

SME Talent Programme (STP)

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for SMEs

SPRING no longer administers the Study Sponsorship (SS) and Fresh Hire (FH) under the SME Talent Programme (STP). For more information, please refer to Questions 5 to 8.

Programme Information

1. What is SME Talent Programme (STP)?

STP is an initiative by SPRING to help SMEs engage and attract local talents from ITE, Polytechnics and Universities to join them. Under STP, SMEs can offer student internships and are eligible for up to 70% support covering the internship month stipend.

2. What are the eligibility criteria for companies?

To be eligible for STP, companies must meet the following criteria:

- Have a minimum of 30% local shareholding
- Have group annual sales turnover of not more than S\$100 million OR group employment size of not more than 200 workers
- Possess sound Human Resources systems and commitment towards talent development
- Be willing to participate in SPRING's Human Resource Maturity Diagnostics (HRMD)

3. What are the eligibility criteria for students?

To be eligible for STP students must meet the following criteria:

- Singapore Citizen or Singapore Permanent Resident
- Full-time student from ITE, NYP, NP, RP, SP, TP, NTU, NUS, SUSS, SIT, SMU or SUTD
- Should not be previously supported by STP (Internship) under the same Company
- Should not be an immediate family member (i.e. child) of any key shareholder

4. How is STP administered? How do I apply for STP?

SPRING has appointed STP Approved-in-Principle (AIP) partners to administer STP. They play an important role to strengthen industry links with educational institutes and profile career opportunities in their sectors.

Interested SMEs can approach one of our STP AIP partners to find out more about STP and how to submit an online Company application through [STPNet](#).

5. What items do I need to prepare in order to complete my online Company application for STP?

These are the items that you would need to prepare to complete your online Company application for STP:

- 1) You would require a [CorpPass](#) account in order to be able to login and access digital services offered on STPNet. Please refer [here](#) for a step-by-step guide to register for a CorpPass account.

**Please note that the CorpPass Registered Officer (i.e. Owner, Partner, Director) is required to appoint a CorpPass Administrator who may then create CorpPass user accounts and access to government digital services for appointed company representatives to act on their behalf. CorpPass users will need to activate their account by setting up their CorpPass ID and password in order to transact on behalf of their companies on STPNet.*

- 2) ACRA document (no later than 6 months old)
- 3) Latest Financial Statements (no more than 18 months old)

6. Who are the appointed STP AIP partners?

The following are SPRING's STP AIP partners:

Industry-specific STP AIP partners:

- Restaurant Association of Singapore (RAS)
- Singapore Food Manufacturers' Association (SFMA)
- Singapore Retailers' Association (SRA)
- Singapore Infocomm Technology Federation (SiTF)

Broad-based STP AIP partners:

- Action Community for Entrepreneurship (ACE) – for Start-ups
- Association of Small and Medium Enterprises (ASME)
- Singapore Manufacturing Federation (SMF)

Appointed Programme Partners: STP AIP partners

7. Do I need to be a member of the STP AIP partners in order to apply for STP? Can I apply if my industry is not represented by any of the STP AIP partners?

Membership with an STP AIP partner is not a pre-requisite. In other words, non-members can still apply for STP.

If your industry is not represented by an industry STP AIP partner, companies can still apply for STP by approaching broad-based STP AIP partners such as ASME and SMF. Technology-based start-ups can approach ACE.

8. What is the role of the STP AIP partners?

The STP AIP partners play a significant role in supporting SMEs' talent attraction efforts in the following areas:

- Perform marketing and outreach to companies and students
- Evaluate and approve company applications
- Evaluate and approve STP internship applications
- Profile SMEs to students through partnerships with IHLs and other advertising channels
- Receive and collate supporting documents for STP internship claims
- Monitor progress of employment to ensure training plan is on-track (For existing Study Sponsorship and Fresh Hire cases)
- Manage and disburse training grants to SMEs based on deliverables met (For existing Study Sponsorship and Fresh Hire cases)

9. What is the role of the Company?

To enable the STP AIP partners to serve you better, companies should be prepared to:

- Provide a clear job description of the position(s) offered
- Indicate candidate preference in terms of preferred course of study, number of positions on offer, career progression pathways

10. How can I contact my STP AIP Partner?

The contact details of the STP AIP Partners are as below. Please contact your relevant STP AIP Partner should you have further queries on the STP.

STP AIP Partner	Contact Number	Address
Action Community for Entrepreneurship	-	stp@ace.org.sg 79 Ayer Rajah Crescent JTC LaunchPad @one-north #01-13 Singapore 139955 Attn: Zack Li, SME Talent Programme
Association of Small and Medium Enterprises	6513 0354	smetalent@asme.org.sg 167 Jalan Bukit Merah Connection One Tower 4 #03-13 Singapore 150167 Attn: Ng Jingyan, SME Talent Programme
Restaurant Association of Singapore	6479 7723	adelyn.choo@ras.org.sg 2985 Jalan Bukit Merah Singapore 159457 Attn: Adelyn Choo, SME Talent Programme

Singapore Food Manufacturers' Association	6221 2438	maxhu@sfma.org.sg 9 Jurong Town Hall Road, #04-13 Singapore 609431 Attn: Max Hu, SME Talent Programme
Singapore Manufacturing Federation	6826 3141	enquiry.stp@smfederation.org.sg 2985 Jalan Bukit Merah Singapore 159457 Attn: Alex Wong, SME Talent Programme
Singapore Retailers Association	6360 0192	sean@sra.org.sg 1 Coleman Street, #05-11B, The Adelphi Singapore 179803 Attn: Sean Lee, SME Talent Programme
SGTech	6653 8827	sheemin@sgtech.org.sg 79 Ayer Rajah Crescent, #02-03/04/05, Singapore 139955 Attn: Wong Shee Min, SME Talent Programme

STP (Internship)

11. How can I benefit from the STP internship?

Internships are a good source of potential talent for SMEs. After the internship, the company could consider recruiting the intern.

12. What is expected of my company?

Companies are required to prepare clear job scopes for its interns and provide guidance by assigning supervisors to the interns. Eligible companies may engage a [SkillsFuture SME Mentor](#) to support their supervisors in ensuring a positive internship experience for students.

13. What is supported under STP (Internship)?

Eligible SMEs can receive up to 70% grant support for the monthly internship stipend paid to interns. SMEs must commit to pay the minimum internship stipend for university, polytechnic and ITE as shown in the table below.

	University	Polytechnic	ITE
Mandatory minimum internship stipend, monthly [^]	\$1,000	\$800	\$800
Grant Support for SMEs (70%) ^{^^}	\$700	\$560	\$560
Grant support for non-SMEs (30%)	\$300	\$240	\$240

[^]Do note that the minimum internship allowance includes CPF contributions if required. The number of working days in a month which is used as a basis for computation of the monthly internship allowance includes the public holidays that fall on a normal working day but excludes rest days and non-working days as per MOM guidelines. The computation for the monthly allowance shall be based on the number of working days in a month. Refer to <http://www.mom.gov.sg> for information on the number of working days in a month.

^{^^} Actual internship period is supported based on internship placement letter issued by the respective IHLs and submitted to SPRING Singapore and its partners. Eligible grant support for SMEs is calculated at 70% of the fixed minimum internship allowance. Eligible grant support for non-SMEs is calculated at 30% of the fixed minimum internship allowance.

14. How do I apply for STP (Internship)?

Please refer [here](#) for a step-by-step guide on how to apply for STP (Internship).

You should prepare the following information and supporting documents for each intern and submit your STP Internship application via [STPNet](#) at least 7 days before the commencement of the internship:

- A copy of the Internship Placement Letter/Email (issued by the school) with the following details:
 - Company name
 - Intern's name and NRIC
 - Internship duration (including start and end date)
 - Internship monthly stipend aligned to STP (Internship) terms (Minimum \$800 per month for ITE and polytechnic students and minimum \$1,000 per month for university students)
- Intern's year of study and current semester
- Internship job scope
- Intern's contact number and email address
- Copy of the NRIC (front and back)

15. How do I submit an STP (Internship) claim?

All STP internship claims for applications submitted online **from 1 August 2017** are to be completed online through [STPNet](#).

All internship claims for applications submitted offline **before 1 August 2017** are to be completed offline through the submission of all supporting claim documents in hardcopy to your respective STP AIP partners. Click [here](#) for more information.

Please prepare the following documents for your claim:

- Claim form
- Student and company feedback form
- Student internship report
- Payslips of all claimable months
- Company bank statement of any claimable month
- GIRO Form

The above set of documents should be submitted within 6 months from the end of the qualifying period. Failing which, the offer of grant for items approved but for which the Company has yet to submit claims for disbursement shall automatically lapse.

The disbursement of STP internship claims will be made by SPRING to the company via Interbank GIRO. You are required to mail a hardcopy GIRO form to SPRING if you have previously not done so or if you intend to change your bank account for the crediting of approved STP (Internship) claims. The GIRO form can be downloaded through STPNet during your STPNet Internship application.

STP (Sponsorship) and STP (Fresh Hire) - Discontinued

16. For existing SMEs who are on STP Fresh Hire and Study Sponsorship – what does the training grant support?

The maximum training grant for a University graduate is \$15,000; Polytechnic graduate S\$10,000; and ITE graduate S\$6,000.

The training grant supports OJT and external training during the first year of employment. The company is required to submit a one-year training plan¹ and deliver the training to the fresh hire. The training grant is disbursed by the STP AIP partner upon verification of training deliverables.

OJT

80% of the training grant recognises OJT by defraying resources by the company to supervise the new hire. The grant is disbursed by the STP AIP partner upon verification of deliverables at the end of the first year of employment.

External Training

¹ Companies may obtain the template for the training plan from STP AIP partners.

The remaining 20% supports external training courses that the new hire attends. The grant supports 70% of the actual cost incurred. The grant is disbursed by the STP AIP partner upon verification of receipts at the end of the first year of employment.

Note that external training courses which are already subsidised (e.g. WDA WSQ Courses) will not be double-funded.

17. I am a SME who is on the STP Fresh Hire and Study Sponsorship. How do I make my training grant claim?

All existing STP Study Sponsorship and Fresh Hire matches will still be monitored and serviced by the STP AIP partners. In particular, the 6 and 12-month training checks as well as verification of all the required documentation from the Company for the STP Study Sponsorship and Fresh Hire claims will still be carried out by the STP AIP partners. If you are submitting your claims under the STP (Study Sponsorship) and STP (Fresh Hire), please contact your respective STP AIP partner for further information.

18. What is the prevailing market median salary that SMEs should pay?

Under STP, SMEs are required to offer competitive salaries and should be committed to paying the prevailing market median starting salary as published by the Ministry of Manpower.

Source: Graduate Employment Surveys conducted by various local publicly-funded institutions of higher learning

Website: <http://stats.mom.gov.sg/Pages/Employment-and-Monthly-Gross-Starting-Salary-of-Graduates.aspx>

19. How does the study sponsorship and training grant support vary across ITE, Polytechnic and University candidates?

A summary of the study sponsorship and training grant for ITE, Polytechnic and University candidates is shown in the table below:

STP (Sponsorship) & STP (Fresh Hire)

Sponsorship Recipient Category	Award Category	Bond Period	(a) Sponsorship Grant from SPRING	(b) SME Share	(c) Training Grant from SPRING
ITE					
Final Year Student (Higher Nitec)	Sponsorship	2 Years	\$8,000	\$4,000	\$6,000 OJT: 80%; ^External Training: 20%
Current Year graduate (Higher Nitec)	Fresh Hire	1 Year	NA		
Final Year Student (Nitec)	Sponsorship	2 Years	\$7,000	\$3,000	
Current Year Graduate (Nitec)	Fresh Hire	1 Year	NA		
Polytechnic					
2nd year Student	Sponsorship	2 Years	\$18,000	\$8,000	\$10,000 OJT: 80%; ^External Training: 20%
Final Year Student			\$12,000		
Current Year Graduate	Fresh Hire	1 Year	NA		
University					
Graduate	Fresh Hire	1 Year	NA	\$8,000	\$15,000 OJT: 80%; ^External Training: 20%

(a) SPRING's sponsorship grant defrays upfront cost by SME by disbursing STP study sponsorship to recipient during the school term. The study sponsorship deed must be signed by 31st October.

(b) The Company's share is paid to the recipient in the form of the final tranche disbursement (for students) or a sign-on bonus (for fresh hires) within the 1st year of employment. The sign-on bonus is subjected to the prevailing CPF contribution rates. The sponsorship grant from SPRING is not applicable for fresh hires.

(c) Disbursed by the Participating Trade Association to the company. Company should deliver upon its one-year training plan, provide at least the market median salary and pay the related sign-on bonus.

^External training: Computed at 70% support based on actual expenses incurred less GST.

20. Is the 'sign-on bonus' (final tranche) subjected to employer CPF contributions?

The STP Study Sponsorship Grant is designed to help SMEs defray the upfront cost of sponsoring a student during his/her studies. The 'sign-on bonus' or final tranche, will be paid out by the SME to the student upon graduation and/or joining the company. The company can either pay the sign-on bonus in full before the start of employment or in a maximum of 2 tranches within the first year of employment.

However, the sign-on bonus is subjected to employer CPF contributions regardless of when the payout to the recipient is made. This is in accordance to the CPF Act, where employers shall pay the related CPF contributions in respect to any employee contributions by the company.

21. What happens if the candidate is unable to complete his/her bond, or resigns?

Upon acceptance of the offer, a deed would be signed between the sponsoring company and the candidate. Reference to the deed would indicate that in the event the candidate is unable to complete his/her bond or resigns, he/she would be liable to pay liquidated damages (LD) to the sponsoring company, subject to prevailing interest rates.

The sponsoring company shall return the relevant grant portion to SPRING, together with any interest accrued.

22. What happens if the company wishes to terminate the services of the candidate during the bond service period?

Termination of the services of the candidate shall be at the discretion of the company. However, in respect of the grant being offered to the company, SPRING should be informed immediately if there is any intention to dismiss or terminate the service of the candidate. SPRING reserves the right to withdraw or reduce the grant and /or require the Company to refund and repay SPRING all or any part of the grant disbursed in the event of changes or abortion of the Sponsorship.

23. Can the company alter or change any terms pertaining to the sponsorship?

In respect of the grant being offered to the company, SPRING's approval should be sought prior to any changes to the sponsorship terms or any other related matters before implementation. This includes any change in course of study, alterations or delay in the bond period date, etc.

24. With the discontinuation of STP Study Sponsorship and Fresh Hire, what is the available support to help SMEs attract young talent from IHLs?

SMEs that are keen to attract and hire young local talent can consider (a) offering structured and meaningful internships to students and receive support under [STP Internships](#), and/or (b) offering work-study programme to students and receive support under the existing [SkillsFuture Earn and Learn Programme \(ELP\)](#).

The ELP has similar features to the STP Study Sponsorship and Fresh Hire such as training grant for SMEs and sign-on bonus for students. SMEs can receive grant support to defray the cost of providing structured on-the-job training (OJT) and mentoring.

SMEs that are interested to improve their HR capabilities for talent attraction and retention can also receive support through SPRING's [Capability Development Grant](#) and [SkillsFuture SME Mentors Programme](#).

Others

25. Can the STP-supported candidate be related to the company?

No. SMEs are required to declare that supported candidates are not related to any of their CEO, Directors or substantial shareholders of the company.