the emails.

(4) Funding support from other sources

- (i) SWTF will not provide grants to applications with funding support to the same programme from commercial sponsors promoting smoking and alcoholic drinks.
- (ii) If the individual social worker has applied / will apply for funds from other sources, the applicant should indicate this in the application. The amount shall be deducted from the course fee before calculating the amount of sponsorship to be applied under SWTF.

(5) Information required for application

- (i) The information required for preparing an application is listed in the application form (i.e. Form B).
- (ii) Nominating organisations are requested to inform the Secretariat of any changes in the applications of individual social workers.

Part D – Enquiry

If you have any question on this Guide and the application form, please contact –

Social Work Training Fund Committee Secretariat
Staff Development and Training Section
Social Welfare Department
Room 925, 9/F Revenue Tower,
5 Gloucester Road, Hong Kong

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Email: sdenq@swd.gov.hk

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