

II Project Information

Project Title (in English)

Project FLY – To Enhance the Employability of Associate Degree Students Through Increasing Students' Understanding of Themselves and the Market

Project Title (in Chinese)

A. Project Summary

(please provide an executive summary of the project proposal in no more than 500 words).

As a key player in the educational sector, the Hang Seng School of Commerce (HSSC) has always strived to provide our future young talents with a comprehensive and all-round education. In our view, the success of Associate Degree (AD) programme is critical to the long-term prosperity of Hong Kong's economy. As Hong Kong moves towards a knowledge-based economy, it is becoming increasingly important for our city to build a diversified pool of talents to meet the changing demands of its economy and sustain its competitiveness. AD students have an important role to play in this. Unfortunately, the recognition towards AD students has hitherto been very low, and this has greatly limited their contributions to the society.

Given the importance of AD programme to Hong Kong, we have decided to take up the challenge of enhancing the recognition and employability of AD students. Despite our strong aspiration and determination, we understand that we would not be able to achieve this goal solely with our own resources. Therefore, we would like to seek funding from the government to help achieve this important mission.

Project Fly (the "Project") is a comprehensive project which better facilitates our careers office to enhance the employability of AD students through increasing students' understanding of themselves and the market. It consists of four parts:

1. Establishing a website for our careers office;
2. Conducting careers workshops to provide students with career-related information and advice;
3. Carrying out mock interviews for students to help them improve their interview performance;
4. Publishing a pocket-size guide on careers planning as a handy reference for our students.

The key beneficiary of this Project is the students of our school; whilst prospective employers and AD students in similar institutions should also benefit from it.

Students at our school will benefit directly from the facilities and services provided which will help them make well-informed careers decisions and improve their competitiveness in the job market. The wider employment community, on the other hand, will benefit from having information about an additional pool of talents from where they could hire new recruits for their organization. More importantly, once the employment community comes to recognize the quality of HSSC students, there will likely to be a spillover effect across the education sector which will in turn enhance the recognition towards AD students in other similar institutions.

In terms of implementation, we plan to launch the Project in September 2009, and it will run for a period of two years until September 2011. In order to gain professional experiences in running a careers office for AD students, we plan to hire an external consultancy at the initial stage to advise us on the implementation of the Project. Our intention is to replace part of the services provided by the external companies by internal resources at the end of the two-year period. To ensure the smooth execution and sustainability of the Project, a project committee (Committee) consisting of senior internal staff would be set up to oversee the Project. Committee members will meet up regularly with the external consultancy to evaluate the progress of the Project.

The total cost of the project is estimated to be HKD1,079,000.

B. Project Objectives

(please identify the needs of the target recipients and explain how the project aims to address the needs).

The main objective of this Project is to enhance the recognition and employability of HSSC students, who are attending our AD programme. The problem with AD students in Hong Kong is that they are often perceived to be less-privileged, and this greatly limits their careers opportunities. The Project aims to equip them effectively with the information and skills they need in making well-informed careers decision. This would improve their competitiveness in the employment market, and ultimately help them build rewarding careers.

The Project aims to achieve the said objectives in the following ways:

1. To provide easier access to careers-related information (e.g. job posting on the careers website)
2. To provide trainings (e.g. mock interviews) to sharpen their edge in the job application process.

With the training and information provided to our students, they are expected to deliver relevant and high-quality job applications. This will facilitate the job matching process and help prospective employers spot the suitable candidates.

The Project is also expected to bring enormous benefits to the education sector as a whole. By giving assistance to our students in careers planning and job search, we effectively expose them to more opportunities to unleash their talents and potentials in the workplace. Once employers start to recognize how they can contribute to their organizations, more employers would hire not only students from our school but also AD students from other similar institutions. This will help to enhance the recognition and employability of AD students. If successful, this Project could serve as a good reference for other similar institutions.

C. Outcomes and Deliverables of Project

(please include the expected number of target beneficiaries and explain how they will benefit from the project).

As mentioned in the first section (Section A), the key beneficiary are students of our school. Unless otherwise specified, the deliverables of our projects would benefit at least 500 students per year (200 first year, 200 second year AD students and 100 Top Up students). In future, student population will grow. Other beneficiaries include prospective employers and other students with similar backgrounds. Benefits to each of the above listed parties are expounded below:

1. HSSC Careers Office Website

Benefit to students at HSSC: The website, an online version of our careers office, provides an easily accessible platform for students to obtain relevant information on careers planning. The website mainly consists of three parts, including a recruitment page for job postings, information on trainings and a platform for alumni networking. Firstly, on the recruitment page, registered students can search for companies and job openings. This provides convenience for students in job hunting and improves their chances of finding a job that suits them. Secondly, information on careers workshops and talks organized by HSSC as well as internship opportunities will also be posted on the website. With this information, students can keep themselves updated with new opportunities both in terms of trainings (e.g. interview workshops) and practical experience in the workplace (e.g. through internships). The materials from recruitment talks and trainings will also be posted on the website, along with general information of various industries, employers and market trends. Thirdly, in terms of alumni

networking, the website will serve as a platform for alumni to exchange information and update themselves on current alumni events and activities. A newsletter will be published on the website with articles and photos of alumni events and training activities.

2. Careers workshops

Benefits to Students at HSSC: Careers workshops aim to provide trainings in the following two areas:

- a. To improve students' understanding of themselves through careers counseling.
 - To help students discover and develop their aspirations, talents, strengths and weaknesses. All these help students assess their compatibility to various types of jobs.
- b. To help them build a good professional image with a view to increase their employability.
 - Training programmes will be held to better equip students in various stages of the job application process. For example, workshops will be conducted to provide tips and highlight common pitfalls in CV and cover letter writing. These workshops, talks and trainings will provide useful advice for students and equip them with the knowledge and skills that is necessary for them to succeed in job-hunting.

3. Mock Interviews

- **Number of beneficiaries:** Around 60 AD2 and top-up students each year .
- **Benefits to Students at HSSC:** Mock interviews will be conducted to help students better prepare for actual employment interviews. Students will then be given constructive feedbacks based on their interview performance, pinpointing areas where they did well and areas which require improvement. This helps to improve their interview performance and thereby increase their chances of getting employed and boost their competitiveness in the job market.

4. Pocket-size Guide on careers planning

Benefits to Students at HSSC: A pocket-size guide will be published, providing a last-minute reminder for students in careers planning. It lists out the “Dos and Don’ts” in different stage of careers preparation, such as job application (writing CV and cover letter), business etiquette and interview skills. Currently, there is no such pocket-size guide in the market and this would serve as a handy reference for our students.

D. Implementation Details

1. Careers Website

Main Functions:

- a. Job database
- b. Information on trainings
- c. Alumni platform

We will develop a website which provides comprehensive information on careers planning, job application and job vacancies to graduates. We believe that such an infrastructure will greatly expand the scope of opportunities for students.

As elaborated above, the website consists of a job database, information on trainings and a platform for alumni. Firstly, regarding the job database, employers are able to post job advertisements on the database and students can search for job openings offered by these employers. Secondly, information on trainings provided by HSSC will be posted on the website, along with information on internships and materials from these trainings. There will also be information on different industries and occupations, as well as tips on job-hunting.

Thirdly, the website consists of an alumni forum where past graduates could discuss about careers-related issues and share information on the job market. Finally, the website will provide links to external websites of major employers so that students could easily access them.

Based on the proposals we get from external companies, the development of the website is expected to run over a course of one year. The basic infrastructure will be completed within 6 months. So the website will be in operation from 2010 onwards. The following year will be mainly for fine-tuning the functions of the website. We expect the website to be in full operation at the end of the two-year period with only regular maintenance required from IT department at HSSC.

As of 1st March 2009, we have already obtained two proposals¹ from external companies which include detailed budget and services to be provided.

2. Careers Workshops

Key themes:

- a. Making informed careers decisions
- b. Training sessions on CV and cover letter writing
- c. Enhancing self-understanding
- d. Industry overview
- e. General interview preparations

A series of careers workshops will be offered to students each year to provide them with information related to

- i) job application,
- ii) making informed careers choices,
- iii) enhancing self-understanding,
- iv) general interview preparations,
- v) CV and cover letter writing technique, and
- vi) industry overview.

In order to provide professional services to students & training to internal staff, we intend to hire external consultants to advise us on how to deliver these in the most effective way. Selection of the consultancy agent will be done on a competitive bidding basis. Each consulting firm will submit a proposal of the package that they can offer. We will then select the most suitable one according to the objectives of this Project.

The set of workshops will be made compulsory to students. It is intended to be a comprehensive careers related training covering most of the information students need in making careers decisions and job applications. Each year, the selected consulting company will run these workshops at our campus over the course of three months.

In order to ensure the long term sustainability of this Project, member(s) of the Careers Office will attend all these workshops to evaluate the performance of the company and record the details. At the end of the two-year period, we target to run part of the workshops ourselves and finance the rest by internal resources.

3. Mock Interviews

Key element:

Provide interview trainings to students by recording their interviews, evaluating their performance and providing post-interview feedbacks.

¹ Proposals are submitted by Standard Business Models Limited and EAB System respectively

We intend to hire external consultants to run a set of mock interviews each year and evaluate the performance of students during these interviews. The whole interview process will be taped and recorded in DVDs which will be given to students who attend these interviews for their future reference.

The way the interview is to be run will be decided by the consulting company selected. However, it has to consist of both one-to-one interview and group interview sessions. After each interview session, feedback will be given to students. At the end of all the interviews, the consulting firm will provide a debriefing session to give comments to all the students who attended these interviews and to the member(s) of the Careers Office.

The target number of beneficiaries is set to be around 60 students per year due to cost concern and participation in this exercise will be voluntary. We currently have a round of mock interviews every year for our first year AD students before they are placed to our internship programme. Interviewers are mostly alumni students who have at least two years' work experience. However, we believe there is room for improvements in the way how this interview should be organized. Therefore, we wish to use the mock interviews run by external agents as a basis to modify our existing model.

As of 13th March 2009, we have already obtained two proposals² from external companies including a detailed budget and the services to be provided. We are expecting more proposals from other companies.

4. Pocket-size Guide

An external professional consultant will be hired to provide advice on the content of the pocket-size guide. Upon our research there is no suitable publication on the market, hence professional advice is required. It will be published and distributed to our students.

² The proposals are for both Career Workshops and Mock Interview. They are submitted by Leadingenes and D&B

E. Implementation Schedule <i>(Please extend this table if necessary.)</i>		
Estimated start date of project:		<u>Sept 2009</u>
Action <i>(please indicate key milestones)</i>	Timeframe	Cashflow Requirement HKD
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appoint a consultant for website development and a workshop provider (for careers workshop and mock interview) through panel bidding Website + 1st stage of the website development – the framework of the careers office I Careers Workshops + Mock Interview Exercises (Year 1) Pocket size guides (Design & Publish) 	Sept 2009 – Feb 2010	336,600
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2nd stage of the development – the framework of the careers office II & input data 	Mar 2010 – Aug 2010	86,550
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3rd stage of the development – Input data + Integration with school website Careers Workshops + Mock Interview Exercises (Year 2) 	Sept 2010 – Feb 2011	428,850
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4th stage of the website development – Integration with school website + Final Tune Up 	Mar 2011 – Aug 2011	227,000
Total:		1,079,000

Estimated completion date of project: September 2011

F. Project Budget				
Projected Expenditure (Please provide detailed breakdown under each item)				
	Amount in HKD			
	Year 1	Year 2	Total	
a. Manpower - A careers officer is expected to be hired in 2010 September onwards; with the expected salary of HKD25K per month; assume no pay rise for simplicity of calculation only.		300,000	300,000	
b. Equipment / Facilities				
c. Services:				
- Website development + Social Network	259,650		259,650	
- Integrate website with OTL on-line careers resources training & learning center		199,850	199,850	
- Careers workshops + Mock Interview Exercises	136,000	136,000	272,000	
d. General Expenses: Pocket-size guides (Design & Publish)	27,500		27,500	
e. Others: Auditor's fee		20,000	20,000	
Total Expenditure :	423,150	655,850	1,079,000	
Projected Income				
	Amount in HK\$			
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total
a. (e.g. fees received)	Nil			
b.				
c.				
Total Income :				
Sources of Funding: Nil				
a. Amount of grant sought under this application: <u> HKD1,079,000 </u>				
b. Other sources of funding (this may include donations, contributions from the applicant/its parent organization, etc. Please give the name(s) of the sponsor(s), the amount of funding, and indicate whether the funding has been secured.):				
(i) <u>School contribution financially from 2011 onwards</u>				
(ii) <u>Schools provision of venue for the events</u>				

G. Monitoring and Self-evaluation Mechanism

A Committee would be set up to oversee the Project to ensure smooth execution and timely feedback. The Committee consists of one representative from the IT department, two from the academic departments, one from alumni, one from the Careers Office or alumni and chaired by a senior member of the school. The Committee will meet on regular basis each academic year. This Committee will also appoint a Careers Officer to run the office.

From time to time, the Committee will collect feedback from the end-users (students) of the service. We also have the right to obtain written report on the development of the Project from the consulting company we appoint. Written and video record will be kept in the Careers Office Library throughout the whole Project for future reference.

We are committed to conducting survey on the performance of our graduates so as to help us to understand the expectations and needs of employers. This would allow us to explore rooms for future improvement.

At the end of the Project, we will produce a written report to evaluate the overall degree of success of this Project. It will serve as a basis for future development of our careers office as well as a case study for other similar institutions.

H. Management Support and Key Personnel Involved

1. A Committee which consists of 6 members.
2. The IT staff of our school will work with the consulting company on the development of the website.
3. A Careers Officer will be appointed in 2010. Our school shall be responsible for his/her payroll from 2011 academic year onwards.
4. The website will be updated and managed on a regular basis by our IT staff from 2011 onwards.
5. Members of the Committee will monitor the progress of the Project from time to time and record the execution details.
6. There will potentially be support from the alumni association.

I. Special Justifications if the Grant Sought Exceeds \$2 million

Nil

III Other information

1 Project Sustainability *(If applicable, please describe how the recurrent expenditure involved will be met after completion of the proposed project)*

- a. The website will be updated and managed on a regular basis by our IT staff from 2011 onwards.
- b. Our school shall be responsible for the Careers Officer's payroll from 2011 academic year onwards.

2 Preparatory work done *(If any)*

Initial contact to external consultancy companies and similar careers services provided by other local universities are benchmarked to obtain some background information. As a result, two proposals each on the building of the website and on the careers workshops are received.

3 Past experience in organizing projects of similar or relevant nature and achievements *(If any)*