RESEARCH GRANTS COUNCIL

Equipment Grant of Collaborative Research Fund (CRF) 2017/18

Explanatory Notes (CRF(E)2) for completing the Application Form for Full Proposal CRF(E)1

You must read this Explanatory Notes carefully before completing and submitting your full proposal. The Research Grants Council (RGC) may stop processing your application if it does not comply with any of the requirements set out in the Explanatory Notes.

GENERAL

(a) These notes are intended to be read by applicant(s)/related staff of university(ies) before completion and submission of a CRF full proposal for Equipment Grant. Please note that the item numbers in these notes correspond to those in the application form.

(b) The form is in 3 parts, Part I: Summary of the equipment proposal; Part II: Details of the equipment proposal; and Part III: University's endorsement and declaration of research ethics / safety approval.

(c) For applications which have genuine special needs to be completed in a language other than English, applicant(s)/university(ies) are required to provide an English version on the Abstract and Equipment Details (i.e. Impact and objectives; Background of proposal and motivation; Equipment acquisition plan) in pdf file format.

(d) In order to ensure consistency and fairness to all applicants, applicants must complete the applications, **including attached pdf documents**, in the following standard RGC format. **Failure to comply with the application format and/or the allowable page may lead to disqualification of the application.**

Font: Times New Roman
Font Size: 12 point
Margin: 1-inch all round
Spacing: Single-line spacing
PDF version: compatible with Adobe Acrobat Reader 5

(e) All sections of the relevant parts should be completed. Where information sought is not applicable or not provided under a particular section, insert "NA" or "Nil".

(f) At the preliminary proposal stage, when applications are submitted through the RGC Electronic System, a project reference number will be automatically generated for each of the proposals for identification purposes. At the full proposal stage, an application will be identified with the same reference number as in the preliminary proposal stage. For any uploaded documents, please mark the reference number at the top-right hand corner of each page for easier identification. This project reference number should be used and quoted in all future correspondence.

(g) The full proposals should be submitted through the RGC Electronic System **by 6 July 2017**. Each application should also be submitted in **two hard copies and 1 soft copy** (with size up to 5MB per proposal saved in a CD/USB flash drive) to the UGC Secretariat through the Research Offices of respective universities **by 5:00 p.m. on 11 July 2017**. For further shortlisted applications to interview, additional hard copies of the proposals should be submitted to the UGC Secretariat through respective Research Offices **in late November 2017**. Universities will be notified of the exact number of copies needed nearer the time.

(h) To help reduce the cost of processing and save paper, applicants are urged to keep the length of proposals and attachments to the minimum and use double-sided printing/photocopying when making copies. It is important that applicants should comply with the page/word limits specified in various sections of the application form. Applications will be disqualified if the proposals are found to have exceeded the allowable page / word limits in various sections or have abused the purpose of the "Supporting Documents" in Section 13 of Part II of the application form (only education plan, letters of collaboration and supporting documents for the purpose of research ethics/safety approval are allowed to be attached. Supplementary materials such as papers, manuscripts, publications or detailed research work are not acceptable). Unless otherwise instructed, applicants should not make use of Section 13 to supplement the contents of other sections.

(i) It is the obligation of the Project Coordinators (PCs) to ensure that their respective applications contain sufficient information, comprehensible to both specialists and non-specialist, for evaluation. **Information given at the full proposal should be consistent with that given in the preliminary proposal.** Incomplete submission (such as those lacking substantial data/information for evaluation) or inconsistent/inaccurate

information would lead to the disqualification of an application.

(j) Applicants are not allowed to mention anything not related to the research proposal per se in the application form (such as describing the funding rules) with a view to communicating to the reviewers that the latter should give a certain rating if they intend to support the projects. Should such act be discovered, the applications concerned will be disqualified.

(k) Applicants are prohibited to communicate with RGC Council and CRF Committee Members on the applications submitted with a view to influencing the latter in assessing their applications. Should such act be discovered, the applications concerned will be disqualified.

(l) PCs should include the project costs only (excluding on-costs) in the application.

(m) Unless otherwise stated, all funding levels stated in this application form are in Hong Kong Dollars.

INFORMATION UPDATE

(n) A brief update of the proposal, if any, should be submitted to the UGC Secretariat on or before **29 September 2017**, indicating any significant changes, e.g. changes in the eligibility of the PC, alternative funding obtained, declarations of similar/related proposals/projects, investigator(s)'s CVs, grant records, etc. It should be emphasized that such update should be confined to the above-said changes, and applicants should not use the opportunity to revise their proposals substantially. The information update in hard copy should be appended to the proposals (number of copies required and timing will be confirmed separately) which should be submitted to the UGC Secretariat.

(o) If an update is provided for ethics/safety approval for an application, the respective Research Offices should submit the relevant updated data to the RGC on or before **29 September 2017**. Submission of letters on ethics/safety approval is however not required at this stage, but such letters, if necessary, may need to be provided upon RGC's request.

(p) If an update is provided for approval for access to Government/official/private data and records for an application, the respective Research Office should submit the relevant updated data to the RGC on or before **29 September 2017**. Evidence of approval should also be submitted at this stage.

ENQUIRIES

(q) Enquiries about the contents of the Explanatory Notes and other related matters about the CRF Equipment Grant should be directed to the Research Offices of the universities which, if in doubt, should consult the UGC Secretariat for clarification. Also, correspondence regarding the CRF Equipment Grant matters including enquiries, appeals and complaints should be made through the Research Offices of the universities.

(r) The guidelines on handling the information and personal data contained in CRF Equipment Grant applications are at Annex A. Applicants requiring additional information about internal deadlines, application procedures or assistance in completing the application form may contact the Research Offices of their own universities.

(s) The RGC is fully committed to the principle of honesty, integrity and fair play in the conduct of its business. To uphold public trust and protect public interest, it is important for all applicants to note and observe the "RGC Code of Conduct" and "Extracts from the Prevention of Bribery Ordinance" at http://www.ugc.edu.hk/eng/rgc/fs/code_of_conduct.pdf.

PART I SUMMARY OF THE EQUIPMENT PROPOSAL

[To be completed by the applicant(s)]

Applicants should not change the essential information submitted in the preliminary proposals. Any changes should be well explained and justified in the submissions. The applicants should separately submit a request to the RGC in writing through the respective Research Office, highlighting the proposed changes and providing sound justification for changes.

1. Particulars of the project

(a)(i) Each application should be submitted with only one applicant nominated as the PC and no applicant should submit more than one application in this capacity. Other joint applicants will be regarded as Co-Principal Investigators (Co-PIs). Each Co-PI should have a clear, distinct and material role. Excessive number of Co-PIs should be avoided. Save in very exceptional circumstances, the RGC will not entertain requests for the addition of Co-PI(s) to a project after the funding award. After the preliminary proposal is submitted, a change of PC during the period of processing the application will **not be** approved.

The PC of an RGC project grant must be an academic staff member of an UGC-funded university with conditions of employment meeting ALL the following requirements:

(i) having a full-time[1] appointment in the university proper[2];

(ii) being in Staff Grades from "A" to "I"[3] as defined in the Common Data Collection Format (i.e. from "Professor" to "Assistant Lecturer", see Annex B);

(iii) being primarily engaged in and spending at least 80% of time in degree or higher degree work at the university proper; and

(iv) salary being wholly funded[4] by the university proper.

PCs falling in the following categories are subject to the following additional requirements besides meeting criteria (i) to (iv) above:

(a) A newly appointed staff member should have formally entered into a contract of service with the university on or before 1 May 2017 and that his/her appointment would take effect on or before 1 November 2017.

(b) A staff member employed on a fixed term contract should be eligible at the time of funding award being offered tentatively in December 2017/January 2018 as well as throughout the whole project period; or

[1] Excluding part-time staff and staff holding honorary appointments.

[2] Excluding schools/arms of continuing education and professional training and other analogous outfits.

[3] Excluding polytechnic staff grades.

[4] Excluding staff member who is receiving income from paid appointments outside the university proper or who is supported by external research grants.

(c) A visiting scholar should have a full-time employment at the university proper covering the whole project period.

An academic staff member who is engaged in non-degree programmes which are still funded by the UGC may also apply and serve as PC. Eligible staff in this category must be wholly funded from the General Funds of the university concerned.

Notwithstanding these, cases of exceptional circumstances may be considered by the RGC on a case-by-case basis. The university should seek the RGC's special approval for such cases before submitting the application.

To ensure record accuracy and to facilitate identification of PCs, PCs should enter the name as shown on his/her Hong Kong Identity Card/passport (where applicable) and use the standardized format of names for all project team members including Collaborators as agreed with respective universities when submitting all RGC grant applications:

	PC Surname	PC Other Name *
e.g.	Chan	Peter Tai-wai
e.g.	Zhong	Yaping
e.g.	Robinson	Philip G

* first/given name, then Chinese name in English syllables (hyphenated) or middle name, if any; initials should be avoided.

The applicant should indicate whether he/she or any of the team members is/are RGC Council/Subject Panel Member(s) as at the deadline of the application and provide the number of hours per week to be spent by the PC and each Co-PI on the proposed project.

(a)(ii) To encourage new appointees in the academia to apply under the CRF exercise, applicants are requested to declare under this section if they are within two years of full-time paid appointment to their first substantive position equivalent to staff grades "A" (Professor) to "I" (Assistant Lecturer) as defined in the CDCF in any university (local or overseas) at the time of the submission deadline of this funding exercise, and their proposals should be printed in green-colour paper for easy identification.

(a)(iii) The project title should be informative, but short and concise and should be the same as that used in the preliminary proposal.

(a)(iv) All applicants must indicate with caution the nature of the application being submitted:

- "New" refers to the application on research topic which the PC and/or Co-PI(s) applies/apply for RGC funds for the first time.
- "Re-submission" refers to the application on research topic which the PC and/or Co-PI(s) have previously applied for UGC/RGC funds but not supported.

Applicants should have indicated the nature of the application in the preliminary proposal and should not change the nature of the application in the full proposal.

(b)(i) The project field(s) in the full proposal should be the same as that used in the preliminary proposal, unless the CRF Committee suggests otherwise.

In general, to facilitate the appointment of the right experts to evaluate the proposal, PC should select a specific primary field are as far as possible. If a PC selects a non-specific primary field area, i.e. Others, for his/her proposal, he/she must select a specific secondary area close to the field area of the proposal.

To indicate the cross-disciplinary nature of a proposal, a PC is allowed to select the secondary field area/code from a subject area which is different from that of the primary field area/code. Cross-disciplinary proposals will be evaluated jointly by experts from different subject areas. The RGC reserves the authority to decide whether an application is cross-disciplinary or not.

(b)(ii) Please give a maximum of five keywords to characterise the work of the proposal. Applicants normally should not change any of the keywords.

(b)(iv) Equipment grant projects to be funded from the CRF should normally last for no more than **three** years. The proposed duration should be the same as that in the preliminary proposal.

(c) A short abstract of a maximum of 400 words comprehensible to a non-specialist should be typed in the text box. This should be informative and indicative of the nature of research to be conducted. One A4 page of abstract in standard RGC format should be uploaded as pdf file only when there are special characters/features which the system cannot support. If a proposal is funded, the abstract of the equipment proposal will be uploaded on the RGC website for public's information. The applicant will be approached for a Chinese version of the abstract for public access shortly after the announcement of the funding results, or an English version if the original abstract is presented in Chinese.

PART II DETAILS OF THE EQUIPMENT PROPOSAL

[To be completed by the applicant(s)]

EQUIPMENT DETAILS

This is the major portion of the application. It should be presented clearly and concisely and at the same time be detailed enough to indicate the significance and merits of the proposed research and to permit a meaningful evaluation of the worthiness of the project. The RGC will not further process the application if insufficient/incomplete information is provided on the application form.

1. Impact and objectives

The objectives and direction of the full proposal must adhere to that of the original shortlisted preliminary proposal and be limited to 800 words. Any changes must be **fully explained and justified** in the submissions and the RGC should be notified in writing.

(a) State the purpose of the equipment proposal and identify the key issues and problem being addressed. The key issues and the elements of the problem should be described and those elements which are critical to the solution of the problem should be clearly identified. State the possible outcome of the research project, its relevance, significance and value, such as contribution to academic, educational, scientific or professional development or potential for practical application. If the proposal is for equipment development, describe the development plan.

(b) The objectives of the project must be presented in point form and reasons for undertaking the project.

[A maximum of 13 A4 pages in total in Standard RGC format for Section 2, 3(a) to 3(f), excluding references which will be separately provided at Section 3(g)]

2. Background of proposal and motivation

State whether work has been/is being carried out by you and/or others on a related subject. Outline what motivates you to undertake the proposed research, previous and alternative approaches to the problem and their deficiencies, and list key references to relevant research by you and others. If the proposal arises from an on-going research, give an update of the progress of the research concerned.

3. Project description

(a) A complete description of the equipment acquisition plan, including, specifications, listing of vendors, quotations, service contract, delivery time, and any further equipment development work. Where appropriate, experiments, tests and required facilities should be described. The relevant scientific principles and techniques on which the problem solution depends

should also be presented. Outline uniqueness and justification of the proposed approach with its plan of investigation, giving citation from literature where applicable.

(e) Applicants are required to describe the maintenance plan for the anticipated useful life of the equipment. This allows the reviewers to have more information to ensure effective use of public resources and uphold the principle of value for money when considering the applications.

(f) A one-page Gantt chart showing the project activities should be given.

(g) The page limit of Sections 2, 3(a) to (f) does not include references. All references should be provided in full and include all authors.

PROJECT FUNDING

The amount of funding requested in the full proposal should not exceed that in the preliminary proposal. The RGC may not process your application if the proposed budget does not comply with the requirements as set out below. Applicants should also note when completing this part of the application, that starting from 2013/14, **universities are required to provide partnership/matching funding in real money on a 50% (RGC) (excluding on-costs)/50% (university) basis for the total cost of project**. The RGC also reserves the right to impose penalty on any universities which fail to screen out non-compliant applications.

While RGC may fully or partially fund the approved projects, universities are expected to provide necessary infrastructural and overhead supports such as normal academic equipment, consumables, postage, fax, stationery, reference books and overseas telephone charges to funded projects.

Permissible items

- A detailed budget for the project throughout the equipment development period should be given. PC and Co-PIs are not regarded as staff and must not be remunerated with salaries. Academic staff remunerated by any UGC-funded universities in Hong Kong must not be paid with honorarium or other forms of payment.

- The estimated costs should not include any “hidden” costs covered by recurrent block grant expenditure, such as the normal salaries of teaching staff who spend a portion of their time on research, cost of utilities, stationery, etc. They should include only expenditure which would not otherwise be separately incurred. Examples of these are: salaries of Research Assistants (RA) or technician specifically

employed for the set-up of equipment/system funded by the Equipment Grant.

- In cases where a particular RA is employed for several projects, his salary should be apportioned accordingly.
- As for cases where a technician is performing duties and possessing qualifications similar to those of a Senior Research Assistant (SRA) or RA, the remuneration to the technician should be pitched at the same level as the SRA or RA.
- Detailed justification should be provided. Otherwise, the RGC will not consider the request.

4. Cost and justification

One-line Vote Items

(a)(A)(i) Supporting Staff

Please state the number, rank, duties, duration and cost of staff involved, with justifications for the proposed rank and duration. The applicant is required to justify the need of technical staff for equipment development. The grant only supports the remuneration of personnel who are directly involved in the setting up of the equipment/system throughout the equipment development period concerned. Detailed justification is required for the use of funding for such purposes. The rates for RA and SRA in the academic year 2017/18 are HK$262,000 per annum and HK$420,000 per annum respectively. The rates are only meant for reference. The rates will be reviewed regularly by the Council. The total staff costs supported will then depend on the indicative rates or the rates proposed by the applicants concerned, whichever is lower.

Justification for staff support for equipment development, related equipment and other non-salary items should be adequately given. For staff, the work involved and justification for the proposed rank and duration should be described. In the case of applications for funding for Post-doctoral Fellows involving in equipment development, the CV of the post-doc in one A-4 page should also be attached if available.

(a)(A)(ii) Equipment

Please itemize all equipment expenses. RGC fund should not be used to purchase personal electronic devices such as cell phones, iPods, iPad, MP3 Players, digital cameras and PDAs except with sound justification as approved by the RGC. In addition, the RGC will not provide funding for the purchase or use of standard equipment such as desktop PCs, servers, laptop computers, printers and scanners known to be available, or reasonably expected to be provided in the universities concerned. Universities may be required by the RGC to confirm the availability of university's resources prior to their acceptance of an award. This is what the RGC means by "university's commitment".

The following points should be addressed:

(i) Why is the equipment/system essential to the project?

(ii) Has the department/university already provided such equipment?

(iii) Is there similar equipment elsewhere in other universities and what is the possibility of sharing?

(iv) Cost of equipment/system – evidence showing that major discounts have been secured/are being secured. Information supporting the estimated cost of equipment must be given e.g. quotes from suppliers. Items costing over HK$200,000 and without supporting quotations will **NOT** be considered.

Please mark respective item number(s) clearly in the quotation(s). The quotation(s) must be submitted together with the application on or before the deadline of submission of applications. No late submission will be accepted.

For purchase of equipment at or over HK$2.5 million, the following supplementary information is required:

- Has the university already been provided with similar equipment? If yes, please explain the need for the purchase.

- Is there similar equipment elsewhere in other universities? If yes, please provide the following information regarding such equipment in other universities as far as possible:

  - brand/model details and the year of purchase of the equipment;
  - the number of hours of its utilization and percentage of utilization (say per month or per year as appropriate);
  - the estimated number of hours (say per month or per year as appropriate) available for use by other universities per year;
  - whether and how it can perform more/less functions and capabilities than the equipment under application;
  - whether there is a practice of shared use of the equipment with other universities currently and in the past two years; and
  - any other reasons that preclude the shared use of the equipment with other universities.

- Level of use: please provide the estimated number of staff members and/or students expected to use the equipment under application and the estimated number of hours per annum of utilization.

- Will the equipment be available for use by universities/institutions other than the collaborating universities/institutions under the application? If yes, please state the extent of shared use by other universities/institutions such as the number of hours available for sharing per week.

(b) & (c) Please confirm whether or not the requested equipment/research-related software licence/dataset is available in the university(ies). If yes, please explain why such related equipment/software cannot be used by the

applicants(s).

5. Existing facilities and major equipment available for this research project

Please elaborate the existing facilities and equipment available for this research project.

6. Funds secured or to be secured

Other sources of funds can include private donations, awards or grants from other organizations, contract research funds from commercial enterprises or special allocations made by the university from the block grant or the indicated grant for equipment, etc. It should be noted that the amount secured from other sources will be deducted from the total cost of the project in Section 4(a) of Part II.

The RGC has the sole discretion in deciding the final funding. Even if the proposal is fully funded as requested, the RGC funds must not be spent on items that are prohibited unless it is explicitly allowed by the RGC.

COLLABORATION PLAN

7. Particulars of PC and Co-PIs

(a) This section should summarize the qualifications of the PC and each Co-PI(s) who will be involved in the project. The CVs to be attached should include the following information, as appropriate:

Name, academic qualifications, previous academic position(s) held (with date(s)) & present position (state if applicant is a visiting academic from overseas), previous relevant research work, publication records including the five most representative publications in the recent five years and five representative publications beyond the recent five years (10 at maximum) and others including research-related prizes and awards, brief description of experience in consultancies, service as a referee in evaluating other grant applications, patents, PhD theses supervised, etc.

The author list of the publications in the CV should be presented in full and cited exactly as written in the original publication. In particular, the applicant should indicate clearly his/her position especially in the long author list, say author 13 out of 40 for facilitating CRF Committee's consideration. Failure to comply with the above requirements may lead to disqualification of the concerned application.

Each CV should be limited to either two A4 pages or a maximum of 800 words in standard RGC format stated in (d) of "GENERAL" above.

(b) Please give details of the plan of collaboration. The role and specific task(s) of each individual (including the PC and Co-PIs) in the proposed research should be described clearly. This section should be limited to either two A4 page in standard RGC format or a maximum of 800 words. If the research involves collaboration with other research team(s) or university(ies)/institution(s), letters of collaboration are required to be attached to the application.

DECLARATION OF SIMILAR OR RELATED PROPOSALS/SIMILAR EQUIPMENT & GRANT RECORD

8. Re-submission of a proposal not supported previously

(a) Applicants need to provide details in case the proposal is a re-submission (submitted to the UGC/RGC before) or is largely similar to a proposal that has been submitted to other funding bodies. Applicants should re-visit the main concerns/suggestions previously expressed by external reviewers if an earlier/similar version of the proposal has been assessed before. The RGC reserves the right to discount the rating of an application for its failure to acknowledge the fact that it is a re-submission of a previous application.

(b) & (c) These sections allow the applicant to respond to those comments, and explain whether and what changes have been incorporated in the latest proposal. Some external reviewers' comments may be more agreeable/disagreeable than others. However, if a rebuttal is offered, it should be scholarly and preferably measured. Under the existing policy, re-submitted proposals will be treated as fresh applications in a peer review and handled in an identical manner to other new applications. Although the CRF Committee will take into account the PCs' responses to reviewers' comments, the CRF Committee is not obliged to invite the same group of external reviewers for assessment of the new application.

Declaration of similar equipment & Grant Record

9 & 10 It is the responsibility of applicants (both PC and Co-PI(s)) to ensure that no duplicate funding from all sources including the RGC will be sought/has been sought for the same/substantially similar research project. Failure to declare similar/related projects/proposals (not limited to those in the past five years) in these sections may result in disqualification of the application and debarring from applying for future UGC/RGC grants. PC/Co-PI(s) are required to:

- declare if there is similar equipment being set up or already set up elsewhere in Hong Kong;
- declare if the current proposal is similar or related to any proposals pending approval/on-going/completed projects; and
- explain the differences between the similar or related projects/proposals and the current proposal.

It is the RGC to make the final decision on whether two proposals/projects are similar. The judgement of the RGC is final. Therefore, it is always

advisable for the PC or the Co-PI(s) to declare similar or related proposals/projects when there is uncertainty. The PC or the Co-PI(s) are advised to make the declaration and elaborate the difference in the proposals/projects to avoid misunderstanding. Declaration of similar or related proposals/projects does not necessarily mean that the proposals concerned will be adversely affected. The RGC may still fund the proposals concerned if the applicants are able to justify the differences of the proposals/projects for separate funding.

9. Declaration of similar equipment

PC and Co-PIs should declare if there is similar equipment being set up or already set up elsewhere in Hong Kong

10. Grant Record of Project Coordinator/Co-Principal Investigators

(a) For the PC, please provide details on each of the research projects/proposals undertaken/submitted by the PC (in capacity of PI/PC/Co-I/Co-PI) including

(i) completed research projects funded from all sources (irrespective whether from UGC/RGC) in the past five years;
(ii) on-going research projects funded from all sources (irrespective whether from UGC/RGC);
(iii) terminated projects funded by UGC/RGC in the past five years;
(iv) unsuccessful proposals or withdrawn projects submitted to UGC/RGC in the past five years and
(v) proposals pending funding approval (irrespective whether submitted to UGC/RGC).

Please also provide the objectives for each of the completed/on-going/terminated/pending projects/proposals under (i), (ii), (iii) and (v) as well as the number of hours per week spent on each of the on-going projects (except the involvement as Co-I in General Research Fund / Joint Research Schemes projects funded by RGC) under (ii).

The PC should declare all the similar or related projects/proposals (not limited to those in the past five years and irrespective whether from UGC/RGC) and provide explanation on the differences between them and the application.

(b) For each Co-PI, please provide details on each of the research projects/proposals undertaken/submitted by each Co-PI (in capacity of PC/PI/Co-PI/Co-I) including:

(i) on-going research projects funded from all sources (irrespective whether from UGC/RGC); and
(ii) Proposals pending funding approval (irrespective whether submitted to UGC/RGC).

Please also provide the number of hours per week spent on each of the on-going projects (except the involvement as Co-I in General Research Fund / Joint Research Schemes projects funded by RGC).

(c) Please include a summary of a maximum of 400 words in standard RGC format, one summary per application on the key results and publications in respect of each previously UGC/RGC and non-UGC/RGC funded project undertaken by the PC and Co-PI(s), in descending chronological order, which are relevant to the application.

ANCILLARY INFORMATION

11. Research Ethics/Safety Approval and Access to Government/Official/Private Data and Records

(a) Research Ethics/Safety Approval

It is the responsibility of the university and the PC to ensure that the research proposal is carefully reviewed for its compliance with applicable laws, health and safety guidelines and ethical standards. Ethics clearance should be sought for research involving living animals and / or human subjects including social sciences research involving human subjects (e.g. potential physical or psychological harms, discomfort or stress to human participants that a research project might generate, subjects' privacy etc.). The primary responsibility of seeking the relevant approval and ethics clearance rests with the PC. The PC's university is required to complete and sign Part III of this application form to confirm whether the research proposal involves human subjects and certify whether the relevant approval is required and if required, the relevant approval has been given / is being sought. For research involving clinical trials, PCs are allowed to obtain relevant ethics approval before the release of funding and project commencement. Please also see the respective notes in Part III below.

(b) Access to Government/Official/ Private Data and Records

It is the responsibility of the university and the PC to ensure that approval has been sought for access to Government/official/private data and records if the related data/records are critical to the research proposal. The primary responsibility of seeking the relevant approval rests with the PC. The PC's university is required to complete and sign Part III of this application form to confirm the relevant approval, if necessary, has been given/ is being sought.

For both Section 11(a) and (b) with the exception of research involving clinical trials, applications should not be submitted unless the approval of the appropriate authority(ies) has/have been or is/are being sought. The RGC will regard the applications as being withdrawn if no confirmation of approval is provided to the RGC by **29 September 2017**.

If the university/PC declared that no approval was required but the RGC/CRF Committee eventually considered otherwise, the related application may be disqualified.

12. Release of completion report, data archive possibilities, and public access of publications resulting from research funded by the RGC

Release of completion report

PCs are required to release the completion reports (containing abstract in non-technical terms, objectives, research output including the list of conference papers/publications/journals and research findings and contact information of PC) to the public through the RGC website. PCs should assess data archive potential and opportunities for data sharing. Due additional weight will be given to an application where the applicants are willing to make research data available to others.

PCs are required to include in the completion reports the URL links to the university's repositories or the publishers' websites so that the public could have quick and easy access to the manuscripts or journal articles. PCs are also encouraged to include in their completion reports the data repositories where research data of their projects could be accessed and shared, where appropriate.

Public access of publication resulting from research funded by the RGC

(i) Upon acceptance of a paper for publication resulting from the work done on a research project funded in whole or in part by the RGC, the PC should check whether the publisher already allows (A) full open access to the publisher's version, or (B) the author's depositing a copy of the paper (either the publisher's version or the final accepted manuscript after peer-review) in the university's repository for open access;

(ii) if both (i) (A) and (B) are not allowed, the PC should request the publisher's permission to place either version in his/her university's repository for restricted access immediately upon publication or after an embargo period of up to twelve months if required by the publisher; and

(iii) subject to the publisher's agreement on (i) or (ii) above, the PC should deposit a copy of the publication in his/her university's repository as early as possible but no later than six months after publication or the embargo period, if any.

13. Education Plan, Letters of Collaboration and Supporting Documents

Appendix I: Education Plan (Mandatory)

Applicants should describe how they will leverage the research in an educational context with a view to strengthening the teaching-research integration. As there may be different expectation within different

disciplines, a wide range of educational activities will be acceptable (with a maximum of 400 words in standard RGC format).

Appendix II: Proposed Changes to Information Submitted at Preliminary Proposal Stage with Detailed Justification (Optional)

If applicants wish to make any changes to the information submitted at preliminary proposal stage, they should highlight the change(s) and provide sound justification for the proposed change(s) in this section.

Appendices III & IV: Letters of Collaboration and Supporting Documents
Only letter(s) of collaboration and supporting documents (e.g. ethics / safety approval letters) are allowed.

Other than the abovementioned, applicants should not make use of this section to supplement the contents of other sections. Applications will be disqualified if the proposals are found to have abused the purpose of this section.

PART III UNIVERSITY'S ENDORSEMENT AND DECLARATION OF RESEARCH ETHICS/SAFETY

[To be completed by the appropriate authority of the PC's university]

1. University's Endorsement

The university should confirm that it has evaluated and given support to the application before submission to the RGC. The university is also required to confirm that (i) the PC fully meets the criteria for the Equipment Grant under CRF; and (ii) the applicant will have the number of hours per week as declared in Part I to supervise the proposed project without prejudice to his/her existing commitment in other research work, teaching and administrative duties.

The university is also required to report to the RGC immediately if a PC subsequently becomes ineligible for the grant and recommend to the RGC for approval a suitable new PC, if any, to take over/conclude the commenced project.

2. University's Commitments

(a)&(b) The university is required to verify and confirm whether the Equipment Grant application is in line with its role, and that adequate supervision, research facilities and training provisions are in place to meet the need of RPg students so employed under the research grant if the application is supported by the RGC. Nevertheless, it should be also made clear that the primary duty of the PC of the Equipment Grant is to complete the project according to plan and that the training of students should not be used to justify any delay in project completion nor unsatisfactory project performance.

(c) to (e) For items (c) to (e), please see the notes for Section 4 in Part II.

(f) To safeguard the interests of the researcher and the university, universities bear primary responsibility for prevention, detection and investigation of research misconduct, including but not limiting to misusing of funds, data falsification, plagiarism and seeking duplicate funding for projects which the applicant has already completed partially or entirely. University is strongly advised to use anti-plagiarism software before submitting the application to the RGC and verify if this application has been scanned by anti-plagiarism software in item (f) and provide reason(s) for not doing so.

3. Research Ethics/Safety Approval and Access to Government/Official/Private Data and Records

(a) The university should confirm that the approval of the appropriate authority(ies) has/have been or is/are being obtained in respect of projects involving safety hazards or the use of living animal or human subjects, including those in social sciences research (e.g. potential physical or psychological harms, discomfort or stress to human subjects in a research project, subjects' privacy, etc.). It should be noted that all applications must be vetted by the universities to ascertain if they involve human subjects. For applications involving clinical trials, PCs are allowed to obtain relevant ethics approval before the release of funding and project commencement. For other non-clinical applications involving human subjects, the university must give approval/exemption according to their internal ethics guidelines by **29 September 2017** as is the case with other ethics/safety approval. If the university is unable to confirm by 29 September 2017 that the required approval has been obtained, the RGC will stop processing the application which will be regarded as to have been withdrawn.

(b) The university should confirm that the approval of the appropriate authority(ies) has/have been or is/are being obtained in respect of access to data/records critical to the proposed research. If the university is unable to confirm **by 29 September 2017** that the required approval has been obtained, the RGC will stop processing the application which will be regarded as to have been withdrawn.

For (a) and (b) above, if the university/PC declared that no approval was required but the RGC/CRF Committee eventually considered otherwise, the related application may be disqualified.

Part III should be completed by the appropriate administrative authority or responsible person(s) in the university.

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UGC Secretariat
May 2017

Annex A
(1 of 3)

Handling of Information and Personal Data
Contained in RGC Research Funding Application

Purpose of Collection of Information and Personal Data

1. Information and personal data contained in your research grant application are collected for the following purposes:

(a) determination of your eligibility, as a staff member of a UGC-funded university, to apply for a competitive grant from the Research Grants Council (RGC);

(b) assessment of the merits of the research proposal which you have submitted for funding support;

(c) assisting the RGC subject panels in identifying external reviewers to assess your research proposal; and

(d) compilation of periodic reports and statistical returns for analysis and research by the RGC / UGC in relation to the use of public funds.

Handling of your information and personal data

2. Your research proposal including your personal data (e.g. CVs) will be handled with care by the RGC. Staff of the UGC Secretariat, members of the RGC and RGC panels, local and non-local reviewers, and other parties who may be involved in the processes described in Paragraph 1 above will be allowed access to the data on a need-to-know basis but they will be placed under a duty of confidentiality to the RGC. Information so collected by the RGC will not be used for any other purposes. If you want to exclude any individuals from access to your research proposal, you should inform the RGC separately when you submit your research proposal. The RGC does not accept research proposals that are classified "confidential" by the principal investigators. It also reserves the right to stop processing or reject any applications if the applicants' requests render it impossible for the applications to be adequately peer-reviewed.

3. When the RGC obtains external assessments on your research proposal, external reviewers will be made aware of the existence of a Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance in Hong Kong, and be forewarned that all written comments about the applicant and research proposal are liable to be released to the applicant concerned upon request. External reviewers will also be advised of the RGC policy on providing feedback to grant applicants described in paragraph 4 below.

4. Applicants should note the following:

(a) all proposals will have undergone a very rigorous peer-review process which involves external assessments and the relevant RGC panels / committees which are made up of experts from the local and international academic / professional community;

(b) grants are allocated on a competitive basis and each year is a different exercise (the success rate is based on the general quality of the proposals as assessed by the relevant RGC panels / committees, and the availability of funds, in that particular year);

(c) the RGC is gradually raising the quality threshold, meaning that only the top and the best quality proposals will be "funded"; and

(d) comments from all external reviewers on each proposal (except for conference grants / travel grants / fellowship applications) will be provided anonymously to the applicants concerned through their universities.

Physical retention of applications

5. Applications that are funded by the RGC will be retained at the UGC Secretariat for periodic review of progress and final assessment of the research investigation and outcome, with the assistance of external reviewers where appropriate.

Annex A
(3 of 3)

Right of Access to Personal Data

6. Notwithstanding the arrangement described above, nothing in this note will affect your legal right to request access to personal data held by the RGC about you or your research proposal and to update or correct such data. Nevertheless, the RGC reserves the right to charge a reasonable fee for the processing of any such request(s).

Further Information

7. All requests for access to your personal data or correction of your personal data or for information regarding policies and practices and kinds of personal data held by the RGC should be made in writing, by post or by fax, addressed as follows:

Assistant Secretary General (Research)2
Research Grants Council
7/F Shui On Centre
6-8 Harbour Road
Wanchai
Hong Kong

Fax: 2845 1183

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Annex B

STAFF GRADES, Modes and Funding Sources

Academic Grades

Academic, Senior

A. Professor
B. Reader
C. Senior Lecturer (U)
D. Principal Lecturer (P)

Academic, Junior

F. Senior Lecturer (P)
G. Lecturer (U)
H. Lecturer (P)
I. Assistant Lecturer

Academic Supporting Staff

J. Instructor
K. Demonstrator/Tutor/Teacher Assistant
L. Others, including language assistant, fieldwork supervisor etc.

Technical Research Staff (Staff who spend essentially all their time on research)

M. Senior Technical Research Staff ("leaders", usually Post Doctoral)
N. Junior Technical Research Staff ("followers", usually Graduate

Non-Academic Grades

Non-academic, Senior

O. Admin, Senior
Q. Technical, Senior

Non-academic, Junior

P. Admin, Junior (including secretarial, clerical)
R. Technical, Junior
S. Others, including "Mod 1"

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