

## Student Volunteer Researcher

Volunteer (unpaid) • Part-time during term, full-time available in summer • Sheung Wan, Hong Kong

### A Note on This Role

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This is an unpaid volunteer position. We want to be direct about that from the outset.

We are not offering pay. We are offering something different: the chance to do real policy work on real problems that affect Hong Kong, alongside researchers and practitioners who take that work seriously. Whether that is a worthwhile exchange depends entirely on what you are looking for.

If you are looking for a credential to add to a CV, this is probably not the right fit. If you are genuinely curious about Hong Kong's future and want to understand how rigorous policy thinking gets made — and occasionally shapes what actually happens — read on.

### Who We Are

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HKFEI is an independent policy research institute focused on Hong Kong's most important economic challenges: housing affordability, population policy, labour markets, and the city's long-term economic trajectory.

We are small and intentionally so. Our work is published in Ming Pao, SCMP, and academic journals. It reaches government officials, legislators, and the broader public. We care about rigour — our proposals are grounded in evidence, not ideology — and we care about independence. We say what the analysis shows, even when it is inconvenient.

Our student researchers are not peripheral to this work. Several have co-authored published policy proposals and academic papers. The ones who get the most out of the experience are the ones who treat it as an apprenticeship in a craft, not as a work placement.

### What You Will Do

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The work varies depending on your skills and the projects underway. It may include:

- Reviewing and summarising academic literature and government documents to support policy proposals
- Collecting, organising, and conducting basic analysis of publicly available data
- Assisting with bilingual drafting, editing, and fact-checking of policy briefs and articles

- Using AI tools to accelerate research tasks — literature synthesis, document analysis, first-draft production
- Supporting social media content creation and knowledge dissemination
- Contributing your own ideas and angles — we are genuinely interested in what you think

**We will not give you make-work.** If a task does not contribute to something real, we will not ask you to do it. In return, we expect you to take the work seriously.

## Who We Are Looking For

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We are not primarily looking for a particular academic background or set of technical skills. We are looking for a certain kind of person.

**Genuinely interested in Hong Kong.** Not as a topic for a class, but as a place you care about. You follow what is happening with housing, demographics, fiscal policy. You have views.

**Intellectually honest.** You are willing to follow an argument where it leads, even if the conclusion is uncomfortable. You do not start with the answer and work backwards.

**Self-directed.** You do not need to be managed closely. When you take on a task, you see it through. You ask questions when you are stuck rather than disappearing.

**Curious beyond your field.** Economics, law, social policy, urban planning, history — the best policy thinking draws on all of these. You read widely and make connections across domains.

**Willing to use AI tools.** We use agentic AI as part of our daily workflow. We expect you to be willing to learn and use these tools, not to resist them. Prior familiarity is a plus.

## PRACTICAL REQUIREMENTS

- Current undergraduate or postgraduate student at any Hong Kong university, or recently graduated
- Strong written Chinese (Traditional) and English
- Ability to commit at least one full day per week during term, with more available during summer
- Economics, public policy, urban studies, statistics, or related fields are preferred — but we have worked well with students from law, journalism, social work, and other backgrounds

## What You Will Gain

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We will be honest here too. The value of this experience depends on what you put into it.

- Direct exposure to how policy research is designed, conducted, and communicated to real audiences
- Mentorship from Professor Michael B. Wong (MIT PhD, HKU) and Professor Yun-wing Sung (Minnesota PhD, CUHK)

- The possibility of co-authorship on published policy proposals if your contribution warrants it — several of our current and former student researchers have published work under the HKFEI banner
- A network that spans academia, government, civil society, and media in Hong Kong
- A reference from senior researchers who can speak specifically and honestly about your work, not generically about your participation
- The experience of understanding Hong Kong's policy challenges from the inside — which is genuinely useful whether you go into government, academia, journalism, or the private sector

## How to Apply

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Send the following to [info@hkfei.org.hk](mailto:info@hkfei.org.hk) with the subject line “Student Volunteer Application”:

- A short letter of no more than 400 words. Tell us: what Hong Kong policy problem do you find most important right now, and why? You do not need to have a solution — we are interested in how you think about the problem.
- Your CV
- Your academic transcript (unofficial is fine)
- Optional but welcome: a writing sample, a data analysis, or anything else that shows us how you think

*We accept applications on a rolling basis throughout the year. We are particularly interested in candidates available to start in summer 2026 or at the beginning of the next academic year.*