



White Paper

Business Licence in Hong Kong

2026
EDITION



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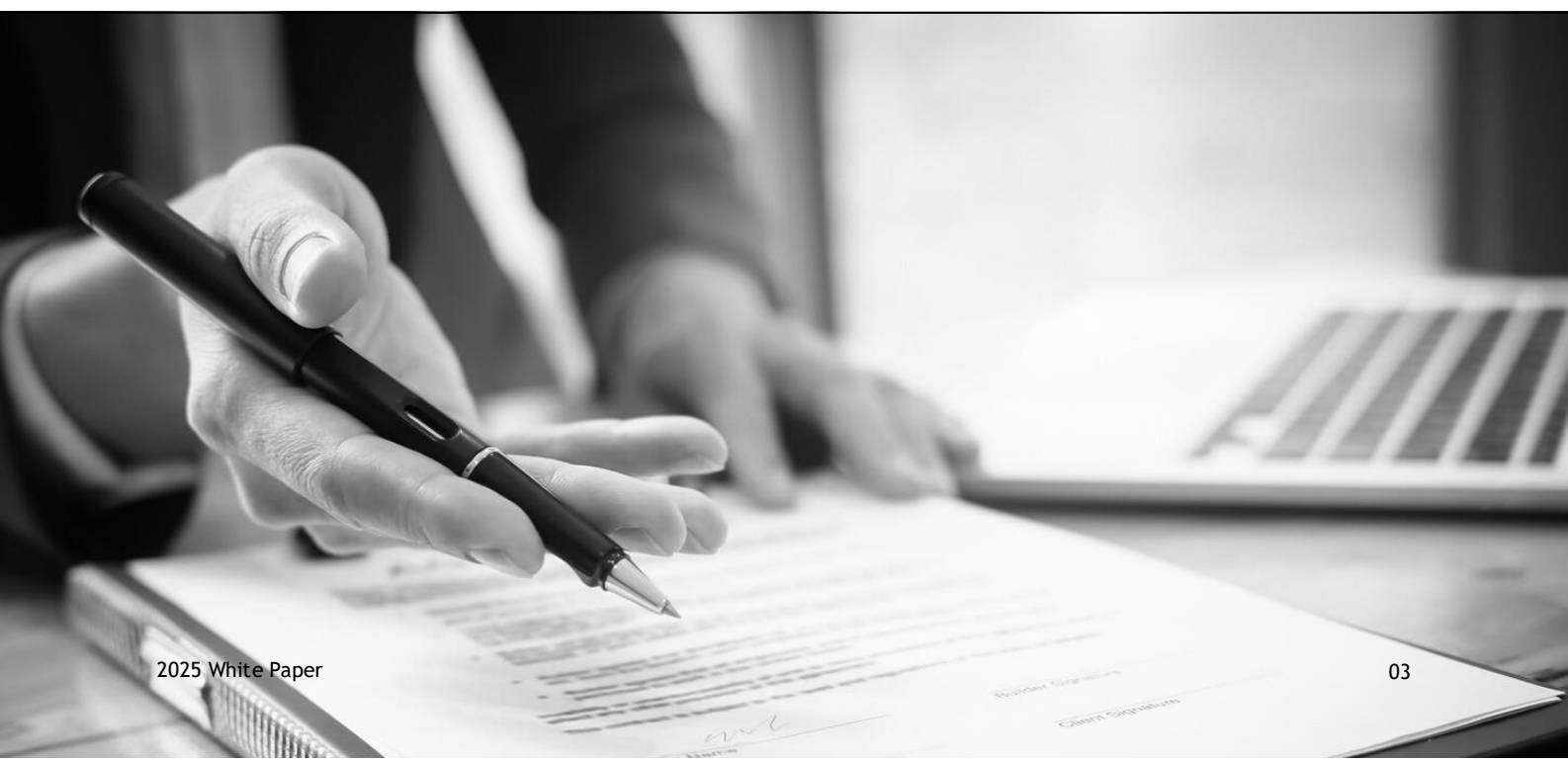
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00. Introduction

Starting and operating a business is an attractive option in Hong Kong given the stable legal system and its advantageous international edge in the global market. For the smooth and sustainable growth of your business, it is of utmost importance to ensure that rules and requirements regulating your type of business are carefully complied with. Non-compliance will result in serious consequences, including reprimand, sanction, and personal liability. Anticipation and adapting of rules and regulations changes are essential for all business which are required continually attention. Keeping up with the various changes to rules in markets is one of the most challenging tasks that businesses face today. Our Regulatory Strategy assists our clients in anticipating and adapting to changes in their regulatory environment by developing relevant business strategies.

This White Paper serves as a readily available tool for our partnering businesses. It provides details about licencing requirements for the common types of businesses in Hong Kong. For further inquiries, feel free to contact us and we are happy to provide advisory services for your business.

Please note that the content of this White Paper does not amount to professional legal advice that are regulated under Legal Practitioners Ordinance (Cap. 159). GCC Capital is not responsible for any damages or loss resulting from adherence to the content and/or advice of this White Paper.



01. Education Business

In Hong Kong, a school is defined in the Education Ordinance of Hong Kong as an institution organization or establishment which provides for 20 or more persons during any one day or 8 or more persons at any one time, any nursery, kindergarten, primary, secondary or post-secondary education or other educational courses by any means, including correspondence delivered by hand or through the postal services. If you intend to run a private school that falls into the meaning of a school in Hong Kong, you will have to apply for the school registration and obtain a “Certificate of Registration of a School” from the Educational Bureau of Hong Kong.

However, “school” does not extend to training institutions that offer practical and on-the-job courses simply aiming at mastering skills and techniques or developing a hobby or an interest, such as cooking courses, grooming, painting, dancing, drama, dressmaking courses etc. A Certificate of Registration of School is not required for running an on-academic organization.



If I want to apply for registration of a school, what should I do?

The application procedures vary depending on the nature of your designated premise for your 'school'. If the premises are not designed and constructed as a school, e.g. premises at commercial and residential building and you want a registration, you will need to meet the requirements issued by the following departments. You will be given a certificate of **provisional registration***, which will be valid for one year.

Steps	Procedures
<p>Step 1: Clearance with the Planning Department</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Submit completed <u>Form P</u> to Secretary of Town Planning Board with the requirement information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • site plan showing the location of the proposed school; • floor plan showing the dimension and arrangement of all classrooms and facilities with clear indication of means of escape provided for the school; • the number of classrooms and other service rooms (e.g. staff room, medical room, etc); • indoor/outdoor play area proposed and the estimate maximum capacity in each room (in case of kindergarten); • particulars of any provision of parking spaces or lay-bys for school bus and/or private car for picking up and setting down of school children; and • height of the highest floor of school measuring from the floor slab to the lowest ground level where accessible by fire appliances 2. The application will be considered within two months. You will be notified in writing of the Board's decision. If you are not satisfied with the decision, you could apply in writing for a review.
<p>Step 2: Clearance with the Land Registry and Lands Department (LD)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Request for the following documents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A certified true copy of the Historical and Current Computerized Land Register showing the nature of instruments and memorial numbers of all documents registered against the lot/premises; and • A certified true copy of the Lease or New Grant or Conditions (including all modifications and attachments thereto) in respect of the lot/premises 2. Submit the above documents and <u>Form L</u> to the relevant District Lands Office of LD
<p>Step 3: Clearance with the Fire Services Department (FSD)</p>	<p>Forward an application form (Form A1) and 3 copies of layout plan to FSD for application for Fire Services Certificate</p>

Steps	Procedures
Step 4: Clearance with the Buildings Department*	Forward an application form (Form A2) and 4 copies of layout plan to Buildings Department (BD) for application of safety certificates and notice *You could also forward it to the Independent Checking Unit (ICU)
Step 5: Clearance with the Education Bureau	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Forward the Board/Land Department's approval letter to EDB for planning permission/ land lease modification/ temporary waiver (if any). 2. Forward other relevant documents (e.g. copies of Form A1 and Form A2, layout plan, etc.) to EDB according to the Checklist at Appendix 6a.
Step 6: Compliance of Requirements FSD & BD (or ICU)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Comply with the requirements 2. Inform FSD and BD/ICU in writing instantly upon compliance of their requirements for follow-up inspections 3. Forward the safety certificates and notice issued by FSD and 4. BD/ICU to EDB for further processing. 5. Forward 5 copies of the approved layout plan to EDB for its onward transmission to the Director of Health to issue health requirements and provide the number of permitted accommodation in each classroom.
Step 7: Compliance of Requirements of Education Bureau (EDB)	Comply with EDB's requirements on the suitability of the proposed school name, school premises, courses to be operated (including syllabus and timetables) and fees to be charged as well as registration of managers, etc.
Step 8: Commence operation after obtaining Certificate of Provisional Registration of A School	

*Provided that your school is **provisionally registered**, and you want to obtain a **full registration**, full compliance of the following requirements is needed:

- Requirements on school management (e.g. registration of teachers, appointment of principal and number of students enrolled set by EDB);
- Health requirements set by the Department of Health; and
- Requirements set by the FSD and BD/ICU (if any).

02. Employment Agency

An employment agency is defined under the Employment Ordinance and the Employment Agency Regulations of Hong Kong as an establishment or person who aims at obtaining employment for another person or supplying personnel to an employer.

If you intend to operate an employment agency, a placement agency, or similar agency in Hong Kong that will provide recruitment services to other employers, you are required to obtain a 'Licence to Operate an Employment Agency' from the Labour Department of Hong Kong (LD). For special cases, you can also run your employment agency business if you obtain a Certificate of Exemption.

If I want to apply for 'Licence to Operate an Employment Agency', what should I do?

First, you must make sure that your agency is a registered Hong Kong Company with a Certificate of Incorporation from the Hong Kong Companies Registry. There should be a nominee of your company, who is responsible for the operations and management of your agency. The nominee must be a permanent resident in Hong Kong or an employment visa holder.

Second, you should commence your application by performing the following two steps:

(1) Check the proposed name of employment agency with the Employment Agencies Administration (EAA) of LD

- Send the proposed name of your employment agency and your telephone number to EAA of LD by e-mail (ea-ee@labour.gov.hk) or by fax (Fax no.: 2115 3756) to confirm that the proposed name can be used for application

(2) (If name is accepted) Attending an interview and documents submission to LD

- You must bring along the following documents and attend an interview in person with an officer at EAA.

Documents required

For all types of your company/ agency:

Authorization letter for the consent of the applicant/nominated operator/other related person(s) to the release to LD of all information of any criminal record against the applicant/nominated operator/other related person(s) within the preceding 5 years, concerning conviction of an offence against the person of a child, young person, or woman or of an offence involving membership of a triad society, fraud, dishonesty or extortion;

Depending on the type of your company/ agency:

Sole Proprietorship	The applicant should bring along: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Hong Kong Identity Card ("HKID") (also the passport if not a Hong Kong permanent resident);2. A recent passport photo of the applicant; and3. Photocopy of the valid Business Registration Certificate ("BRC")
Partnership	Appoint one of the partners as applicant and the applicant should bring along: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. HKID (also the passport if not a HK permanent resident);2. A recent passport photo of the applicant;3. Photocopy of the valid BRC;4. Photocopy of the HKID of each of the other partners (photocopy of passport if not the holder of HKID) ; and5. Document signed by all partners confirming the appointment of applicant as licensee
Limited Company	A natural person should be appointed as a nominated operator of the company and the nominated operator should bring along: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. HKID (also the passport if not a HK permanent resident);2. A recent passport photo of the nominated operator;3. Photocopy of the valid BRC;4. Photocopy of the HKID of each of the directors (photocopy of passport if not the holder of HKID);5. Document signed by all directors or directors' meeting minutes confirming the appointment of nominated operator; and6. Photocopies of (i) the Certificate of Incorporation; (ii) Incorporation Form / Annual Return and (iii) Notice of change (in particulars) of company secretary and director (ND2A / ND2B), if applicable



What will happen after my submission of application?

EAA will process your application in accordance with s.53(1) of the Employment Ordinance. Your application would be rejected if the person operating your employment agency:

- is an undischarged bankrupt;
- has, within the preceding 5 years, been convicted of an offence against the person of a child, young person or woman or of an offence involving membership of a triad society, fraud, dishonesty or extortion;
- has knowingly furnished to the Commissioner any false or misleading information in connection with his application for the issue or renewal of the licence;
- has contravened any provision of this Part or any regulation made under section 62; or
- is not, for any other reason, a fit and proper person to operate an employment agency.

Unless the above situations occur, you would receive a demand note for payment of licence fee. After the payment settlement, you would obtain a licence and could commence operation of your agency.

What can I do if my application is rejected?

You could choose to appeal to the Administrative Appeals Board within 28 days of notice of refusal.

How can I get a Certificate of Exemption (CoE) for my agency?

You will be granted a CoE under s52 of Employment Ordinance if the Commissioner for Labour is satisfied that the EA is non-profit making and should, in public interest, be so exempted. Employment agencies that are granted CoE are still subject to the regulations in Part XII of the Employment Ordinance and the Employment Agency Regulations.

03. Estate Agency

In accordance to the Estate Agents Ordinance in Hong Kong, a person who intends to operate an estate agency requires an Estate Agent Licence issued by the Estate Agent Authority (EAA). An Estate Agent means a person who does estate agency work in the course of business. Generally speaking, it includes work in relation to the introduction to the client of a third person who intends to buy or sell a property, or the negotiation for the acquisition or disposition of a property by the client. In Hong Kong, there are two types of real estate licences: **(1) estate agent licence** - its holder can work as an estate agent or act as a salesperson for another estate agent; **(2) salesperson's licence** - its holder can work under a licenced estate agent as an employee.

If I want to register for an estate agent's licence (company), what should I do?

You should first make sure that your agency:

- is a company;
- has at least one director holding a valid estate agent's licence;
- has a licenced estate agent in effective control of the company's business as an estate agent;
- has directors who are all considered fit and proper persons;
- is considered a fit and proper person to hold a licence.



If you meet the above requirements, you could commence your application by submitting the required documents and fee to EAA. The requirement documents include:

1. Duly completed and signed application forms
 - For new application: Form 3(CN)
 - For non-Hong Kong educational qualifications (if applicable): Questionnaire on Education Attainment
2. Valid BRC
3. Any of the following documents showing the company name and number:
 - certificate of incorporation; or
 - any document having been filed with the Companies Registry;
4. Any of the following documents showing the latest board of directors:
 - Annual Return (AR1) and Notification of changes of secretary and directors (D2A) (if applicable); or
 - Incorporation Form (Company Limited by Shares) (NC1) and Notification of changes of secretary and directors (D2A) (if applicable);
5. Any of the following documents showing the latest registered address:
 - Annual Return (AR1); or
 - Notification of situation of registered office (R1)

If none of our directors hold a valid estate agent's licence, what should I do?

If you wish to obtain an estate agent's licence for your company, there should be **at least one** director holding a valid estate agent's licence. To be granted a salesperson's licence or an estate agent's licence (individual), an applicant must:

- have attained the age of 18 years at the date of application;
- have completed an educational level of Form 5 of secondary education or its equivalent;
- have passed the relevant qualifying examination in the 12 months immediately prior to the application; and
- be considered a fit and proper person to hold a licence.

04. Event Management Company

In Hong Kong, it is not required to obtain a business licence for setting up an event management company. However, licencing requirements will depend on the category of events that you will organize. Generally speaking, if you organise events in public areas, you are required to obtain a Place of Public Entertainment Licence from the Food and Environment Hygiene Department (the “FEHD”). Additional licences are required if the event will engage the following activities:

Type 1: Food Stall or Kiosk

A Temporary Food Factory Licence from FEHD is needed if the event is going to sell food and drink (limited to pre-cooked food supplied from licenced food factories or other lawful sources). For this type of licence, no cooking other than heating up / warming of food by electricity shall be permitted on the premises. You should not start the operation of your businesses without a licence; otherwise, you will be liable to prosecution.

What should I submit for the application?

To apply for a Temporary Food Factory Licence, the applicant should submit the following to Assistant Secretary (Other Licences) of Licencing Office concerned of FEHD:
a standard application form ([FEHB 201](#)); and
copy of proposed layout plan of the premises

When should I submit the application?

You should submit the application to the Licencing Office concerned at least 2 working days before the proposed commencement date of the licence.

What will happen after the submission?

The concerned Government departments will process your application. You will receive a list of licencing requirements in line with the Food Business Regulation. You should start the decoration work only upon notification in writing of the licencing requirements from the Licencing Authority. You will be informed if your application is rejected, and reasons will be provided.

You should strictly comply with the licencing requirements so that the licence could be issued. Specifically, you have to report compliance in writing to the Licencing Office with the requirement documents. The Licencing Office will then arrange for a Licencing Inspector to visit your premises for verification inspection.

Type 2: Liquor

A Liquor Licence issued by the Liquor Licencing Board is needed if the event will sell liquor for consumption on the premise of the event.

What should I submit for the application?

You should submit a completed application form “Application for New Issue of a Liquor Licence” ([FEHB 106](#)) and return it to the respective Liquor Licencing Office together with the following documents

- 2 recent photographs (35 mm x 40 mm) of the applicant;
- a copy of the applicant’s HKID card;
- a copy of each of BRC of the restaurant and company (if limited);
- 3 copies of a plan showing the layout of the premises with clear indication of the area used for dancing (for applications with dancing endorsement only);
- a copy of the Certificate of Incorporation if the owner of the establishment under application is a corporation.

What will happen after the submission?

You might be invited to attend an interview arranged by the Secretary, Liquor Licencing Board to verify the information provided in the application form. Public opinion is sought by placing an advertisement at the applicant’s expense in three newspapers. Please note that there are specific format requirements for the newspaper posts.

Type 3: Amusements with Prizes

An Amusement with Prizes Licence (AWPL) in Hong Kong issued by the Television and Entertainment Licencing Authority (the “TELA”) is needed if the event is amusement games which involves prize such as fun fairs or bazaars.

What will happen after the submission?

Application for an AWPL could be submitted either via mail to the Office of the Licencing Authority of the Home Affairs Department (OLA) or by electronic submission channels ([Link to E-submission](#)). Documents required are dependent on the nature of the applicant. If you are a company within the meaning of the Companies Ordinance, you should complete Forms 3 and 7. If you are a club or society as described in the Societies Ordinance, you should complete Forms 3 and 8. Apart from the required forms, you would have to submit supporting documents specified in the checklist ([Link to Checklist - p.10](#)) as shown in the official website.

A Liquor Licence issued by the Liquor Licencing Board is needed if the event will sell liquor for consumption on the premise of the event.

Type 4: Lottery

The Gambling Ordinance defines a lottery as a raffle, sweet stake or any competition involving money, any game, method, device or scheme which distributes or allotting prizes by lot or chance. A Lottery Licence is needed if you intend to organise a lottery during the event.

What should I submit for the application of licence?

You should submit a duly completed application form and supporting documents to OLA by mail or in person. Specifically, the documents include:

- a completed Form 1
- a completed Form 6 or 7 or 8
- a completed “List of Documents to be Submitted after the Lottery Event” Form
- a completed “Exemption of Licence Fee and Collection of Licence” Form
- a completed “Contact Details of Applicant and Contact Person” Form
- a copy of the applicant’s Hong Kong Identity Card or passport
- two sets of sample lottery ticket
- an acknowledgement from the school if your organisation is a Parents-Teachers Association planning to conduct a lottery to raise funds for/on behalf of the school
- an acknowledgement from the local registered charity exempt from tax under s.88 of IRO if your organisation plans to raise funds for donation to that charity
- a copy of the Certificate of Incorporation if your organisation is a registered company or a copy of the Certificate of Registration of a Society if your organisation is a registered society
- a copy of the Memorandum of Association (if any) and Articles of Association if your organisation is a registered company or a copy of the club rules/constitution if your organisation is a registered society

The forms and relevant documents could be found on the official website of OLA. If you would like to apply for sale of lottery tickets on public streets, you will need to obtain an additional written approval from the public officer. Reach out to us to know more.

What will happen after the submission?

Your application will be processed by OLA after the submission. The process usually takes ten (10) working days. You will be asked to pay a prescribed fee, and the lottery licence will be issued upon the completed payment. You should make sure that the lottery tickets that you issue state the licence number. Therefore, it is suggested that you apply for a licence at least three weeks in advance to allow buffer time for printing lottery tickets.

I am a local registered charity, could I apply for a waiver of the licence fee?

If you are a local registered charity as stipulated under s.88 of IRO, you may apply for a waiver by submitting the “Method of Payment and Collection of Licence” Form.

If you prefer a refund over a waiver, you could apply in writing to the public officer stating reasons for refund with relevant documents, given that at least 75% of your lottery proceeds has been appropriated to other local registered charities.

Type 5: Trade Promotion Competition

A Trade Promotion Competition licence from TELA is needed if it is intended to promote a business or sale of a product through competition, such as lucky draws during the event to boost publicity and sales.

What should I submit for the application of licence?

You should submit the following forms and supporting documents for the application to OLA via mail or electronic submission channels ([Link to E-submission](#)) at least 2 weeks before the commencement of your event:

Forms:

- Form 4
- Form 6 (not on behalf of a company nor club/ society) or Form 7 (on behalf of a company) or Form 8 (on behalf of a club or society)
- Form for Collection of Licence
- Contact Details of the Applicant and Contact Person Form
- Additional Information Sheet

Supporting documents

- a copy of the up-to-date and paid Business Registration Certificate of your company
- a copy of the Memorandum of Association (if any) and Articles of Association (for Form 7 applicant) or the Club Rules/Constitution (for Form 8 applicant)
- a copy of the Applicant's HKID/passport
- Details of the competition:
 - publicity materials (e.g. advertisement, poster, web page) terms and conditions of the competition
 - sample of lucky draw ticket/scratch card
 - screen captures of the computer game (for instant-win computer programme) design of the roulette wheel and a table explaining the colours (or numbers, words, signs) and the corresponding prizes (for roulette wheel game)
 - a table explaining the colours of the balls and the corresponding prizes and the number of balls of each colour in the box (for drawing balls from a box)

What will happen after the submission?

Your application will be processed by OLA. You should ensure compliance with licencing guidelines and requirements to prevent cancellation of licence. The details and relevant licencing requirements could be found in "[Application Forms and Guide for Applicants](#)" published by OLA.

Type 6: Public Exhibition of Films

A Certificate of Approval issued by the TELA is needed as required by the Film Censorship Ordinance in Hong Kong.

What should I submit for the application of licence?

To apply for a Certificate of Approval, a person will have to submit the following to the Office for Film, Newspaper and Article Administration (OFNAA):

- the film with a duly completed Film Submission Form ([Link to Film Submission Form](#))
- information about exhibition of the film (such as venue and date of exhibition)

Before the submission, you are suggested to write to or make a call to OFNAA to book a date for examination of the film. You will then be assigned a film viewing session within 7 working days from the date of notice of submission. After the viewing, the censor will process your application and decide whether to issue a Certificate of Approval.

What will happen after the submission?

You will be notified about the classification of your film for exhibition within eight (8) working days from the date of receipt the submission with accordance to the list below:

- (a) Category I (Suitable for All Ages);
- (b) Category IIA (Not Suitable for Children);
- (c) Category IIB (Not Suitable for Young Persons and Children); or
- (d) Category III (Persons Aged 18 or Above Only)



05. Financial Services Company

Hong Kong is ranked among the top three international financial centre in the world. Financial industry is highly regulated, and the rules and regulations governing financial services are complex. The licences require to be obtained will depend on the type of financial services you wish to provide. With the rise of Fintech in Hong Kong, detailed examination of the regulatory regime is required before commencement of the proposed fintech business. The following lists out the common financial services that require a regulatory licence in Hong Kong:

Regulated Activities defined under the Securities and Futures Ordinance (“SFO”):

Under SFO, it defines ten types of regulated activities (“RA”) which include dealing in securities, dealing in futures contracts, leveraged foreign exchange trading, advising on securities, advising on futures contract, advising on corporate finance, providing automated trading securities, securities margin financing, asset management and credit rating services. To conduct RA, it is required to obtain a licence issued by the Securities and Futures Commission.

Specifically, you will need a licence if:

you are not an authorized financial institution and:
you are a corporation carrying on a business in a regulated activity in Hong Kong (s.114(1) & (2) SFO); or
you are a corporation actively marketing, whether by yourself or another person on your behalf and whether in HK or outside HK, to the public any services that you provide, which would constitute a RA if provided in HK (s.115 SFO); or
you are an individual performing a regulated function for your principal which is a licenced corporation in relation to a RA carried on as a business. In that case, you have to be a licenced representative accredited to your principal (s.114(3) & (4) SFO). In addition, if you are an executive director of that corporation, you also need to be approved as a responsible officer (s.125(1)(a) SFO).

Authorization of Banks, Restricted licenced Banks, Deposit-Taking Companies and Representative Offices:

In order to carry out banking business or deposit-taking businesses, it needs to seek the authorization from the Hong Kong Monetary Authority ("HKMA"). The authorization procedures are highly complex and it is advised to seek independent professional advices;

In brief, the minimum criteria of authorization are as follows:

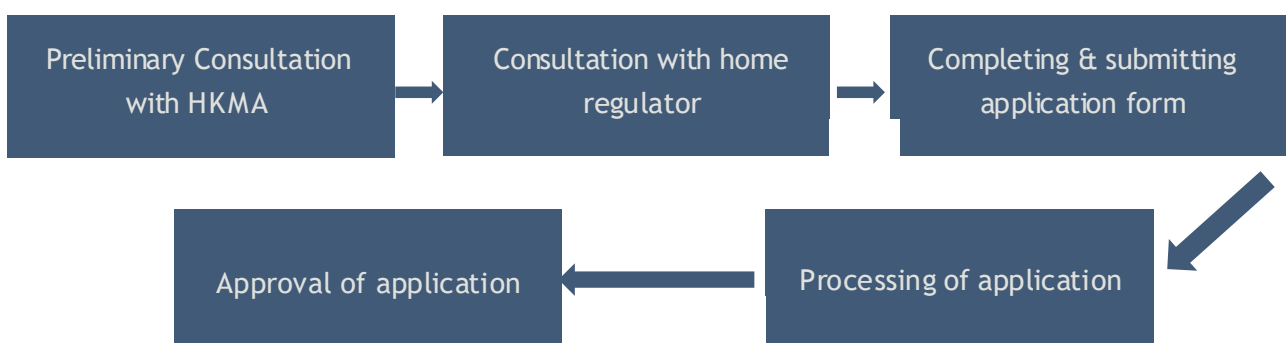
Minimum capital requirement	
Licenced Banks	HK\$300 million
Restricted Licence Bank	HK\$100 million
Deposit-taking Companies	HK\$25 million

Licencing for Stored Value Facilities (the "SVFs") Issuers / Facilitators issuing / facilitating the issue of multi-purpose stored value facilities:

A facility is a SVF if it may be used for storing the value of an amount of money that (i) is paid into the facility from time to time; and (ii) may be stored on the facility **AND** if it may be used for either or both of the following purposes: (i) as a means of making payments for goods or services under an undertaking given by the issuer and (ii) as a means of making payments to another person under an undertaking.

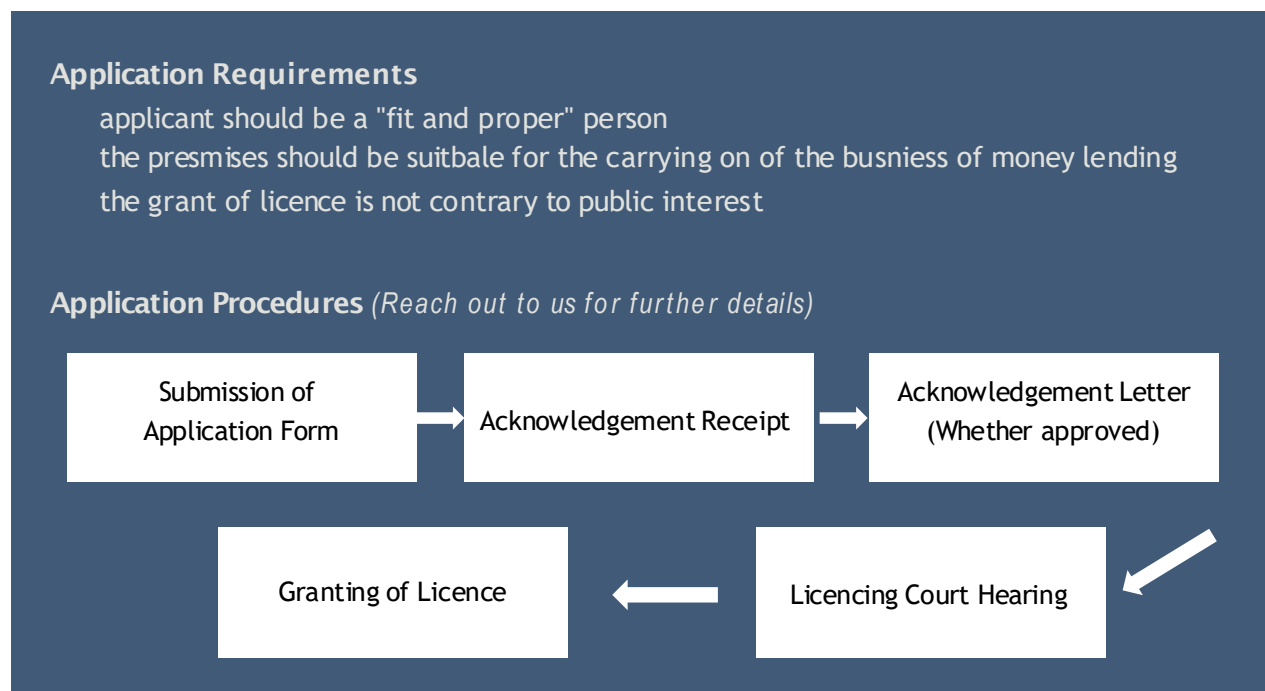
The issue of the SVFs is subject to a licencing regime administered by HKMA. HKMA may grant an SVF licence to the applicant only if HKMA is satisfied that all the minimum criteria applicable to the applicant are fulfilled, and if the SVF licence is granted, the minimum criteria will continue to be fulfilled in relation to the applicant as a licensee. In addition, HKMA is also responsible for the oversight of the designation of Retail Payment System under the Payment Systems and Stored Value Facilities Ordinance;

In brief, the application procedures are as follows:



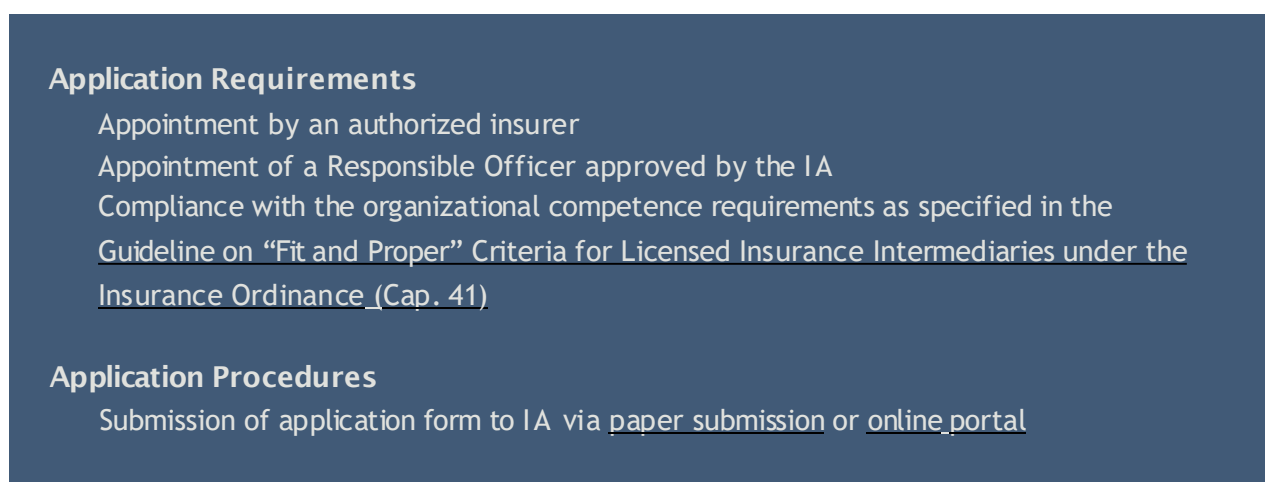
Money Lenders Licence issued by the Companies Registry:

To operate a money lending business, it is required to obtain the licence from the Company Registry and the relevant application is vetted by the Licencing Officer (Money Lender licencing Section) of the Hong Kong Police Force;



Licence of Insurance Brokers / Insurance Agents issued by the Insurance Authority:

To act as an insurance broker / agent, it is required to comply with the licencing requirements as an insurance intermediaries (including Insurance Broker Company Licence or Insurance Agency Licence) and vetted by the Insurance Authority ("IA") for granting the relevant licence;



Registration of Money Services Operators issued by the Customs and Excise Department of Hong Kong:

Before operating a Money Changer & Foreign Currencies/Exchange Broker or Dealer, it is required to seek an MSO licence issued from the Commissioner of Customs and Excise ("C&ED");

Application Requirements

For **individual**: the individual and each ultimate owner is a fit and proper person to operate a money service;

For **partnership**: each partner and each ultimate owner in the partnership is a fit and proper person to operate a money service; or

For **corporation**: each director and each ultimate owner of the corporation is a fit and proper person to be associated with the business of operating a money service.

Application Procedures

Completion of application form ([Form 1](#)), supplementary information sheet and the relevant annex and submit a (i) Business Plan; and (ii) AML/CFT policies

Submission of form via post or via C&ED's website or in person

Trust or Company Service Provider (the "TCSP"):

If you intend to carry on a trust or company service business in Hong Kong, you are required to apply for a licence under the Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorist Financing Ordinance in Hong Kong;

Application Requirements

Fit and Proper Test: a TCSP and every relevant person of the TCSP must be fit and proper to carry on or be associated with a trust or company service business

Application Procedures

Completion and Submission of [Form TCSP1](#) "Application for a Trust or Company Service Provider Licence" via post or the [TCSP Website](#)

For each person subject to fit and proper test, a [Form TCSP4](#) or [Form TCSP5](#) duly signed by the person must be delivered together with the Form TCSP1

Fee:

application fee - HK\$3,440

additional fee for each person subject to the fit and proper test - HK\$975

06. Travel Agency

In order to start a travel agency in Hong Kong, it is required to make an application to the Registrar of Travel Agents for a licence under the Travel Agents Ordinance with the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau. You are required to read the requirements set out in the Travel Agents Ordinance and the Travel Agent Regulations. The Travel Agent's Licence permits you to conduct the following activities (outbound / inbound)

- Arranging for hotels or accommodation;
- Selling or arranging transportation tickets; and
- Organizing a group tour or package tour (including sightseeing and shopping trips, etc).

If I want to register for a travel agent's licence (individual or company), what should I do?

Firstly, you should make sure that you are eligible to apply for a Travel Agent's licence. The pre-conditions for eligibility are as follows:

- the applicant, and any person in control of the company or responsible for its management, must be, in the opinion of the Registrar, a **fit and proper** person to carry on or be associated with the business of a travel agent;
- the premises where the applicant proposes to carry on its business as a travel agent must be **suitable for the purpose**;
- the applicant must be a member of an '**approved organization**', which, as specified in Schedule 1 of the TAO, is the Travel Industry Council of Hong Kong (TIC)

Specifically, '**fit and proper**' is related to whether the person

- has been convicted, whether in Hong Kong or elsewhere, of an offence involving fraudulent, corrupt or dishonest acts;
- has been convicted of an offence against any provision of the TAO;
- is in financial difficulty; or
- is otherwise not a fit and proper person.

If you are eligible, you should then submit the application form ([Link to E-form](#)) with requisite documents in person to the Travel Agents Registry.

Form*

If you are applying as an individual or an unincorporated body, use Form 2 and Form 4.

If you are applying on behalf of a body corporate, use Form 3 and Form 5.

*For required supporting documents, please refer to <https://www.tar.gov.hk/eng/doc/gs342se.pdf>

07. Restaurant

Before starting a restaurant business, you are required to obtain a 'General Restaurant Licence' ("GRL") from the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (the "FEHD"). However, you may be subject to further licencing requirements in accordance to the services that you propose to offer. The FEHD will inspect the premises prior to granting an approval for the licence. As such, you must first finalize your premise before applying for the licence. The selection of a professional contractor is a critical factor for the approval of the licence.

The following is the additional licences or permits that you may require

Liquor Licence;

Permission for Outside Seating Accommodation;

Bakery Licence if you intend to bake bread or other bakery products for sale at any premises;

Food Factory Licence if you intend to prepare, manufacture, further process or pack food for consumption off the premises;

Karaoke Establishment Permit;

Import Licence for importing frozen meat and poultry;

Permit to Sell Food by means of Vending Machine; and

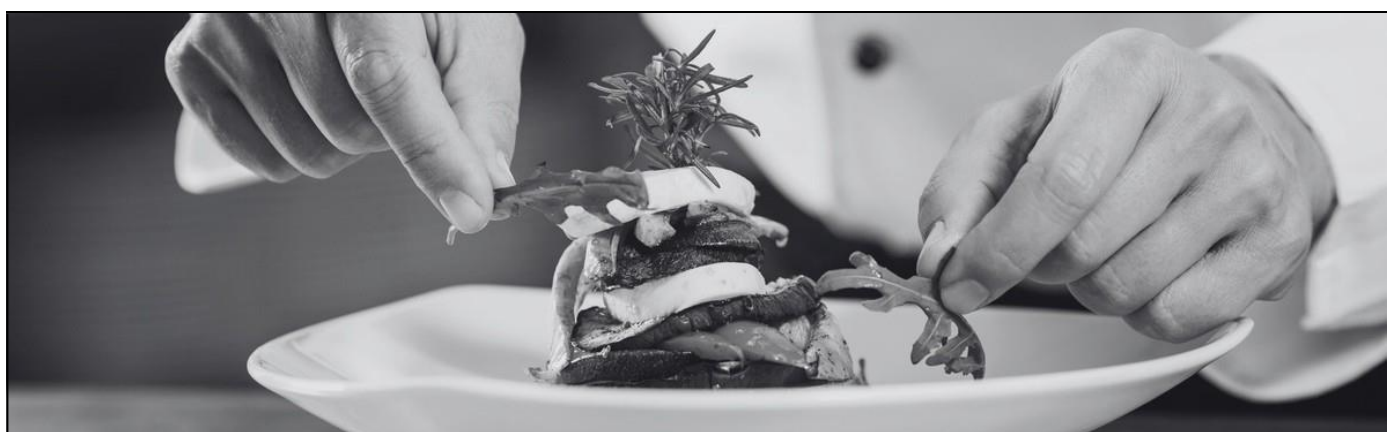
Restricted Food Permit which is to sell restricted foods such as cut fruit, sashimi, sushi, oyster and meat in their raw forms



If I want to register for a ‘general restaurant licence’, what should I do?

If your restaurant is already a company and you have already selected a designated place for the operation of your restaurant, you should submit the following to proceed with your application:

- a GRL application form together with 3 copies of the proposed layout plan;
- certified true copies of Business Registration Certificate, Certificate of Incorporation and Articles of Association of the company;
- a certified true copy of Notice of Situation of the Registered Office
- a certified true copy of the company’s most recent Annual Returns
- a copy of the Board Resolution confirming the appointment of an authorized person to represent the company in applying for the licence
- a certified true copy of the stamped tenancy agreement or record of ownership of the office premises
- a self-declaration on compliance with Government lease conditions for premises located in private buildings;



What will happen after the submission?

Your application will be processed by FEHD and you will receive the results within 10 working days. You should expect site inspections by FEHD, Buildings Department and FSD respectively, as well as a panel meeting with the three departments after the inspection. You will then receive a letter of licencing requirements, and strict compliance is required to prevent cancellation of the licence.

08. Trading Company

Hong Kong is a free port and there is no customs fee imposed on imports and exports (except excise duty for liquors, tobacco, hydrocarbon oil and methyl alcohol irrespective of whether those goods are imported or locally manufactured). With the growth of fintech businesses providing trade financing, the financing options available for trading companies have been increasing significantly. If you are intending to engage in import or export activities, please make sure that the goods that you are dealing with are controlled goods or non-controlled goods.

The following items are some of the examples of controlled goods:

- cigarettes and tobacco products;
- plants;
- radio transmission equipment;
- rice;
- textiles
- pharmaceutical products, medicines and dangerous drugs;
- animals or birds; and
- food products.

If you are trading in controlled goods, you will require seek the relevant government authority to grant the import/export licence relating to the specific controlled goods you are dealing in.



If I want to register for import/ export licences, what should I do?

You should submit the relevant documents and forms for the licence relating to the specific controlled goods, as illustrated in the table below:

Relevant goods	Procedures	Remarks
Cigarettes and tobacco products	You will need an import and export licence (a type of Dutiable Commodities Licence). To obtain the licence, you must file an application and appoint a responsible person for the intended activities of the licence under application.	You must be a company registered with the Business Registration Office of IRD
Plants*	You will need a Plant Import Licence and a valid Phytosanitary Certificate.	*Does not include cut flowers, fruit and vegetables for consumption, grains, pulses, seeds and spices for human or animal consumption etc. (Please refer to the Official Website of AFCD)
Radio transmission equipment	<p>You must obtain an Import/ Export Permit from the Telecommunications Authority (TA) unless you are a holder of a Radio Dealers Licence (Unrestricted) issued by the Office of TA to deal in the course of trade or business in radio transmitting equipment.</p> <p>You should submit your completed application form to the Office of the Communications Authority (“OFCA”)</p>	<p>Link to Application Forms for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Import Permit • Export Permit

Relevant goods	Procedures	Remarks
Rice	<p><u>Paper Form</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchase licence application forms from the Shroff and Form Sales Counter • Complete the licence application and lodge it with the Integrated Customer Service Centre <p><u>Electronic Form</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Download the e-application form from TID's e-Form Submission Service and submit accordingly 	<p>You should state clearly whether the rice is imported for local consumption or imported for re-export:</p> <p><u>Local consumption</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Import Licence Form 3</u> <p><u>Re-export</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Import Licence Form 3 & Export Licence Form 6</u>
Textiles	<p>There are no mandatory licencing requirements, but traders are encouraged to join the Textiles Trader Registration Scheme (TTRS) voluntarily</p> <p>To join, you should submit a complete <u>application form for TTRS</u> with evidence of payment of registration fee and required documents</p>	<p>You will receive a reply in three clear working days after the submission</p>
Pharmaceutical products, medicines and dangerous drugs	<p><i>Pharmaceutical products and medicines</i></p> <p>You will need an import/ export licence. You will need to submit the relevant licence application forms to the Drug Evaluation and Import/Export Control Division:</p> <p><u>Import</u>: <u>Import Licence Form 3</u> (complete in quadruplicate) <u>Export</u>: <u>Export Licence Form 6</u> (complete in triplicate)</p> <p><i>Dangerous drugs</i></p> <p><u>Import</u></p> <p>(i) Import Certificate: you should apply through <u>PLAMM's website</u> and check the details for the supporting documents required</p> <p>(ii) Import Licence: you should also apply through <u>PLAMM's website</u> and include arrival details like flight number, air waybill number etc.</p> <p><u>Export</u></p> <p>For export, you will need an original import authorization issued by the overseas health authority from the overseas importer. You should also apply for an export licence through <u>PLAMM's website</u>.</p>	

Relevant goods	Procedures	Remarks
Animals or birds	<p>You will need a special permit obtained in advance from AFCD. You should submit the prescribed form and the permit will normally be valid for 6 months.</p> <p>Depending on the destination and animal types, the procedures might be different. Please see remarks for details related to dogs and cats.</p>	<p><u>Special Permits for Dogs and Cats</u></p> <p>(1) dogs and cats imported direct from Group I countries/ places* are exempted from quarantine</p> <p>(2) dogs and cats imported direct from Group II countries/ places ^ are exempted from quarantine</p> <p>(3) dogs and cats imported from countries other than Group I and II are subject to a minimum of 4- month quarantine period</p>
Food products	<p>For certain high risk imported foods (e.g. game, eggs), prior approval is required. For release of imported food, importers are required to provide health certificates issued by the issuing entities of exporting countries/ places.</p> <p>For frozen meat, chilled meat, frozen poultry and chilled poultry, you will need an import licence.</p> <p>For other types of high risk imported foods, <u>please check the Official Website of Centre for Food Safety for further details.</u></p>	<p><u>Eggs</u> You can make an application for approval via online or paper mode channels. Please see the <u>Guide</u> for details.</p> <p><u>Frozen/ chilled meat/ poultry:</u> You can make an application for approval via Food Trader Portal (FTP) or paper mode channels. Please see the <u>Guide</u> for details.</p>

*Including UK, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, Hawaii and Japan

^ Including: Austria, Bahamas, Bahrain, Belgium, Bermuda, Brunei, Canada, Cayman Island, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Gibraltar, Guam, Iceland, Italy, Jamaica, Luxembourg, Maldives, Malta, Mauritius, Norway, New Caledonia, Papua New Guinea, Portugal, Seychelles, Singapore, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Netherlands, USA (Continental), Vanuatu, Virgin Islands, Taiwan



09. Conclusion

Regulatory requirements could be complex and haunting. Consequences could be unexpectedly severe if we overlook the details of the regulations. This White Paper serves as guide to the regulatory regime in Hong Kong, but it is always recommended to seek professional advice from advisory agencies when initiating application procedures.

Always reach out to GCC Capital's team when you are thinking about applying for a licence. Our experienced team could provide you with a best-fit and cost-effective strategy, enabling our partner businesses to carry on their businesses. We could provide practical assistance in areas including regulatory compliance, form filling, liaison with government offices, inspection preparation and so on. Let us know your inquiries and concerns - our team is here to help.





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