RESEARCH GRANTS COUNCIL

Humanities and Social Sciences
Prestigious Fellowship Scheme (HSSPFS) 2025 / 26
Scheme Overview and Guidance Notes (HSSPFS 2)

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Preamble: How to Use this document and further advice

All applicants and universities should read this Scheme Overview and Guidance Notes (Guidance Notes) carefully before completing and submitting an application to the scheme. The Research Grants Council (RGC) may stop further processing your application if your application is found to be not in compliance with any of the requirements as set out in the Guidance Notes.

The Guidance Notes is in two parts: SECTION 1 summarises the key information about the scheme while SECTION 2 is structured to mirror the application form sections and provide section-by-section guidance on completion of the application.

Enquiries about the contents of this Guidance Notes and other related matters about the Humanities and Social Sciences Prestigious Fellowship Scheme (HSSPFS) should be directed to the Research Offices of your university. 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.

The guidelines on handling the information and personal data contained in applications submitted to the RGC are contained in **Annex A**.

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 https://www.ugc.edu.hk/doc/eng/rgc/guidelines/code/code_of_conduct.pdf

SECTION 1 – SCHEME OVERVIEW

1. **Purpose and Objectives of the Scheme**

The main objective of this scheme is to provide opportunities for outstanding investigators with a proven track record of research and publication under the disciplines of the Humanities and Social Sciences Panel to be granted with extended time-off and supporting funds for research work and writing.

HSSPFS is not only intended to provide time and supporting fund to develop a new research project, but also to build on a research programme that have already been well defined and developed. New project can either be a newly funded project or a new research proposal which does not require project costs but only applicant's time to do extensive research and writing.

2. **Awards Available**

Not more than ten awards may be granted in each funding exercise.

3. **Applicant Eligibility to Apply**

Universities are invited to submit a maximum of five nominations under the disciplines of the Humanities and Social Sciences Panel. Eligible applicants should be academic staff members of a University Grants Committee (UGC)-funded university with conditions of employment meeting <u>ALL</u> 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 **<u>Annex B</u>**);

(iii) being primarily engaged in and spending at least 80% of time in degree or higher degree work[4] at the university proper;

(iv) salary being wholly funded[5] by the university proper; and

(v)   being eligible at the time of funding award being offered in June 2025.

The following categories of staff members are subject to the following additional requirements besides meeting criteria (i) to (iv) above:

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[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] A Project Investigator who is / will be seconded to work full-time or part-time at the two Innovation and Technology (I&T) clusters (Health@InnoHK and AIR@InnoHK) at the Hong Kong Science Park; or to conduct research in a university or a research institute / body / agency in the Mainland / overseas jurisdiction, is still considered eligible to apply for the HSSPFS.

[5] Excluding staff members who are receiving income from paid appointments outside the university proper or who are supported by external research grants.

(a) A newly appointed staff member should have formally entered into a contract of service with the university on or before the submission deadline of this funding exercise and that their appointments would take effect on or before <u>16 April 2025</u>.

(b) A staff member employed on a fixed term contract should be eligible at the time of funding award being made in June 2025.

An academic staff member who is engaged in non-degree programmes wholly funded from the General Funds of the university concerned may also be eligible. Visiting scholars are not eligible for being nominated under the HSSPFS.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, 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. Awardees of HSSPFS cannot compete again in future exercises.

4. Funding Amounts and Fellowship Period

HSSPFS can be used to support a wide range of research activities provided that these activities will lead to significant research or other outputs by the end of the Fellowship. <u>Awardees must ensure that financial support for their research work during the Fellowship is readily available or expected from other sources if the project requires project costs.</u> Applicants should state the amount requested and provide justification for all items. The applicants and the universities should decide on the salaries for the replacement with reference to the level and amount of workload expected and justify them on the application forms. Usually, the salaries for relief teachers taking up purely teaching duties should not exceed the salary of Staff Grade "G" (i.e. Lecturer (U)) of the universities concerned.

A maximum amount of $1 million per award (covering salary costs for relief teachers and staff, travel, subsistence and dissemination costs) for a period of up to 12 months may be granted.

5. Scheme Timetable

The application deadline for the HSSPFS 2025/26 exercise is **5 February 2025**. Applicants shall submit their applications via the RGC electronic system. Late applications will NOT be considered.

6. Assessment Process for Applications

Applications are assessed by the HSSPFS Selection Committee assisted by a number of external experts from all over the world. The RGC currently has a database of more than 12 000 experts whose services may be called upon to assess applications for research project grants.

Assessment criteria

The following criteria should be used in considering competitive bids:

A	academic quality / merit: • research and scholarly merit of the proposal; • qualifications and track record of the (principal) investigator(s); • originality; • feasibility within the time-scale of the proposal
B	institutional commitment
C	contribution to academic / professional development (where applicable);
D	potential for social, cultural or economic application
E	availability of, and potential for, non-RGC funding

Academic quality / merit is the overriding criterion in evaluating applications when others are accorded equal weight. In considering grant applications, the RGC will also take cognizance of alternative sources of funding available because some subject area will attract more private funding than others.

Feedback reports from expert reviewers will be provided to applicants via their universities. These comments will be anonymised so individual reviewers cannot be identified.

Making changes to the proposal following submission

If necessary, applicants can submit a brief update of the proposal through the Electronic System to the UGC Secretariat on or before 15 April 2025. This should only indicate material changes to the bid, e.g. changes in the eligibility of the applicants, alternative funding obtained / being requested, declarations of similar / related proposals / projects / research work, grant records, progress of proposals (including preliminary proposals) pending funding approval, 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. Upon request, the information update in hard copy should be appended to the proposals when submit to the UGC Secretariat.

If an update is provided for ethics / safety approval for an application, the respective Research Office should submit the relevant updated data to the RGC on or before 15 April 2025. 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.

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 15 April 2025. Evidence of approval should also be submitted at this stage.

If an update is provided on any related research work that is being / has been conducted in relation to the proposal, the applicant should submit the relevant update to the RGC on or before 15 April 2025.

7. Submission process

When proposals are submitted through the Electronic System, a project reference number will be automatically generated for each of the proposals for identification purposes. The project reference number should be used and quoted in all future correspondence.

Upon request, hard copies of each proposal may need to be forwarded to the UGC Secretariat in <u>May 2025</u>. Universities will be notified of the requirement in <u>April 2025</u>.

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. Applicants shall not include links to external websites in their applications which contain extra information about the proposed project in the research proposal.

Applicants and their concerned universities have the responsibility to ensure applications are complete and in compliance with all the requirements as set out in the Guidance Notes before submission to the RGC.

SECTION 2: COMPLETING THE APPLICATION MATERIALS

Format and font

In order to ensure consistency and fairness to all applicants, applicants must complete the application form and all **pdf documents** in the following standard RGC format:

- Font : Times New Roman
- Font Size : 12 point
- Margin : 2.5 cm all round
- Spacing : Single-line spacing

Failure to comply with the format requirements may result in the removal of your application from processing. **Do not exceed the page or word limits for any section.**

All sections of the application forms should be completed. Where information sought is not applicable or not provided under a particular section, insert "N.A." Please ensure that you provide sufficient information for the RGC and its reviewers to undertake a full assessment of your proposal. Incomplete applications or applications with inconsistent / inaccurate information may be rejected by the RGC.

Applicants are not allowed to mention anything not related to the research proposal per se in the application form with a view to communicating to the RGC / Panel Members / reviewers to influencing the latter in assessing their applications or 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.

For applications which have genuine special needs to be completed in a language other than English, applicants are required to provide an English version for convenience of international reviewers and selection committee members.

PART I: PARTICULARS OF THE APPLICANT

1. Basic Information

To ensure record accuracy and to facilitate identification of the applicants, the applicant should enter the name as shown on his / her Hong Kong Identity Card / Passport (where applicable) and use the standardized format of names as agreed with respective universities when submitting all RGC grant applications:

	Applicant's Family Name	**Given Name***
e.g.	CHAN	Peter Tai-wai
e.g.	ZHONG	Yaping
e.g.	ROBINSON	Philip

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

With a view to establishing the researcher database in Hong Kong, the applicant is required to provide his / her Open Researcher and Contributor ID Identifier (ORCID iD).

Please indicate any involvement with current UGC / RGC Committees or Panels.

2. Current Employment

Use this section to provide details related to your current role, employment and education details.

Current Teaching Responsibilities and Current Administrative Responsibilities

Please provide summaries of your current teaching and administrative responsibilities. Ensure you indicate an estimated number of hours per week for each area.

Estimated Amount of Time Currently Spent on Your Research

Please provide the estimated number of hours per week spent on research.

3. Curriculum Vitae (CV)

Research Interests

Please provide a summary statement describing your current areas of research interest. Maximum 400 words.

Research Output

Please provide up to five research outputs including publications.

Career Profile

Please provide a summary statement describing your career accomplishment, such as major projects, publications or wider contribution to your field, etc. Maximum 400 words.

CV attachment

You must include a CV. This must be a maximum of <u>ten</u> sides of A4 in the following standard RGC format:

    (i)   Name;
    (ii)   Academic qualifications;
    (iii) Previous academic positions held (with dates);
    (iv) Present academic position: (state if applicant is a visiting academic from overseas);
    (v)   Previous relevant research work: Other information 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 should also be included.

PART II: DETAILS OF THE RESEARCH PROPOSAL

1. Particulars of the Project

The project title should be informative, clear, and concise. It should be limited to 80 words.

The primary field area / code should be selected from among the list of areas / codes as prescribed for Humanities and Social Sciences research proposals. For example, if a proposal's primary area / code is "Anthropology (4101)", it should come under the subject area of "Social and Behavioural Sciences (H2)". The schedules showing the field area descriptions and the corresponding codes are at **Annex C**.

Please provide maximum of five keywords related to the research proposal. You have a maximum of 30 characters per keyword.

Type a short Project Abstract of a maximum of 400 words in the text box[6]. The abstract should be comprehensible to a non-specialist audience. It should summarise the key research challenges and your approach, including what the research will deliver in terms of new knowledge and / or impact. If a proposal is funded, the Project Abstract will be mounted on the RGC website for public's information. The applicant will be approached for a Chinese version of the Project Abstract for public access shortly after the announcement of the funding results, or an English version if the original Project Abstract is presented in Chinese.

2. Research Details

(a) Nature of proposal

Applicants must indicate the nature of the application being submitted. "New" refers to the application on research topic which the applicant applies for RGC funds for the first time. "Re-submission" refers to the application on research topic which the applicant has previously submitted or largely similar to a proposal that has been submitted to but not supported by the UGC / RGC or other funding agencies. "Continuation" refers to the application continuing the work previously funded by the RGC.

If this is a Resubmission or a Continuation application, provide details of the previous application or award.

It is the responsibility of the Principal Investigator (PI) to declare clearly and honestly whether his / her proposal is a re-submission. 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.

In the case of a Resubmission, please complete a statement (maximum of 500 words) explaining how any previous review / assessment recommendations have been addressed in the current submission. This should be a constructive response to previous reviewers' comments. It should be scholarly in tone. You should focus on key issues that have been most significantly changed or improved as a result of previous feedback. Re-submitted proposals

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[6] Applicants may contact the Research Office of their universities in case they have difficulty in submitting the abstract via the Electronic System.

will be treated as fresh applications in peer-review and handled in an identical manner to other new applications. Subject panels will take into account the PIs' responses to the reviewers' comments but the panels are not required to invite the same group of External Reviewers for assessment of the new application.

(b)   Project Objective

Please provide a maximum of 800 words outlining in bullet-point form the Project Objectives. These should include a summary of:

- reasons for undertaking the project
- the key issues and / or problems being addressed – these should be described and the project's engagement with solutions to the problems explained
- possible outcomes of the research project in terms of new knowledge and / or practical application.

On proposals concerning Creative Arts, applicants should ensure that proposals submitted to the RGC should contain research elements which contribute to academic attainments.

(c)   Research Project Statement

This is to be a maximum of 10 A4 sides in Research Project Statement and should include five elements:

i.   Research context - This should set out details of the research proposal in relation to the research field(s) involved. You should make clear the need for the research you are proposing and how it relates to existing research in the field.

ii.   Research questions - This element should state clearly the key problems or questions you are seeking to address in the research project. Why are these important issues to address? How do they relate to the research context you have outlined? What new knowledge and insight will be generated by your project in relation to these issues and why is that important?

iii. Research Methods - This element should make clear the approach you propose to take to the research: Outline the uniqueness and justification of the proposed approach including how will you explore the research questions you have outlined and by what kinds of method and approach i.e. data gathering, experiment, observation, analysis and critique. The relevant research principles and techniques on which the problem solution depends should also be presented. You should make clear why these methods respond effectively to the questions you are seeking to explore.

(a maximum of seven A4 sides for items (i) to (iii) above in Research Project Statement)

Across these three elements, you should be clear on whether work has been / is being carried out by you and / or others on a related subject and outline previous and alternative approaches to the problem and their deficiencies, listing the key references to relevant research by you and others. For continuation of previous projects, the progress made and results achieved during the previous years should be clearly summarized. The summary should be sufficiently detailed to allow an evaluation of the worthiness of the project for continuation of support. For new projects, the reasons for investigation and the relevant findings should be clearly demonstrated.

iv.　Project timetable / Gantt chart (a maximum of one A4 page in Research Project Statement) - A research timeline and a Gantt chart showing the research activities should be given. Where appropriate, experiments, tests and required facilities should be described. For proposals applying for funding for clinical trial, a protocol should be submitted in a separate pdf file as an addendum.

v.　Attached diagrams, photos, charts, and tables etc, if any (a maximum of two A4 non-text pages in Research Project Statement)

(d)　Pathways to Impact Statement
Please provide a maximum of <u>two</u> A4 sides as an attachment.

The Pathways to Impact Statement shall demonstrate how the applicant will realise the "impact" beyond the academia by the findings / outcome of the research proposal and by addressing any associated risks. For the purpose of HSSPFS, impact shares the same definition in Research Assessment Exercise 2020, i.e. the demonstrable contributions, beneficial effects, valuable changes or advantages that research brings to the economy, society, culture, public policy or services, health, the environment or quality of life; and that are **beyond the academia**. The impacts may occur in any geographical location whether locally, regionally, nationally or internationally.

The Pathways to Impact Statement should address the following questions:

(a) Who are the potential beneficiaries of the proposed research in the short (1-3 years), medium (4-10 years) and long term (over 10 years)?
(b) How will the potential beneficiaries benefit? What will be the objective demonstrable / measurable benefits beyond academia?
(c) What will be done during and / or after the project to increase the likelihood of achieving the identified benefits and reaching the identified beneficiaries?
(d) What are the potential risks that might adversely affect the achievement of the stated impact and how will such risks be mitigated?

The statement shall be comprehensible to a lay person.

Applicants may find the impact case studies available on the Research Assessment Exercise 2020 Impact Database (https://impact.ugc.edu.hk/) useful reference to understand more about research impact. These case studies demonstrated the impact generated by the underpinning research undertaken from January 2000 to September 2019. For the purpose of this Pathways to Impact Statement, the applicant should describe how the research findings arising from this proposal **would / could be used**, and what the applicant and universities **would do**, in bringing about and achieving future impact beyond academia. It should be noted that research impact may or may not be arising from a single research. Hence, the expected impact as described in the Pathways to Impact Statement may also include findings from other research, but the part to be contributed by this research proposal should be clearly defined.

(e)   References

Please provide up to three A4 sides maximum as an attachment. All references should be provided in full and include all authors. Generally accepted citation formats (e.g. American Psychological Association (APA) format) should be used.

(f)   Work Plan

Please outline your timetable for the research project, your proposed duration of the Fellowship and indicate the work to be undertaken during the Fellowship. Items (f)(a) to (f)(c) should be limited to 250 words

(g)   Output dissemination plan

Please provide information on output dissemination plan in the table below:

Target timing of dissemination (quarter / year)	Output type (Journal / Conference / Others)	Name of journal, conference or other dissemination means

The outputs can be of any form but should be of scholarly work nature and not textbooks and straight forward translation. For proposals concerning Creative Arts, applicants should ensure that the proposals should contain research elements which contribute to academic attainment. A wide range of research outputs that will lead to significant advances in knowledge, insights of interest or value to the research community is allowed. They can be publications or other outputs from research conducted prior to the start of the Fellowship. It is the responsibility of the applicants to justify the value and appropriateness of the outputs in the applications.

Applicants are required to list the name of journal, conference or other dissemination means, e.g. book chapter, for dissemination of research output and the target timing of dissemination, e.g. 2027 4Q.

PART III: PROJECT FUNDING AND RESOURCES

The RGC may not process your application if the proposed budget does not comply with the requirements as set out below. The RGC also reserves the right to use sanctions on any university which fails 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.

General Advice
A detailed budget for the project duration must be given. The nominee and collaborator(s) are not regarded as project staff and their salaries must not be paid from RGC's project fund. Academic staff remunerated by any UGC-funded universities in Hong Kong must not be paid with honorarium or other form of payments.

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.

Detailed justification should be provided for each item or the RGC will not consider the request.

Unless otherwise stated, all costs are to be provided in Hong Kong dollars.

1. Cost and Justification

(A)   One-line Vote Items

(i)   **Non-research related supporting staff other than relief teacher**
Please state the rank of the staff, the months and costs involved. Supporting staff are meant to relieve the applicant's administrative workload which should not be research-related.

(ii)   **Travel**
Please state the number of research-related trips required and the cost per trip during the fellowship period.

(iii)   **Subsistence**
Please state the amount of subsistence required during the Fellowship period. The ceiling of $900 per day should not be exceeded.

(iv)   **Expenses for Dissemination of Research Deliverables**
Please state the costs required for dissemination of outputs delivered at the end of the Fellowship, including publication fee, equipment and materials required for dissemination of outputs.

(B) Earmarked Items

(v) Costs for Employment of Relief Teacher(s)

Please state the rank of the relief teacher(s), the months and costs involved. Relief teachers engaged for this purpose are meant to relieve the awardees of their major teaching loads or / and administrative burden related to teaching work. The cost of relief teachers should be calculated as follows:

per-course rate of relief teacher x number of courses to be relieved

PART IV: DECLARATION OF RELATED PROPOSALS, GRANT AND FELLOWSHIP RECORD

The applicant should provide a list of grants relevant to the work to be undertaken under the proposed Fellowship. The grants should be currently held or held in the recent five years as PI.

It is the responsibility of the applicant 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 (irrespective of whether submitted to / funded by UGC / RGC) in this section may result in disqualification of the application and debarring from applying for future UGC / RGC grants. The applicant is required to declare any related research work that is being / has been conducted in relation to the proposal.

It is for the RGC to make the final decision on whether two proposals / projects / research work are similar. The judgment of the RGC is final. Therefore, it is always advisable for the applicant to declare related research work when there is uncertainty.

PART V: ETHICS AND OTHER APPROVALS

1. **Research Ethics / Safety Approval and Access to Government / Official / Private Data / Records and Restricted Area(s)**

   (a) **Research Ethics / Safety Approval**
   It is the responsibility of the university and the applicant 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 study of artefacts and / or 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 for seeking the relevant approval and ethics clearance rests with the applicant. The applicant's university is required to complete and sign Part IX of this application form to confirm the details on ethics and safety provided in the application are accurate and any approvals have been given / is being sought. For research involving clinical trials, applicants may obtain relevant ethics approval after the announcement of funding result and before the release of funding and project commencement.

   (b) **Access to Government / Official / Private Data / Records and Restricted Area(s)**
   It is the responsibility of the university and the applicant to ensure that approval has been sought for access to Government / official / private data / records and restricted area(s) if the related data / records and entry to the restricted area(s) are critical to the research proposal. The primary responsibility of seeking the relevant approval rests with the applicant . The applicant's university is required to complete and sign Part IX of this application form to confirm the details provided are accurate and relevant approvals have been given / are being sought.

For both (a) and (b) with the exception of research involving clinical trials, applications should not be submitted unless the approval of the appropriate agency(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 15 April 2025. If the supporting university / applicant has declared that no approval will be required but the RGC / Panel eventually considers otherwise, the related application may be disqualified.

2. **Release of Completion Report, Data Archive Possibilities and Public Access of Publications Resulting from Research Funded by the RGC**

Release of completion report
Awardees 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 the awardee) to the public through the RGC website. The awardees should assess data archive potential and opportunities for data sharing. Due additional weight will be given to an application where the applicant is willing to make research data available to others.

Awardees are required to include in the project 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. Awardees are also encouraged to include in their research completion reports the data repositories where research data of their projects could be accessed and shared, where appropriate.

Public access of publications resulting from research funded by the RGC:

(i)   Upon acceptance of a paper for publication, the awardee 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 awardee should request the publisher to allow him / her 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 applicant 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.

PART VI: ADDITIONAL ATTACHMENTS

Appendix 1: Education Plan (up to one A4 page)
Applicants are required to provide the proposed educational activities relating to the proposed research.

Appendix 2: Supporting Documents
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 VII: APPLICANT'S COMMITMENTS

For applicants not intending to commit 100% of their time to the Fellowship, please state the teaching and administrative commitments (with estimated percentage) which will continue alongside with the Fellowship.

Awardees of the Fellowship are required to undertake their continual services in their respective universities for at least one year upon the completion of the Fellowship.

Applicants should confirm the information provided in the application form is truthful and agree that the application will be seen by persons who are involved in the review of the application.

PART VIII: UNDERTAKING OF THE PI

It is the responsibility of the PI to ensure that the research activity(ies) / expenditure(s) of the project if funded will be carefully monitored for its / their compliance with applicable laws, health and safety guidelines and ethical standards.

PART IX: UNIVERSITY'S ENDORSEMENT
[To be completed by the appropriate authority of the applicant's university]

1.   Staff Eligibility Requirement
The university is required to verify that an applicant fully meets the criteria for the Fellowship.

2.   Research Ethics / Safety Approval and Access to Government / Official / Private Data / Records and Restricted Area(s)

   (a)   Universities should confirm that the approval of the appropriate authority(ies) has / have been / is being sought in respect of the projects involving study of artefacts and / or safety hazards and / or the use of living animal or human subjects (e.g. potential physical or psychological harm, 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. If they do, the universities must give approval / exemption according to their internal ethics guidelines by 15 April 2025 as is the case with other ethics / safety approval. If the university is unable to confirm by 15 April 2025 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 15 April 2025 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 / applicant declared that no approval was required but the RGC / Selection Committee eventually considered otherwise, the related application may be disqualified.

3.   University's Statement
Universities should indicate their level of support on the applications. Evidence of significant and appropriate university's support for the applications will be an important criterion in assessing the applications. The university's support could include travel grants, conference grants, support for early stage development of the proposed research, funding of project costs / networking / communication activities, time-off, provision of additional mentoring or training or sabbatical leave etc.

4.   University's Undertaking
Universities are required to confirm their commitment to manage the grants and to release the applicant if the application is successful.

UGC Secretariat
December 2024

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 selection committee in identifying external reviewers to assess your research proposal;

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

(e) sharing of data with other government departments / research funding agencies for the avoidance of duplicate funding; and

(f) for successful projects, such data will be used for project monitoring, promotion, publicity and may also be published on the RGC website.

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 selection committees, 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 applicants. 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 the electronic system.

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.

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) in accordance with the prevailing Government Regulations.

<u>Further Information</u>

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)1
         Research Grants Council
         7/F Shui On Centre
         6-8 Harbour Road Wanchai
         Hong Kong
         Fax: 2845 1183

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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. Other, including "Mod 1"

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List of Research Field Areas and Code
for Humanities and Social Sciences Research Proposals

Psychology and Linguistics
(Subject Area: H1)

Field Area	Code
Psychology	4104
Linguistics and Languages	4108
Psycholinguistics	4109
Cognitive Neuroscience of Language	4110
Language Development, Second Language Acquisition, Audiology	4123
Sociolinguistics and Discourse Analysis	4124
Criminology	4125
Others – relating to Psychology and Linguistics (please specify:)	4196

Social and Behavioural Sciences
(Subject Area: H2)

Field Area	Code
Anthropology	4101
Public Administration & Political Science	4105
Sociology	4106
Architecture	4401
Law	4402
Nursing	4408
Public Health	4409
Social Work	4410
Social Services / Management	4411
Urban Studies and Planning	4412
Visual Design (including advertising, graphic, visual communication, digital media)	4414
Product Design (including fashion, industrial, product)	4415
Environmental Design (including interior design, space design)	4416

Social and Behavioural Sciences (Cont'd)
(Subject Area: H2)

Field Area	Code
Archaeology	4417
Human Geography	4418
Social Policy	4419
Others – relating to Social and Behavioural Sciences (please specify:)	4195

Humanities and Arts
(Subject Area: H3)

Field Area	Code
Media and Communication	4151
Literature	4204
Creative Arts: Dance	4207
Creative Arts: Dramatic Arts	4208
Creative Arts: Music	4209
Creative Arts: Visual Arts (including Drawing, Painting, Sculpture, Film and Photography)	4210
Creative Arts: Writing	4211
Film, Visual and Media Studies	4221
History	4213
History of Arts	4214
Musciology / Music History	4215
Translation Studies	4216
Cultural Studies / Cultural Policy	4222
Philosophy	4218
Religious Studies	4219
Sexuality and Gender Studies	4220
Journalism and Media	4407
Contemporary Art	4420
Area Studies (including Japanese Studies, China Studies, European Studies)	4421
Chinese History (including Socio-economic, Military, Legal Social and Cultural History)	4422
Classical Chinese, Chinese Thought and Paleography	4423
Hong Kong Studies	4424
Others – relating to Humanities and Arts (please specify:)	4299

<u>Education</u>
(Subject Area: H4)

<u>Field Area</u>	<u>Code</u>
Education: Policy & Administration	4301
Education: Research on Teaching & Learning	4302
Education: Language and Literature	4303
Education: Theory and Applications	4304
Others – relating to Education (please specify:)	4399