RESEARCH GRANTS COUNCIL

**COMPETITIVE RESEARCH FUNDING SCHEMES FOR
THE LOCAL SELF-FINANCING DEGREE SECTOR 2018/19**

INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME (IDS)

Guidance Notes (IDS2) for Completing the Application Form IDS1

All applicants should read this set of Guidance Notes (IDS2) carefully before completing and submitting your research proposal. 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 this set of Guidance Notes (IDS2).

GENERAL

1.   Please read the Fifth Call for Proposals for details of the Institutional Development Scheme (IDS), and also make reference to the 'Guidelines on Disbursement, Accounting and Monitoring Arrangement for the Competitive Research Funding Schemes for the Local Self-financing Degree Sector' (SF-DAMA) from the RGC website.

2.   In this Fifth Call for Proposals, applications must be   the following thirteen self-financing degree-awarding institutions:

Code	Institution
11	Caritas Institute of Higher Education
12	Centennial College
13	Chu Hai College of Higher Education
14	Hang Seng Management College
15	Hong Kong Shue Yan University
16	The Open University of Hong Kong
17	Tung Wah College
21	HKCT Institute of Higher Education
22	Hong Kong Nang Yan College of Higher Education
23	School of Continuing Education, Hong Kong Baptist University
24	School of Professional Education and Executive Development, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

25   Technological and Higher Education Institute of Hong Kong

31   Gratia Christian College

3.   The application must be submitted on an institutional basis by the Head of Institution specified in Paragraph 2 above, and each institution is allowed to submit one application per exercise under the IDS.

4.   These notes are intended to be read by the applicant / related staff of institution(s) specified in Paragraph 2 above before completion and submission of an IDS application.

5.   The Application Form contains three parts and four annexes as follows:

Part I   Summary of the Proposal

Part II   Details of the Proposed Project

Part III   Declaration of Institution

Annex A   Implementation Timetable

Annex B   One-page Summary

Annex C   Utilization of Asset funded by IDS

Annex D   Summary of Courses, Students and Staff Numbers

6.   For applications which have genuine special needs to be completed in a language other than English, applicant(s) / institution(s) are required to provide an English version on the Abstract and Project Details (i.e. Impact and Objectives; and Project decriptions).

7.   In order to ensure consistency and fairness, the applicants must complete the applications including attached documents, in the following **standard RGC format.   Failure to comply with the following format may lead to disqualification of their applications**.

Font: Times New Roman

Font Size: 12 point

Margin: 1-inch all round

Spacing: Single-line spacing

PDF version: compatible with Adobe Acrobat Readers 5

8.   **All sections should be completed.**   Where information sought is not applicable or not provided under a particular section, insert <u>'NA' / 'Nil'</u>.

9.   Before submission, a project reference number should be assigned by the Institution for each of the proposals for identification purposes. The format of the reference number is UGC / Scheme + Institution Code / Year, e.g. UGC / IDS11 / 18. The project reference number should be used and quoted in all future correspondence.

10.   The **deadline for submission of application is 1 March 2018 (Thursday) 5:00 pm**. **Four hard copies (including the original version) and one soft copy of each proposal are required** to be forwarded to the UGC Secretariat through the institution. The soft copy of the proposal should be saved in one CD / DVD / USB memory stick as far as possible, with size **up to 5MB for each proposal**, with the file name identical with the project title. The content of the soft and hard copies should be **identical**. The application will not be processed if such discrepancies are spotted.

11.   Institutions are required to submit the applications together with a summary of critical information (in Excel table) on the proposals for the funding scheme. The completed critical data file should be forwarded to the Secretariat on or before the deadline for submission of applications.

12.   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 limits specified in various sections of the Application Form. **Applications will be disqualified if the proposals are found to have exceeded the allowable page limits in various sections of the Application Form.**

13.   It is the obligation of the applicant to ensure that his / her application contains sufficient and consistent information for evaluation. **Incomplete submission** (such as those lacking substantial data / information for evaluation) **or inconsistent / inaccurate information would lead to the disqualification of an application.**

14.   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 and the applicants will be subject to disciplinary action.

15. A **Selection Interview** will be conducted with the project team of each short-listed application under IDS in **mid-August 2018**. To ensure that the funding for the proposed IDS projects will be effectively deployed, the project teams are required to complete the one-page summary in **Annex B** of IDS1 to report the development on their on-going IDS projects, if any, and elaborate on whether and why the proposed IDS projects will create synergy with their on-going projects, and how their deliverables are intended to complement to each other.

16. Institutions should also report in **Annex C** of IDS1 the condition / utilization of all major facilities / equipment previously supported by the IDS to ensure that those items are well managed and utilized during and beyond the project period.

17. 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 **Annex B** of this set of Guidance Notes. Applicants are prohibited to **communicate with the RGC Members and Assessment Panel 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 and the applicants will be subject to disciplinary action.**

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

INFORMATION UPDATE

19. If an update is provided for ethics / safety approval for an application, the applicant or the institution should submit the relevant updated data to the RGC on or before 29 June 2018. 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.

20.   If an update is provided for approval for access to Government / official / private data and records for application, the applicant or the institution should submit the relevant updated data to the RGC on or before 29 June 2018.   Evidence of approval should also be submitted at this stage.

21.   Other than the specific situations set out, no information update / revision to an application is allowed after submission deadline.

ENQUIRIES

22.   Enquiries about the contents of these Guidance Notes and other related matters about the IDS should be directed to the Research Coordinators (RCs) or responsible personnel of the institutions who, if in doubt, should consult the UGC Secretariat for clarification.   Also, correspondence regarding IDS matters including enquiries, appeals and complaints should be made through the RCs or responsible personnel of the institutions.

23.   The guidelines on handling the information and personal data contained in IDS applications are in **Annex A of this set of Guidance Notes**. Applicants requiring additional information about internal deadlines, application procedures or assistance in completing the Application Form may contact the RCs or responsible personnel of their own institutions.

24.   For any situations not covered in this set of Guidance Notes, applicants may make reference to the prevailing practice of other RGC funding schemes and if in doubt, consult the RCs or related personnel of the institutions.

APPLICATION FORM

The ensuing paragraphs set out step-by-step guidelines on completing the application form IDS1 where the item numbers correspond to the item numbers on the form. Only one application is allowed for each institution per funding exercise.

PART I   SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH PROPOSAL

1.   Particulars of the Applicant

(a)   To ensure record accuracy and to facilitate identification of the applicant, Team leader and Team members of the Project Team, their names on their Hong Kong Identity Cards / Passports (where applicable) should be used and entered in the standard RGC format:

	Surname (in capital letters)	Other 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.

The applicant must be the Head of Institution himself / herself.   Please state the post title for addressing in future correspondence.

Once the application is submitted, change of applicant / Team leader during the processing period will not be allowed.   The applicant is responsible to report immediately via RC of the institution to the UGC Secretariat any updates of his / her as well as the Team leader's changes in eligibility requirement.

2.   Particulars of Project Team

(a)-(b)   The Team leader, who can be the applicant himself / herself or any academic staff of the institution, must be a full-time academic staff with at least 80% of time on locally-accredited local degree or higher degree work, employed by the thirteen self-financing degree-awarding institutions specified in Paragraph 2 under Section "General" above. The Team leader should undertake the key coordinating position of the proposal.   There is no eligibility requirement for the Team members.

The Team members can be any personnel working in the same or different local self-financing degree-awarding institutions, or the UGC-funded institutions, or public / private local or overseas institutions / organizations. Each Team member should have a clear, distinct and substantive role. There is no quota for the number of Team members. However, excessive number of Team members should be avoided. Save in very exceptional circumstances, the RGC will not entertain requests for the addition of Team members to a project after the funding award. If the application is invited for the Selection Interview, <u>the interview team should comprise the Applicant, Team leader and **one** Team member.</u> If the Applicant carries the role of Team leader, the interview team may comprise up to **two** Team members.

Please provide and indicate, in particular:
- the average number of hours per week to be spent by the Team leader and each Team member on the proposed project;
- whether the Applicant, Team leader or any Team member(s) is / are RGC Committee / Panel Member(s) as at the deadline of the application.

(c)   Please summarize the qualifications of the Team leader and each Team member who will be involved in the project. The CVs to be attached should include the following information, as appropriate:

(i)-(v)   Name, academic qualifications (with dates), previous academic positions held (with dates) & present position(s) (with date(s)), 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 other informative particulars 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.

(vi)   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 panel's consideration. Failure to comply with the above requirements may lead to disqualification of the concerned application.

Each CV should be limited to two A4-sized pages according to the standard RGC format.

3.   **Particulars of the Project**

(a)   The project title should be informative, but short and concise.

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

Nature	Definition
New	The application on a research topic / purchase of research facilities which the applicant applies for RGC funds for the first time.
Re-submission	The application on research topic / purchase of research facilities which the applicant previously applied for RGC funds but not supported.
Continuation	The application continuing the work previously funded by the RGC. The applicant is required to quote the previous RGC reference number if the application is a re-submission / continuation.

(c)   A short abstract of a maximum of one A4-sized page in standard RGC format on the proposed programme should be provided. If a proposal is funded, 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 of the original Abstract is presented in Chinese.

(d)   Applicant is required to complete the implementation time-table in **Annex A** of the IDS1 to spell out the proposed milestones of the project to facilitate the consideration on the disbursement arrangement if the project is funded. The time-table is limited to a maximum of two A4-sized page in standard RGC format.

4.   **Information on the Funded IDS Project(s)**

(a)   One-page Summary (Annex B of IDS1)
Please give a brief summary on the proposal and the on-going IDS

project(s), if any, with maximum of one A4-sized page in standard RGC format <u>per project</u>. Please elucidate whether and how the proposed project will create synergy with the on-going IDS projects and how their deliverables will complement with each other.

(b)　　　<u>Utilization of Asset funded by IDS (Annex C of IDS1)</u>

Please specify the level of utilization of the funded asset by providing the average usage per month / year. Sharing of resources among institutions is encouraged.

5.　　　<u>Summary of Courses, Staff and Student Numbers (Annex D of IDS1)</u>

Please provide the number of courses, academic staff and students of the institution as at 28 February 2018. Actual staff grades and ranks of the academic staff spending 80% or more of their time on locally-accredited local degree or higher degree work should be provided.

PART II   DETAILS OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT

PROJECT DETAILS

The proposal should be presented clearly and concisely as well as be detailed enough to indicate the significance and merits of the project and to permit a meaningful evaluation of the worthiness of the project. **The RGC will not process the application further if insufficient / incomplete information is provided in the Application Form.**

1.   **Impact and Objectives**

   (a)   State how the proposal will help the institution to build and improve the research capacity in its strategic areas in the long run.

   (b)   The objectives of the project must be presented in point form. The proposal should develop a programme that supports research. The proposed programme should fall in the strategic areas of the institution's development plan.

2.   **Project descriptions**
           (A maximum of four A4-sized pages in RGC standard format for each item below)

   (a)   Programme on Activities to Support Research

              Proposal on the organization of Conference / Seminar / Workshop / Exchange Programme or a series of activities that support research. Information includes the particular of the activities, programme outline, objective(s), expected outcomes, budget, etc, should be provided.

   (b)   Asset Purchase and Infrastructure / Physical Research Structure Establishment to Support Research

              For proposal on (i) asset purchase (e.g. purchase of research facilities, communal equipment, software licence, dataset), and / or (ii) infrastructure / physical research structure building (e.g. research centre, research supporting unit), a "Research Facilities Development /Utilization Plan" should be included.

The Research Facilities Development / Utilization Plan should address the following:

(i)   acquisition of major research facilities, or equipment, including major library acquisitions and datasets for research, which cannot otherwise be afforded by one institution and which can be used for collaborative research;

(ii)   importance of the equipment / facilities in building up the research capacity in the institution;

(iii)   availability of such facilities / equipment within / outside the institution; and

(iv)   assisting institutions in "leveraging" support from equipment suppliers with a view to stretching the value of the RGC's funds further than could normally be possible by making small allocations in connection with individual projects.

In addressing the above, the following areas should be covered:

(i)   A complete description of the physical research facilities and / or infrastructure support, communal equipment and research materials, databases, software licences and computing equipment made available for research, including specifications, listing of vendors, quotations, service contract, delivery time, and any other facilities and equipment development plan.

(ii)   State the purpose of the proposed equipment / facilities and identify the key research projects being supported, the possible outcome of the research projects in terms of its relevance, significance and value.

(iii)   The proposed management / maintenance arrangement **during** and **beyond** the project period in respect of the following:

- Level of use:
  ‣ please provide the estimated number of
    - license holders (if applicable)
    - staff members expected to use the equipment under application
    - the number of hours of its utilization and percentage of utilization (say per month / year as appropriate) per annum
- Optimal utilization:

‣ please advise on
  - whether staff training will be provided / required for the utilization of the equipment / facilities
  - the plans for making available for users in the UGC / Self-financing sectors
- Sustainability
  ‣ please advise on how resources will be secured for
    - maintenance
    - upgrading

The following criteria will be adopted when considering the Research Facilities Development / Utilization Plan:

(i) the merit of the proposal, its contribution to academic / professional development and potential for application, and benefit to tertiary institutions in particular and Hong Kong in general;

(ii) the scope for collaborative research / joint use, and the degree of such usage;

(iii) plans for maintenance, management and make available to users from UGC-funded universities or other eligible local self-financing degree-awarding institutions;

(iv) relevancy to this IDS proposal;

(v) any institutional support, including that of the sponsoring / collaborating institutions on the purchase and / or future maintenance / upgrade;

(vi) the prospect of external funding;

(vii) maximum value for money; and

(viii) the availability of similar facilities acquisitions elsewhere in Hong Kong.

(c)   Support Staff Development Plan

A complete description of administrative and technical supporting staff, and research staff to be employed to support research activities and provide administrative support.

PROJECT FUNDING

3.   Cost and justification

(a)   Estimated cost & resources implications

When preparing the budget plan, it should be made in conjunction with the milestones set out in the Implementation Time-table in **Annex A** of the IDS1.

The RGC may not process the application if the proposed budget does not comply with the requirements as set out below. The RGC reserves the right to impose penalty on any institution which fails to screen out non-compliant applications and such records may bring negative impact on institutions concerned in respect of their future submissions.

It is a mandatory requirement for applicants to prepare an itemized project budget, i.e. budget for individual activities listed on the application form should be supported by itemized breakdown. For those items with cost estimates over HK$200,000 must be supported by quotations. Applications without the inclusion of itemized breakdown of project budget and / or quotations will be rejected. Avoid being suspected of gaming the system, items with cost estimates slightly below HK$200,000 are discouraged unless quotations are provided.

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

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

• Is there similar equipment elsewhere in other institutions? If yes, please provide the following information regarding such equipment in other institutions 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 / year as appropriate);

‣ the estimated number of hours (say per month / year as appropriate) available for use by other institutions 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 institutions currently and in the past two years; and

‣ any other reasons that preclude the shared use of the equipment with other institutions.

• Level of use: please provide the estimated numbers 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 institutions other than the collaborating institutions under the application?   If yes, please state the extent of shared use by other institutions such as the number of hours available for sharing per week.

• Whether staff training will be provided for the use and / or manning of the equipment.

Funds will be disbursed on an annual basis according to the cash flow requirements as stipulated in the approved budget submitted by the applicants and subject to satisfactory progress of the project.

Institutions are required to follow the RGC's, ICAC's and / or the institutional procedures and guidelines, whichever is more stringent, for acquisitions of facilities / equipment / services and for recruitment of supporting staff for projects funded by RGC grants.

(i)   Research Support Activities

Please itemize the expenses of each activity.   The grant can support the direct cost of organizing the activities within the institution, or sending academic staff to participate the activities organized by other institutions, either local or overseas.

If any overseas travel is required, the grant can support economy class roundtrip air passage by the most direct route, hotel accommodation, and subsistence allowance.   The expenses / allowances should follow the RGC's / the institutional procurement procedures and guidelines, whichever is more stringent, and should not exceed the limit set by the institution.   Should there be any expenses exceeding the set limit,

institutions are required to bear the differences.

The following points should be addressed:

- How the activities proposed can help build up the research capacity in the institution?

- How the participants will be benefited from participating in the activities?

- Has the institution provided such activities before?

- If the activity proposed requires overseas travel, please state

  ‣ Why this activity is recommended?

  ‣ Which academic member should be nominated to go and why?

  ‣ Whether the academic member has participated in similar activities before?

  ‣ Is / Are there any similar activity(ies) held in other local institutions?

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.**

(ii)   <u>Facilities and Equipment</u>

Please itemize all facilities and equipment expenses. The grant can support the acquisition of equipment and research material that can build up the research capacity and facilitate the research activities in the institution. It cannot be solely used for individual research project.

RGC funds cannot be used to purchase personal electronic devices such as cell phones, smartphones, tablet computers, MP3 players, personal digital assistants (PDAs) and digital cameras / video recorders except with sound justification as approved by the RGC. In addition, the institution cannot use this funding for the purchase or use of standard equipment such as desktop PCs, servers, laptop computers, printers and scanners known to be available, or items reasonably expected to be provided in the institution concerned.

Using RGC grants for physical structure renovation purpose is not allowed.

Please provide evidence showing that the major discounts for the cost of equipment / facilities have been secured / are being secured. Documents supporting the estimates must be given e.g. quotations from suppliers. **All acquisitions must comply with the RGC's, ICAC's and / or institutional procedures and guidelines, whichever is more stringent.**

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.**

(iii)   Supporting Staff

Please list the post of each staff proposed to hire. The supporting staff can be a technical / administrative staff. **The post of the staff should reflect the duties performed. The RGC's, ICAC's and institutional guidelines and procedures on recruitment of supporting staff, whichever is more stringent, should be complied with.** The salary / compensation should align with other staff of the same post / rank in the institution. The RGC may require the institutions to provide such information in the Auditor's Report.

The following points should be addressed:
- Why the staff employed at such rank?
- Would the staff be a new headcount or redeployed from other department / office of the institution?

(iv)   Auditing Expenses

According to the SF-DAMA, upon completion / termination of a funded project, the institution is required to submit an Auditors' Report together with the unspent balance, if any. Hence, the auditing expense is an allowable item to be included in the budget. The indicative reference rates for auditing expenses are as follows:

Size of Grants	Ceiling for Audit Fee
below $1M	$ 7,000
$1M to less than $10M	$15,000
$10M or above	$20,000

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

(e)-(h) Please confirm whether the proposal is similar or related to on-going / completed projects, or proposals pending funding approval.

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 project. **If the applicant fails to declare similar / related project(s) / proposal(s) in this section, the application may be disqualified and the applicant may be debarred from applying future UGC / RGC grants.**

Applicants should declare if the proposal is similar or related to any on-going / completed projects, or proposals pending funding approval. Component(s) of program activities in the proposal that has / have already been funded by other funding schemes, either by RGC or other funding bodies, should also be highlighted. It is the RGC to make the final decision on whether two proposals / projects are similar.   The judgment of the RGC is final.   Therefore, it is always advisable for the applicant to declare similar or related proposals / projects when there is uncertainty.   The applicants are advised to make the declaration and elaborate on the differences between 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 applicant is able to justify the differences of the proposals / projects for separate funding.

The applicant is responsible to report <u>immediately</u> via RC of the institution to the UGC Secretariat any updates on grants records, including declaration of similar / related projects / proposals.

4.   **Funds secured or to be secured**

Please provide information on other research funds already secured for this proposal. Other sources of funds include private donations, awards or grants from other organizations, contract research funds from commercial enterprises or special allocation made by the institution (including seed funding), etc. It should be noted that the amount secured from other sources should be stated on Part II Section 3(a)(v) above and the amount will be deducted from the total cost of the project.

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 non-permissible items unless approval is obtained from the RGC.**

ANCILLARY INFORMATION

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

    (a)   Research Ethics / Safety Approval

It is the responsibility of the institution 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 living animals and / or human subjects including social sciences research involving human subjects (regarding potential physical / psychological harms, discomfort / 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 applicant. The applicant is required to complete and sign Part III of the 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.

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

It is the responsibility of the institution and the applicant 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 applicant.   The applicant is required to complete and sign Part III of the Application Form to confirm the relevant approval, if necessary, has been given / is being sought.

For both (a) and (b) above, 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 a withdrawn case if no confirmation of approval is provided to the RGC by 29 June 2018. **If the institution / Applicant declared that no approval was required but the RGC / Panel eventually considered otherwise, the related application may be disqualified.**

6.   **<u>Release of completion report, data archive possibilities and public access of publications resulting from research funded by the RGC</u>**

<u>Release of completion report</u>

The institution 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 researchers concerned) to the public through the RGC website.   The institution 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.

Project holders^ are required to include in the project completion reports the URL links to the institutional repositories or the publishers' websites so that the public could have quick and easy access to the manuscripts or journal articles, if applicable. Project holders 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.

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^ Project holder refers to applicant / Head of Institution of the funded proposal.

Public access to publications resulting from research funded by the RGC

(i) Upon acceptance of a paper for publication, if applicable, the project holder should ensure the researcher concerned to 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 institutional repository for open access;

(ii) if both (i)(a) and (b) above are not allowed, the project holder should ensure the researcher concerned to request the publisher to allow him / her to place either version in his / her institutional 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 researcher concerned should deposit a copy of the publication in his / her institutional repository as early as possible but no later than six months after publication or the embargo period, if any.

PART III   DECLARATION OF INSTITUTION

[To be completed by the appropriate authority of the institution]

1.   **Eligibility Requirement for IDS**

The institution should confirm that:

(a)   the institution has evaluated and supported the application before submission to the RGC;

(b)   the Team leader fully meets the eligibility as stated in Part I Section 2(b) and is not debarred from applying for any UGC / RGC grants;

(c)   the project team will abide by the in-house guidelines, as well as the relevant guidelines as set out by the RGC and the ICAC, whichever is more stringent, regarding procurement of facilities / equipment / services and for recruitment of supporting staff;

(d)   the institution will inform the RGC as soon as there is a change in the Project holder / Team leader and recommend to the RGC for approval a suitable new Project holder / Team leader to take over the funded project once it is funded and commenced. In this connection, the institution is required to provide the RGC with a succession / management plan on the new Project holder's / Team leader's duties in the funded project, and a CV of the new Project holder / Team leader for the RGC's consideration. Normally no extension or change of the objectives of the project concerned will be allowed. As a matter of policy, change of Project holder / Team leader will normally not be approved within the first six months of an approved project and during the process of the application. However, change of Project holder / Team leader from the 7th month may be considered by the RGC under the circumstances as stipulated in the SF-DAMA;

(e)   the institution understands that the IDS grant, if given, will be withdrawn if the project does not start within <u>one year</u> of the announcement of funding result. The institution should report to the RGC <u>as soon as</u> possible when the Project holder / Team leader proceeds on no-pay leave / professional leave for a continuous or cumulative period exceeding 183 days within the project period; and

(f)   if the project is approved, the institution may top-up partially funded projects from other funding sources to ensure that the project is being realistically worked towards its goals. Apart from contributions towards specialized equipment, the institution will provide necessary infrastructural and overheads supports such as normal academic equipment, consumables, postage, fax, stationery, reference books, overseas telephone charges, etc. to the approved projects where appropriate.

2.   **Support to the project**

The institution is required to verify and confirm that:

(a)   the research project under this IDS application is in line with the role of the institution;

(b)   adequate supervision, facilities and training provisions will be in place if this application is supported by the RGC;

(c)   the applicant's declaration and reasons in Part II Section 3(c) and (d) are genuine and true; and the applicant's request, if any, is supported;

(d)   the institution will strictly follow the relevant RGC's guidelines during the whole project period to ensure that the project funding is properly used and will return the funding as requested by the RGC when the project is completed / terminated.

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

(a)   Research Ethics / Safety Approval

The institution 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 / human subjects, including those in social sciences research (regarding potential physical / psychological harm, discomfort / stress to human subjects in a research project, subjects' privacy, etc.). It should be noted that all applications must be vetted by the institutions to ascertain if they involve human subjects. If affirmative, the institutions must grant approval or

allow exemption according to their internal ethics guidelines or whether because the case has been granted with other ethics / safety approval.   **If the institution is unable to confirm with the RGC by <u>29 June 2018</u> that the required approval has been obtained, the RGC will stop processing the application and will regard it as a withdrawn case.**

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

The institution 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 that are critical to the proposed research.   **If the institution is unable to confirm by <u>29 June 2018</u> that the required approval has been obtained, the RGC will stop processing the application and will regard it as a withdrawn case.**

For (a) and (b), **if the institution declared that no approval was required but the RGC Committee / Panel eventually considered otherwise, the application concerned may be disqualified**.

Part III should be completed, signed and submitted by the appropriate authority of the institution.

UGC Secretariat
November 2017

**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 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 panel 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 department / 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 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 applicant.   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 institutions.

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 rights 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.

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) 3
> University Grants Committee Secretariat
> 7/F Shui On Centre
> 6-8 Harbour Road
> Wanchai
> Hong Kong
>
> Fax: 2845 1183

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Research Grants Council

Code of Conduct

I. Preamble

1.   The Research Grants Council (the Council) is fully committed to the principle of honesty, integrity and fair play in the conduct of its business. The Council, operating through subject panels and committees, invites, receives and approves applications for research grants and fellowships. To uphold public trust and protect public interest, it is important for all Council / Panel / Committee members to handle the Council's business in a just and impartial manner so that the Council's reputation will not be tarnished by dishonesty, impropriety or corruption. To this end, this Code of Conduct sets out the standard of behaviour expected of the (i) Council / Panel / Committee members in handling the Council's business (the members), (ii) reviewers in conducting peer-review for the Council (the reviewers); and (iii) applicants who apply for the Council funds (the applicants).

II. General Standards

2.   A Council / Panel / Committee member and a reviewer shall :

    (a) ensure that his / her conduct would not bring the Council into disrepute;

    (b) avoid at any time or in any respect doing anything which may compromise or impair his / her integrity, impartiality, objectivity or ability to perform Council duties. For instance, he / she should not contact the applicants directly for clarification / additional information relating to their applications or disclose information relating to the assessment; and

    (c) adhere to the spirit and the letter of any rules or orders made for the Council's practices and procedures in relation to the business of the Council.

3.   An applicant shall :

    (a) ensure that his / her conduct would not bring the Council into disrepute;

(b) restrain from communicating with the members and reviewers on the application submitted with a view to influencing the members and / or reviewer in assessing the application; and

(c) observe the prevailing guidelines and procedures relating to application for and implementation of RGC grants issued by the Council.

III. Specific Standards

4.　　　The following specific standards of this Section shall apply in addition to the General Standards detailed above:

(A) Offer and Acceptance of Bribes or Advantages

(1) Provisions of the Prevention of Bribery Ordinance (Cap 201)

Members and reviewers are governed by Section 9 of the Prevention of Bribery Ordinance (Cap 201) (POBO) (and other provisions where appropriate). A member or reviewer commits an offence under POBO if he / she, without the Council's permission, solicits or accepts any advantage in connection with the Council's business. Members and reviewers shall not misuse their official capacity as such to gain benefit for themselves or others, or render favour to any person / organization. On the other hand, applicants should not offer gifts and advantages or intimidate the members and reviewers with a view to influencing the assessment of application for RGC grants. Attachment I provides the full text of Section 9 of the POBO and the legal definition of an advantage.

(2) Acceptance of Advantages

(a) Gift / souvenir presented to a member or reviewer in his / her capacity as such

A gift / souvenir presented to a member or reviewer in his / her capacity as such should be regarded as a gift / souvenir to the Council (e.g. a gift / souvenir presented by an applicant to a member or reviewer invited in his / her capacity as such or

representing the Council to officiate at a ceremony). A member or reviewer shall report to the Secretariat for the disposal of gifts / souvenirs received in the above circumstances.

(b) Advantage offered to a member or reviewer in his / her private capacity

(i) Where a member or reviewer is offered an advantage in his / her private capacity, he / she may accept it if –

● the acceptance will not affect the performance of his / her duties as a member or reviewer; and

● he / she will not feel obliged to do something in return in connection with Council business for the offeror.

(ii) If a member or reviewer feels that he / she would be obliged to reciprocate an advantage by returning to the offeror a favour connected with any Council business, he / she should decline the offer.

(iii) When a member or reviewer is in doubt as to whether he / she should accept an offer of advantage, it is advisable for him / her to apply the "sunshine test" *(In the sunshine test, the person concerned should ask himself / herself if he / she would be happy to openly discuss with the general public what he / she is doing. If he / she feels uncomfortable about that, what he / she is doing is probably conflicting with the ethical standard generally accepted.)* and consult the Council Chairman or the Secretariat.

(3) Acceptance of Entertainment

A member or reviewer should not accept entertainment from persons / organizations who / which have an interest in any matters under consideration by the Council or with whom/which he / she has official dealings, in order to avoid embarrassment or give the perception of the loss of objectivity when considering or giving his /

her views on matters concerning these persons / organizations.

(B) Conflict of Interest

(1) Definition

A conflict of interest situation arises when the private interest of a member or reviewer competes or conflicts with the interest of the Council. "Private interest" includes both the financial and other interests of members or reviewers and those of their connections, including family members, relatives, friends, clubs and societies to which they belong, as well as people to whom they owe a favour or are obligated in any way.

(2) Managing Conflict of Interest

(a) The reporting of conflict of interest should be two-tiered. Full declaration according to standard format should be made on first appointment, re-appointment or significant change of circumstances. Members should update or complete and return the "Register of Interests" to the Secretariat on an annual basis. At the second tier, it will be incumbent upon the member to declare interest whenever he / she sees a reason to, on a case by case basis (e.g. when particular issues are to be addressed).

(b) Members or reviewers should avoid any conflict of interest situation (i.e. situation where their private interest conflicts with the interest of the Council) or the perception of such conflicts. They should not use their official position or any information made available to them in the course of their duties to benefit themselves, their relations or any other persons with whom they have personal or social ties. They should avoid putting themselves in a position that may lead to an actual or perceived conflict of interest. Failure to avoid, declare, disclose or report such conflict in particular with the applicants or comment on proposals from applicants with affiliation without permission may give rise to criticisms of favouritism, abuse of authority or even allegations of corruption. In this connection, members or reviewers should declare upfront any conflict of interest

situation to the Secretariat where appropriate.

(c) When a conflict of interest is declared and in case there is a meeting to be convened to discuss the matter, the respective Chairman shall decide on whether the member may speak or vote on the matter, remain in the meeting as an observer or withdraw from the meeting altogether. The Secretariat can provide advice according to general government practices and regulations.

(d) Applicants should be mindful to disclose, declare or report in their application forms their relationship as well as any conflict of interest or potential conflict of interest with nominated external reviewers and declare upfront any conflict of interest situation to the Secretariat.

(3) Members' / Reviewers' Assessment of Applications

(a) Members or reviewers are appointed in their personal capacity and should in no way represent their own or any institutions. It is important that the assessment given is independent and impartial.

(b) Members should not assess applications in which they are in any way associated, such as applications from (i) themselves / colleagues in their departments / institutions or (ii) institution that they have served within two years or (iii) institutions that they have been invited for pre-review. Similarly, reviewers should not assess applications in which they are in any way associated, such as (i) applications from themselves / colleagues in the same institution or (ii) applications that have been pre-reviewed by the concerned reviewers before submission to the Council. In case of doubt, members or reviewers should declare upfront the full circumstances to the Secretariat who will seek agreement from the appropriate authority in deciding whether the applications in question should be re-assigned to other members or reviewers.

(c) Member who is from the same institution of the applicant may participate in the panel discussions when they are invited to do

so and should not take part in the decision-making on the applications concerned.

(4) Members Applying for RGC Grants

Under the existing mode of operation of the Council, members may apply for Council funding in their own personal capacity.   In order to prevent the public perception of the members using their capacity to obtain financial gains from the Council, the concerned member will be requested to be excused from the discussion when his / her application is considered.   Members are reminded to strictly adhere to the guidelines on managing possible conflict of interest in applying for the funds.

(C) Observe Confidentiality and Use of Confidential and Privileged Information

(1)   A member or reviewer shall not take advantage of, or let any person or organization benefit from, the confidential or privileged information obtained in his / her capacity as a member or reviewer.   All meeting papers, including the worksheets, have to be returned to the Secretariat for disposal at the end of the meeting.   Soft copies in System and downloadable files such as PDF should only be used during meeting and should not be taken away in any way.   A member or reviewer shall not divulge any confidential or privileged information of the Council to any party or contact the applicants directly unless he / she is authorized to do so.   Communications, including documentary information and deliberations at meetings and discussions, concerning business of the Council, which will come into the member's or reviewer's knowledge / possession as a result of his / her service for and appointment with the Council, must be held in confidence.

(2)   An applicant should not contact the members or the reviewers to discuss issues relating to the proposals submitted.   Likewise, a member / reviewer should not contact the investigators directly for clarification / additional information relating to their applications or disclose information relating to the assessment. This should be handled by the UGC Secretariat.

(D) Breach of Ordinance and Laws

Members, reviewers and applicants should avoid any unethical action which may be illegal especially when it is in breach of the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance or other relevant laws of Hong Kong.

(E) Allocation of Funds

Members shall ensure that all the funds are allocated in a prudent and responsible manner to safeguard public interest. They should only approve fund applications which fall within the objective of the fund, and meet the eligibility and assessment criteria. Members shall particularly ensure that an open, fair and competitive mechanism is adopted for the assessment of fund applications and selection of applicants.

Extracts from the Prevention of Bribery Ordinance
(Cap 201, Laws of Hong Kong)

A. Section 9 - Corrupt transaction with agents

(1) Any agent who, without lawful authority or reasonable excuse, solicits or accepts any advantage as an inducement to or reward for or otherwise on account of his:

(a) doing or forbearing to do, or having done or forborne to do, any act in relation to his principal's affairs or business; or

(b) showing or forbearing to show, or having shown or forborne to show, favour or disfavour to any person in relation to his principal's affairs or business, shall be guilty of an offence.

(2) Any person who, without lawful authority or reasonable excuse, offers any advantage to any agent as an inducement to or reward for or otherwise on account of the agent's:

(a) doing or forbearing to do, or having done or forborne to do, any act in relation to his principal's affairs or business; or

(b) showing or forbearing to show, or having shown or forborne to show, favour or disfavour to any person in relation to his principal's affairs or business, shall be guilty of an offence.

(3) Any agent who, with intent to deceive his principal, uses any receipt, account or other document:

(a) in respect of which the principal is interested; and

(b) which contains any statement which is false or erroneous or defective in any material particular; and

(c) which to his knowledge is intended to mislead the principal, shall be guilty of an offence.

(4) If an agent solicits or accepts an advantage with the permission of his principal, being permission which complies with subsection (5), neither he nor the person who offered the advantage shall be guilty of an offence under subsection (1) or (2).

(5) For the purposes of subsection (4) permission shall:

  (a) be given before the advantage is offered, solicited or accepted; or

  (b) in any case where an advantage has been offered or accepted without prior permission, be applied for and given as soon as reasonably possible after such offer or acceptance, and for such permission to be effective for the purposes of subsection (4), the principal shall, before giving such permission, have regard to the circumstances in which it is sought.

B. Definition of an Advantage (Section 2)

"Advantage" means :

(1) any gift, loan, fee, reward or commission consisting of money or of any valuable security or of other property or interest in property of any description;
(2) any office, employment or contract;
(3) any payment, release, discharge or liquidation of any loan, obligation or other liability, whether in whole or in part;
(4) any other service, or favour (other than entertainment), including protection from any penalty or disability incurred or apprehended or from any action or proceedings of a disciplinary, civil or criminal nature, whether or not already instituted;
(5) the exercise or forbearance from the exercise of any right or any power or duty; and
(6) any offer, undertaking or promise, whether conditional or unconditional, of any advantage within the meaning of any of the preceding paragraphs (a), (b), (c), (d) and (e);

but does not include an election donation within the meaning of the Elections (Corrupt and Illegal Conduct) Ordinance (Cap 554), particulars of which are included in an election return in accordance with that Ordinance.

C. Definition of Entertainment (Section 2)

The provision of food or drink, for consumption on the occasion when it is provided, and of any other entertainment connected with, or provided at the same time as, such provisions.