

THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY
Department of Applied Social Sciences
Mary Ho Financial Hardship Fund
Application Guidelines

Background

In November, 2011, an APSS alumnus Miss Mary Ho donated \$4.25 million to the Department with a wish to help *local self-financing APSS students who experience genuine financial hardship* to the extent that it affects their studies.

Purpose of the financial hardship fund

To moderate the financial hardship of local self-financing students who are undertaking coursework, and/or fieldwork/practicum so that they can concentrate on their learning.

Eligibility

Besides being a local self-financed student, the applicant has to demonstrate that he/she has suffered from a situation of financial hardship resulting from any one of the following conditions:

- (a) The student has been afflicted by recent and unforeseen circumstances that cause hardship and has a need for emergency financial assistance;
- (b) The student has to give up his/her job with a compassionate reason during his/her study and as a result, he/she has financial difficulty in supporting his/her own living;
- (c) A drop in income from his/her job i.e. from full-time to part-time job which renders continuation of studies unaffordable;
- (d) The student is not eligible to, or has failed to, secure other financial assistance or the financial assistance he/she so obtained is insufficient to sustain his/her study with APSS.

The Mary Ho Hardship Fund Committee can make exception with Head's endorsement for cases which do not satisfy any of the above conditions while genuine financial hardship is established.

Amount of relief fund to be granted for each application

The amount to be granted to each application ranges from \$1,000 - \$30,000 maximum, depending on the financial needs of each applicant. A student receives grant from the fund on a lump sum basis. Past successful applicants will not be eligible if the total granted amount has reached the maximum of \$30,000. Exception case has to be approved by Head.

Operation of the Fund and application procedure

1. The program leader/program tutor/student advisor attempts to understand the student's difficulty and make an Initial Assessment of the student's eligibility for the fund. If preliminary evidences show genuine financial hardship, the student would be asked to apply the Mary Ho Financial Hardship Fund.
2. The student fills out an application form on which he/she declares the financial situation of him/herself and his/her family. The form has to be submitted via the program leader/program tutor. The application will go to the Hardship Fund Committee for a Final Assessment.
3. The Hardship Fund Committee can choose to interview the student and assesses his/her eligibility. The Committee may require additional evidence to substantiate the financial needs of the applicant, and recommend the amount of grant to be given if the application is approved.

4. The whole process should be completed within 3 weeks.

Handling of Information and Personal Data Provided

1. The personal data provided in this application will be used by the Department for processing of your application for financial assistance.
2. If an applicant is successful in obtaining the financial assistance, the information he/she provided will be kept in his/her student file for record purpose up till his/her departure from the University. All documents of the unsuccessful applications will be disposed at the completion of the assessment exercise.
3. Under the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance, applicants may request for access to and/or correction of the personal data in relation to their applications. Such request should be made in writing to the Head of Department of Applied Social Sciences.

1 September 2014