

GBA STARTUP POSTDOC PROGRAMME APPLICATION HANDBOOK

Important Note:

This Handbook is subject to amendments from time to time without prior notice. Please contact Knowledge Transfer and Entrepreneurship Office or visit the official website (www.polyu-startuppostdoc.hk) for the latest version before submitting your application

Version: 1 (8 Mar 2022)

GBA STARTUP POSTDOC PROGRAMME 2022
BRIEF INTRODUCTION

1. Background

Piloted in 2019, GBA Startup Postdoc Programme 2022 @Hong Kong/Shenzhen (“the Programme”) offers dual career prospects for recent doctoral graduates to carry out translational research while exploring startup opportunities in Hong Kong or Shenzhen.

The Programme features global recruitment of postdocs with strong passion and vision to commercialise research technologies through startups, leveraging support from the Hong Kong Polytechnic University (“PolyU”) and its partners’ resources and network in Greater Bay Area.

The structured programme provides competitive salary and benefits, entrepreneurship training, dual mentorship by academia and industrialists, and preferential IP licensing terms to transform doctoral graduates into technopreneurs and translate research outcomes into real-world impact.

2. Objectives:

- To promote and support research-based entrepreneurship
- To transform recent doctoral graduates into technopreneur
- To connect research commercialisation to funding support, incubation programmes, industry network and other resources in GBA

3. Highlights of the Programme

- Dual mentorship - academic and industrial
- Options to work in Shenzhen or Hong Kong (subject to quota)
- Translational research supported by university facilities
- Preferential IP licensing: equity options in lieu of cash
- Preferred route for academic faculty members’ participation in startups

4. Work Location

Subject to related terms and conditions, Postdocs under the Programme will be recruited as either

- a) a postdoc fellow employed by The Hong Kong Polytechnic University with the primary work location on Campus in Hong Kong; or
- b) a postdoc researcher registered with the Postdoc station of Shenzhen Virtual University Park (深圳虚拟大学园博士后工作站) with the primary work location at the PolyU Shenzhen Research Institute (SZRI 香港理工大学深圳研究院).

5. Benefit & Support

A GBA Startup Postdoc will receive a competitive support package as well as other resources to jumpstart his/her start-up, including:

- Annual remuneration up to RMB ¥300,000 (Shenzhen) or HK\$366,000 (Hong Kong)
- Full statutory benefits (e.g. MPF and medical insurance, etc.)
- Free workspace (InnoHub @HK or InnoHub@SZ¹)
- Entrepreneurship training
- Working visa for overseas candidates

Plus

- One-stop coordinated service support by Knowledge Transfer and Entrepreneurship (KTEO), PolyU
- Dual mentorship
- Investor network
- Fast-track to funding schemes or incubation programmes

Other funding opportunities² from government and University, if applicable, include:

- Research grant of RMB300,000³
- Scholarship of RMB600,000 and family relocation allowance of RMB400,000⁴
- Grant up to HK\$1.5 million⁵ matching external investment

6. Duel-Trak Programme

Candidates with difficulties in research commercialisation may opt for the academic track after Year 1. The academic supervisor shall secure funding support for the postdocs on the academic track.

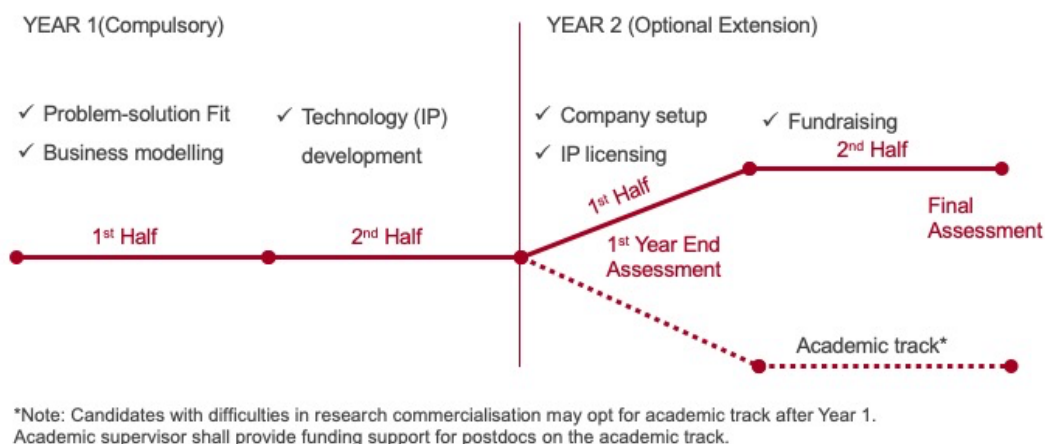
¹ Management fee may apply

² Relevant conditions must be fulfilled with further application procedures required and subject to availability

³ Applicable to candidates supported by Shenzhen Talents Programme

⁴ Applicable to candidates supported by Guangdong Province Pearl River Talents Programme

⁵ Applicable to candidates supported by PolyU Tech Launchpad Fund, up to HK\$1,500,000



7. Programme Structure

The normal period of the Programme is 24 months after the commencement date. The commencement date is the starting day in the national postdoc registry system in the Shenzhen programme, whereas the starting day in the employment contract in the Hong Kong programme.

Year 1

Time	Milestones
-1~0 Month	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Initial Project Plan
0-6 th Month	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PolyU Micro Fund application (including Lean Launchpad training) ▪ Innovation and entrepreneurship competitions
6 th -12 th Month	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Translational research and product/service development ▪ Patent filing (if applicable) ▪ 1st Year-end Assessment

Year 2 (Subject to 1st Year-end Assessment)

Time	Milestones
12 th -18 th Month	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Second-year project plan ▪ Company establishment

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ IP licensing agreement
18th-24th Month	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continuation of translational research and product/service development ▪ Fundraising ▪ Final Assessment

Note: The Startup Postdocs in the Shenzhen programme are also subject to the project proposal, mid-term review, final review and other requirements as stipulated by the regulations and guidelines of the Postdoc Station under the Shenzhen Virtual University Park.

8. Programme Assessment Criteria

1st Year-End Assessment

	Task to be completed (Mandatory)	Requirement
1	PolyU Micro Fund (including Lean Launchpad training)	Participated and completed Lean Launchpad training
2	a) “White List” Innovation and entrepreneurship competition OR b) Applied research/entrepreneurship funding	a) Prize awarded b) Funding offer attained
3	Translational research and product/service development	Satisfactory progress

*** If a candidate fails to meet any of the above three requirements, PolyU reserves the right to discontinue the support for the candidate. The Assessment Panel will also recommend that the candidates shift to the academic track in the 2nd year.*

Final Assessment

		Distinction	Merit	Pass
1	Commercialisation Income OR Investment & Valuation (RMB/HKD)	≥RMB 1 million(or)	RMB 500,000~1 million(or)	RMB 100,000~500,000(or)
		≥ RMB 2 million cash investment, post-investment valuation ≥RMB 20 million	≥ RMB 1 million cash investment, post-investment valuation ≥ RMB 10 million	≥ RMB 500,000 cash investment, post-investment valuation ≥ RMB 5 million
2	Competition Award OR	First prize awarded	Second prize awarded	Third prize or below awarded

	Funding/Grant Support	(Or) Funding offer attained		
3	Entrepreneurial practice	Company registered and IP licensed (if applicable), and satisfactory progress in research and development according to the second-year project plan		
<i>For Shenzhen Programme, if item (1) is not satisfied, either one of the following must be fulfilled:</i>				
4	Journal publishing OR Patent	One journal published in JCR – Q1	One journal published in JCR - Q2	Two journals published in SCI/SSCI/CSSCI
		File one patent (entered the trial stage)		

9. Mentorship

During the Programme, the Startup Postdocs will be guided and supported by:

Academic Supervisor

- A recognised doctoral supervisor from PolyU
- Co-supervision may be required, if the supervisor is an assistant/associate professor or the same supervisor in PhD (for Shenzhen Programme)

Industry Mentor

- A professional in the related industry in Hong Kong/Shenzhen (to be assigned after selection)
- Provide industry mentorship

10. Intellectual Property Rights & Share Holding Arrangement

- The Intellectual Property (IP) generated within the Programme period belongs to PolyU/SZRI
- No infringement of a third party's IP shall be declared by the Startup Postdoc
- Licensing agreement shall be signed with PolyU/SZRI when the Startup Postdoc establishes a start-up and starts commercialisation (royalty fee shall apply)
- PolyU will own 10% equity in the form of stock option of the start-up established by the Startup Postdoc

11. Enquiry

- gba.startuppostdoc@polyu.edu.hk
- (852) 3400 2735
- www.polyu-startuppostdoc.hk

APPLICATION GUIDELINES

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SECTION A: Application Eligibility

1. Application Eligibility

- Doctorate graduates attained a doctoral degree for no more than three years⁶⁷ or doctoral candidates who will attain their degrees within six months
- Excellent applied research capabilities and determination to turn research outcomes into products/services
- Strong passion and vision to commercialise the research technology through start-up (those with past or current entrepreneurial experience are preferred)
- Good English reading and writing skills

Extra requirements for Shenzhen Programme

- Aged 35 or below⁸
- Only PhD graduates are likely to be accepted
- Good command of written and spoken Chinese is a definite advantage

2. Academic Supervisor

The Applicant shall have identified at least one recognised doctoral supervisor from PolyU to be his/her academic supervisor(s) and have their consent.

Applicants can visit www.polyu.edu.hk/education/faculties-schools-departments/ to search for suitable academic supervisors.

SECTION B: Application Submission

1. Submission of Application

The Applicant shall complete an online application form on or before the Application Deadline stipulated below and upload the required supporting documents as below:

- I. A 15-slide PPT in English (please refer to PPT Guidelines in Section B.4);
- II. CV;
- III. A copy of identity document;
- IV. A copy of academic & professional qualification certificates.

⁶ Upon the application submission date.

⁷ Exceptions may apply for outstanding applicants of the Hong Kong programme subject to the University's common practice and the assessment panel's decision.

⁸ Upon the registration in Shenzhen government's Postdoc System

***Please complete the form in Microsoft Word format and email gba.startuppostdoc@polyu.edu.hk if you cannot access the online application form.*

2. Application Form

Online Application Form: Please click [HERE](#) or scan QR Code



3. Briefing Session and Application Deadline

Briefing Session (online)	Application Deadline
24 March 2022 (Thu) 1:00pm – 2:00pm	21 April 2022 (Thu) 1:00pm

4. PPT Guidelines (No more than 15 slides)

In the slides, the Applicant shall cover briefly the following:

- A. The Problem and the Market:
 - The problem you would like to solve
 - Why is this problem important and difficult to solve?
 - Are there any other companies working on the same or similar problems?
- B. Your Solution and the Research Technology:
 - The product/service you will create with your technology to address this problem
 - What are your target market and customer segment?
 - What are your competitive advantages versus the existing solutions?
- C. Your Commercialisation Plan:
 - How will you commercialise the technology and generate revenue?
 - What is the current status and your timeline to develop your product/service?
 - Any societal impact beyond economic return?
- D. Your Personal Statement:
 - A brief introduction/highlight of yourself
 - Why do you want to apply for GBA Startup Postdoc Programme?

5. Enquiry

Knowledge Transfer and Entrepreneurship Office
Tel: (852) 3400 2735/2703
Email: gba.startuppostdoc@polyu.edu.hk

SECTION C: Application Assessment Procedure

1. Assessment Process

- 1.1. All applications are free of charge and will be processed in strict confidence. The Applicant must meet the eligibility conditions stipulated in Section A for the application to be further processed.
- 1.2. After the application deadline, all applications will go through an eligibility screening process conducted by KTEO. Wherever necessary, Applicants may be required to submit supplementary supporting documents by the date specified by KTEO.
- 1.3. Subject to the number of applications received and the available quota for the Programme, the Semi-final Assessment will be conducted when necessary to shortlist the top Applications for consideration by the Final Assessment Panel.
- 1.4. One-to-one consultation and pitch training will be carried out before the Final Assessment. At the meetup with the Applicant and the academic supervisor, KTEO will conduct the due diligence and provide pitch advice on the presentation by the Applicant.
- 1.5. The Final Assessment Panel comprising 3~5 members will assess the shortlisted Applicants with a 7-minute presentation delivered by each Applicant and recommend applications to be accepted by the Programme subject to other eligibility requirements and further engagement/employment agreements.

2. Assessment Schedule

Briefing Session (Online)	24 March 2022 (Thu) 1:00pm-2:00pm
Application Deadline	21 April 2022 (Thu) 1:00pm
Semi-Final	May 2022
One-to-one Pitch Training	Late May to early June 2022
Grand Finale	June 2022

3. Application Assessment Criteria

1. Research Technology Impact & Market Potential	25%
2. Technology Readiness / Feasibility	15%
3. Commercialisation Plan	15%
4. Academic & Research Capability	15%

5. Business / Commercial Acumen	15%
6. Coachability / Open-mindedness	15%

SECTION E: Others

1. All Startup Postdoc must read and comply with the terms and conditions listed in this Handbook and the agreements to be signed with the PolyU/PolyU Shenzhen Research Institute if shortlisted for the Programme.
2. Where the Applicant is asked to submit any information, content or material to PolyU (“Content”), the Applicant must ensure that all Content is up-to-date, accurate, legal, honest, decent, truthful and complies with all applicable laws, regulations, standards and codes of practice. The Applicant must ensure that all Content submitted to PolyU does not infringe copyright, design, privacy, publicity, data protection, trademark or any other rights of any third party, and is not obscene, abusive, threatening, libellous or defamatory of any person.
3. The Applicant shall have sole responsibility for the Content which submitted to PolyU and the Applicant shall indemnify and shall keep PolyU fully and effectively indemnified on demand from and against all actions, claims, losses, liability, proceedings, damages, costs, expenses, loss of business, loss of profits, business interruption and other pecuniary or consequential loss (including legal costs and expenses) suffered or incurred by PolyU and arising directly or indirectly from the Content submitted by the Applicant to PolyU being in breach of these terms and conditions. Where PolyU has relied upon, published or used the Content then the losses to be indemnified by the Applicant shall include all sums claimed from PolyU by third parties having relied upon the Content and all sums expended by PolyU on the Applicant in connection with the Programme (including but not limited to any financial benefits and sponsorship that the Applicant has received).

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Can current doctoral students apply for the Programme?

Yes, a doctoral student who will attain a doctoral degree within six months is welcome to apply, as long as they fulfil the eligibility requirement.

2. Can non-Chinese applicants apply for the Programme?

Yes, Applicants from overseas are welcome to apply for the Programme, as long as they fulfil the eligibility requirement.

3. Can non-PolyU graduates/students apply for the Programme?

Yes, graduates/students from recognised tertiary institutions from all countries or regions can apply for the Programme, as long as they fulfil the eligibility requirement.

4. Do I need to select the academic supervisor by myself upon application?

Yes, you are required to liaise with at least one PolyU academic supervisor and have his/her consent before submitting your application. The academic supervisor must be a recognised doctoral supervisor from PolyU.

5. If I have already participated in the “PolyU Lean Launchpad Programme”, can I still apply for the Programme?

If you used the same research technology in the participation, you can skip the “PolyU Lean Launchpad Programme” during the Programme.

6. I have no entrepreneurial experience. Can I apply for the Programme?

Yes, as long as you have a strong passion and vision to commercialise the research technology through start-up in GBA, you are welcome to apply for the Programme.

7. Can I choose to change from the Hong Kong Programme to the Shenzhen Programme?

You can not change between the two programmes as they involve different engagement/employment agreements and funding sources.

8. Who will provide the working space, equipment, and lab access?

Like the other postdoc fellowship scheme, your academic supervisor shall provide you with working space, equipment, and lab access. If you are in the Shenzhen Programme, SZRI will provide such facilities if available.

9. Who will be the owner of any intellectual properties (IP) generated?

The Intellectual Property (IP) generated during the Programme belongs to PolyU/SZRI.

10. When should I obtain the authorisation of using a third-party IP?

If you are using a third-party IP for the application, you should obtain written consent from the inventor/ owner upon application.

11. Can I choose a patented technology for commercialisation?

Yes, you are required to provide the related information, including patent number, name and country, when submitting your application.

12. Is there any restrictions on the composition of shareholders of the start-up company?

No, there is no restrictions on the composition and share allocation of the shareholders of the start-up company. However, it is expected the Startup Postdoc will be the major shareholder, and also PolyU has the right to own 10% equity of the company in the form of stock option.

13. Can the academic supervisor participate in the start-up as a shareholder?

The academic supervisor can participate in the start-up as a shareholder and take up some non-executive role such as Advisor, subject to the proper declaration of interests following the pertaining regulations of the University.

14. When will the University take the 10% equity of the start-up?

The University will take the 10% equity in the form of the stock option through an IP licensing agreement and an option agreement. Only when the start-up's valuation reaches the agreed threshold the University will opt to exercise the option and become a shareholder of the start-up.