

Enhancement measures for Study Sponsorship Scheme under Urban Forestry Support Fund

The Development Bureau (DEVB) today (June 23) announced the enhancement measures to the Study Sponsorship Scheme under the Urban Forestry Support Fund which seeks to attract youngsters to join the arboriculture and horticulture industry, and encourage in-service practitioners to pursue continuing education, with a view to further increasing the industry's manpower and enhancing its capability. The enhancement measures will take effect from July 1.

A spokesman for the DEVB said, "Rolled out in 2020, the Scheme provides sponsorship and scholarship to applicants who aspire to join the arboriculture and horticulture industry, so as to encourage them to undertake recognised arboriculture, tree management and tree works programmes at Level 2 to Level 5 of the Qualifications Framework (QF) offered by local vocational, tertiary and training institutions. A total of 21 programmes provided by eight institutions are currently recognised under the Scheme."

The enhancement measures include raising the sponsorship for relevant courses. The sponsorship ceiling for arboriculture and tree management programmes will be increased from half of the tuition fee or \$20,000 to 70 per cent of the tuition fee or \$35,000, whichever is less; and that for tree works programmes will be increased from 70 per cent of the tuition fee or \$6,000 to 70 per cent of the tuition fee or \$10,000, whichever is less. Each applicant will be entitled to apply for a study sponsorship each for enrolling in an arboriculture and tree management programme and a tree works programme, with no age limit, so as to foster practitioners' diversified development.

In addition, eligibility for scholarship will be extended to the best-performing students who are studying the recognised full-time arboriculture and tree management programmes at QF Level 5, to encourage them to strive for better academic performance and prepare for future careers in the industry. The scholarship amount is the total tuition fee or \$50,000, whichever is less, for each academic year of the programmes.

"It is expected that the new measures will benefit more students and in-service practitioners, to help nurture an adequate and quality workforce to support and enhance tree management and maintenance work in Hong Kong," the spokesman said.

The Scheme accepts applications throughout the year. The relevant application forms and guidelines can be downloaded from the website of the Urban Forestry Support Fund of the DEVB (www.greening.gov.hk/ufsf/en/introduction/index.html).