

## RESEARCH GRANTS COUNCIL

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

#### INTER-INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME (IIDS)

#### Guidance Notes (IIDS2) for Completing the Application Form IIDS1

*All applicants should read this set of Guidance Notes (IIDS2) 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 (IIDS2).*

#### GENERAL

1. Please read the Fifth Call for Proposals for details of the Inter-Institutional Development Scheme (IIDS), 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, applicants must be eligible academic staff from the following thirteen local self-financing degree-awarding institutions:

<u>Code</u>	<u>Institution</u>
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. These notes are intended to be read by the applicants / related staff of institutions specified in Paragraph 2 above before completion and submission of an IIDS application.
4. The Application Form is in three parts, Part I: Summary of the Proposal; Part II: Details of the Proposal; and Part III: Institutional Endorsement and Declaration of Research Ethics / Safety Approval.
5. 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 brief description of the project.
6. In order to ensure consistency and fairness, applicants must complete the applications 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

7. **All sections should be completed.** Where information sought is not applicable or not provided under a particular section, insert 'NA' / 'Nil'.
8. 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 / Subject Panel + Serial No. / Year, e.g. UGC / IIDS11 / B01 / 18. The codes for the five subject panels are:

B – Business Studies

M – Biology and Medicine

E – Engineering

P – Physical Sciences

H – Humanities and Social Sciences

9. The project reference number should be used and quoted in all future correspondence. While an application could be made to a particular panel, the RGC shall have the discretion to decide on the panel responsible for the final assessment of each application.
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 must be **identical**. The application will not be processed if such discrepancies are spotted.
11. In view of substantial amount of data involved, institutions are required to submit the applications together with a summary of critical information (in Excel table) on all 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 or have abused the purpose of the ‘Supporting Documents’ in Part II Section 11 of the Application Form** (only letters of collaboration and supporting documents for the purpose of research ethics / safety approval are allowed to be attached). Applicants should not make use of Section 11 to supplement the contents of other sections.
13. It is the obligation of the Principal Investigators (PIs) to ensure that their respective applications contain 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 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. 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 C**. 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.**
16. Unless otherwise stated, all funding levels stated in this application form are in Hong Kong Dollars.

### **INFORMATION UPDATE**

17. If an update is provided for ethics / safety approval for an application, the PI 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.
18. If an update is provided for approval for access to Government / official / private data and records for application, the PI 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.
19. Other than the specific situations set out, no information update / revision to an application is allowed after submission deadline.

## **ENQUIRIES**

20. Enquiries about the contents of these Guidance Notes and other related matters about the IIDS funding exercise should be directed to the Research Coordinators (RCs) or responsible personnel of the institutions which, if in doubt, should consult the UGC Secretariat for clarification. Also, correspondence regarding IIDS matters including enquiries, appeals and complaints should be made through the RCs or responsible personnel of the institutions.
  
21. The guidelines on handling the information and personal data contained in IIDS applications are at **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.
  
22. 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 IIDS1 where the item numbers correspond to the item numbers on the form.

### PART I SUMMARY OF THE PROPOSAL

#### **1. Particulars of the Principal Investigator (PI)**

- (a) To ensure record accuracy and to facilitate identification of the PI, Co-Principal Investigator (Co-PI) and Co-Investigator (Co-I), their names on their Hong Kong Identity Cards / Passports (where applicable) should be used and entered in the standard RGC format:

	<b>Surname (in capital letters)</b>	<b>Other Name*</b>
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.

- (b) The PI (i.e. the applicant) and the Co-PI(s) (if any) of the proposal must be a full-time academic staff employed by an eligible self-financing degree-awarding institutions specified in Paragraph 2 under Section “General” above and fulfill ALL of the following requirements:
- (i) spend(s) at least 80% of time on locally-accredited local degree or higher degree work; and
- (ii) has / have at least a one-year renewable contract with the institution at the time of funding award being made.

Institutions are responsible for interpreting whether an applicant has fulfilled the eligibility requirements announced in the Call for Proposals. The applicant should clarify his / her status with the institution concerned. **Once the application is submitted, change of PI during the processing period will not be allowed. The PI is responsible to report immediately via RC of the institution to the UGC Secretariat any updates of his / her changes or his / her Co-PI(s)’ changes in**

**eligibility requirement. For this purpose, the Co-PI(s) is / are also responsible to inform the PI of his / her change in eligibility requirement immediately.**

**2. Information on PI, Co-PI and Co-Investigator (Co-I)**

- (a) Please refer to 1(a) and (b) above for the particulars and eligibility of the PI and Co-PIs. Each application should be submitted with only one applicant nominated as the PI and no applicant should submit more than one application in this capacity. The IIDS encourages collaborations among institutions and there may be Co-PIs from collaborating self-financing degree-awarding institutions in the project. Other joint applicants, if any, will be regarded as Co-Is. There is no eligibility requirements for the Co-Is. The Co-Is 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. There is no quota for the number of application for a Co-PI or Co-I. Each Co-PI and Co-I should have a clear, distinct and material role. Excessive number of Co-PIs and Co-Is should be avoided. Save in very exceptional circumstances, the RGC will not entertain requests for the addition of Co-PI(s) and / or Co-I(s) to a project after the funding award.

The applicant should indicate whether he / she or any of the Co-PI(s) / Co-I(s) is / are RGC Committee / Panel Member(s) as at the deadline of the application.

- (b) Please summarize the qualification of the PI and each Co-PI(s) and Co-I(s) who will be involved in the project. The CV(s) to be attached should include the following information, as appropriate:
- (i)-(vii) 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 others including research-related prizes and awards, brief description of experience in consultancies, service as a referee in evaluating other grant applications, patents, PhD theses supervised, etc.

The author list of the publications in the CV should be presented in full and cited exactly as written in the original publication. In particular, the applicant should indicate clearly his / her position especially in the long author list, say author 13 out of 40 for facilitating 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.

- (c) Please give details of plan of collaboration. In proposals involving more than one investigator, the role and specific task(s) of each individual (including the PI, Co-PIs and Co-Is) in the proposed research should be described clearly. If the research involves collaboration with other research team(s) / institution(s), letters of collaboration should be attached to Part II Section 11 of the Application Form.

### 3. **Particulars of the Project**

- (a) The project title should be informative, but short and concise.
- (c) Projects to be funded from the IIDS should last for no more than one year. The project should start no later than six months after the announcement of funding result.
- (d) For all proposals, the primary and secondary fields of research and codes should be stated clearly. Please refer to **Annex B** of this set of Guidance Notes for the details. The primary field area / code should be selected from among the list of field areas / codes as prescribed under the relevant subject area of the Assessment Panel to which the proposal is submitted. For example, if a proposal's primary field area / code is 'Nursing (1222)', it should come under the subject area of Medicine, Dentistry & Health (M2) under the Biology and Medicine (M) Panel. A maximum of two fields are accepted. To facilitate the appointment of the right experts to evaluate the proposals, a PI should select a specific primary field area as far as possible. If a PI selects a non-specific primary field area, i.e. Others, for his / her proposal, he / she must select a specific secondary field area close to the field area of the proposal.

To indicate the inter-disciplinary nature of a proposal, a PI is allowed to



select the secondary field area / code which is different from that of the primary field area / code. Inter-disciplinary proposals may be evaluated jointly by experts in different fields. The RGC reserves the authority to decide whether an application is inter-disciplinary or not.

- (e) The programmes / events of the project should be opened to other institutions and to the public.
- (f) A brief description of a maximum of one A4-sized page comprehensible to a non-specialist should be provided. This should be informative and indicative of the nature of the project to be conducted. If a proposal is funded, the brief description will be posted on the RGC website for public's information. The applicant will be approached for a Chinese version of the brief description for public access shortly after the announcement of the funding results, or an English version if the original brief description is presented in Chinese.

## **PART II DETAILS OF THE PROPOSAL**

### **PROJECT DETAILS**

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

#### **1. Impact and Objectives**

- (a) Identify the key issues and problems being addressed. The key issues and the elements of the problem should be described and those elements which are critical to the solution of the problem should be clearly identified. State the possible outcome of the project, its relevance, significance and value, such as contribution to academic, educational, scientific / professional development or potential for practical application.
- (b) The objectives of the project must be presented in point form and with reasons for undertaking the project.

Attention: Section 1 (a) and (b) in the Application Form should be limited to two A4-sized pages in standard RGC format.

#### **2. Programme Outline of the Project**

Please set out concisely the programmes and activities to be organized in the project supported by an implementation schedule. The programme / activities and schedule should be practical and feasible.

#### **3. Particulars of Potential Speaker(s)**

The potential speaker(s) can be academic staff from the local self-financing degree-awarding institutions, or any expert from local / overseas institutions.

4. **Collaboration with other Self-financing Degree-awarding Institutions**

Please quantify the collaboration and job division among PI and different Co-PI(s). The PI and Co-PI(s) involved are confined to the eligible local self-financing degree-awarding institutions as specified in this set of Guidance Notes.

5. **Proposed Funding**

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.

(a) **Budget**

There is no funding threshold or ceiling for the approved IIDS projects. The approved funding will be subject to the justification of the proposal. If any overseas travel is required for the speaker(s), the grant can support up to business class roundtrip air passage by the most direct route, hotel accommodation, and subsistence allowance. The expenses / allowances should follow the RGC's and / or 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 exceeded the set limit, institutions are required to bear the differences.

The grant provided by the RGC should only be used to cover project expenditure which would not otherwise be separately incurred. Please refer to the funding policy stipulated in the SF-DAMA. If application is funded, relevant funds will be released to the Institutions two months before the holding of the events upon the PI's submission of "Progress Update for Release of Funding" (copy available in the SF-DAMA).

(D) **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:

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

(F) On-costs

The on-costs related to research projects funded by the RGC will be disbursed to the institutions for their disposal. Applicants are required to include the project costs as well as the on-costs of 15% of the project costs on the Application Forms.

**6. Funds secured or to be secured**

Please provide 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 allocations made by the institution (including seed funding), etc. It should be noted that the amount secured from other sources should be stated in Part II Section 5(a)(B)(vi) of the Application form, and it will be deducted from the total cost of the project.

If revenue will be generated from the project (e.g. enrollment fees of participants, the amount of funding to be awarded may be reduced or the institution will be required to return the revenue generated to the RGC after the completion 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.**

**DECLARATION OF SIMILAR OR RELATED PROPOSALS**

**7. Re-submission of a proposal previously NOT supported**

- (a) The PI needs to provide details in case the proposal is a re-submission

(submitted to the UGC / RGC before) or is largely similar to a proposal that has been submitted to the UGC / RGC or other funding bodies. It is the responsibility of the PI to declare clearly and honestly whether his / her proposal is a re-submission. The PI should re-visit the main concerns / suggestions previously expressed by external reviewers if an earlier / similar version of the proposal has been assessed before. The RGC reserves the right to discount the rating of an application for its failure to acknowledge the fact that it is re-submission of a previous application.

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

## 8. Grant Record of Investigator(s)

It is the responsibility of the PI, Co-PI(s) and Co-I(s) to ensure that no duplicate funding from all sources including the RGC will be sought / has been sought for the same / substantially similar project. **The PI should ensure that Co-PI(s) and Co-I(s) understands the requirements and have declared all similar or related projects / proposals. If the PI, Co-PI(s) and / or Co-I(s) fails to declare similar or related projects / proposals (irrespective of whether submitted to / funded by UGC / RGC and not limited to those in the past five years) in this section, the application may be disqualified and the PI, Co-PI(s) and / or Co-I(s) may be debarred from applying future UGC / RGC grants.** PI, Co-PI(s) and Co-I(s) are required to:

- declare if the current proposal is similar or related to any proposals / projects pending approval / on-going / completed projects; and
- explain the differences between the similar or related projects / proposals and the current proposal.

It is the RGC to make the final decision on whether two proposals / projects are similar. The judgment of the RGC is final. Therefore, it is always advisable for the PI, Co-PI(s) and Co-I(s) to declare similar or related proposals when there is uncertainty. The PI, Co-PI(s) and Co-I(s) are advised to make the declaration and elaborate the difference in the proposals / projects to avoid misunderstanding. Declaration of similar or related proposals / projects does not necessarily mean that the proposals concerned will be adversely affected. The RGC may still fund the proposals concerned if the PI, Co-PI(s) and Co-I(s) are able to justify the differences of the proposals / projects for separate funding.

- (a)-(b) For the PI and Co-PI(s), please also provide details on each of the research projects / proposals undertaken by the PI, Co-I(s) (in the capacity as PI / Project Coordinator (PC) / Co-PI / Co-I / Project holder<sup>^</sup> / Team leader<sup>^</sup>) including:
- (i) completed projects funded from all sources (irrespective of whether from UGC / RGC) in the past five years;
  - (ii) on-going projects funded from all sources (irrespective of whether from UGC / RGC);
  - (iii) terminated projects funded by UGC / RGC in the past five years;
  - (iv) unsuccessful proposals or withdrawn projects submitted to UGC / RGC in the past five years; and
  - (v) proposals pending funding approval (including FDS, IDS and IIDS in this funding exercise).
- (c) For each Co-I, please also provide details on each of the research projects / proposals undertaken by each Co-I (in the capacity as PI / PC / Project holder / Team leader) including:
- (i) on-going projects funded from all sources (irrespective of whether from UGC / RGC); and
  - (ii) proposals pending funding approval (including FDS, IDS and IIDS in this funding exercise).

**Please note that the information listed on the CV at Part I Section 2(b) will not be regarded as fulfilling the declaration requirements in this Section. PI, Co-PIs and Co-Is are responsible to report**

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<sup>^</sup> Project holder / Team leader refers to projects under the Institutional Development Scheme.

**immediately via RC of the institution to the UGC Secretariat any updates on grants records, including the declaration of similar / related projects / proposals.**

## **ANCILLARY INFORMATION**

### **9. 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 PI to ensure that the research proposal is carefully reviewed for its compliance with applicable laws, health and safety guidelines and ethical standards. Ethics clearance should be sought for research involving living animals and/or human subjects including social sciences research involving human subjects (e.g. potential physical / 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 PI. The PI's institution 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 PI 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 PI. The PI's institution is required to complete and sign the Application Form Part III 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 authority(ies) or agency(ies) has / have been or is / are being sought. The RGC will regard the application as a withdrawn case if no confirmation of approval is provided to the RGC by 29 June 2018.

**If the institution / PI declared that no approval was required but the RGC / Panel eventually considered otherwise, the related application may be disqualified.**

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

(a) Release of completion report

PIs 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 PI and / or researchers concerned) to the public through the RGC website. PI 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.

PIs 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 any. PIs 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.

(b) Public access to publications resulting from research funded by the RGC

(i) Upon acceptance of a paper for publication, if any, the PI 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 institutional repository for open access;

(ii) if both (i)(a) and (b) above are not allowed, the PI should 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 PI 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.

**11. Letters of collaboration and supporting documents**

Only letters of collaboration and supporting documents (e.g. ethics / safety approval letters) are allowed. Applicants should not make use of this section to supplement the contents of other sections. **Applications will be disqualified if the proposals are found to have abused the purpose of this section.**

**PART III INSTITUTIONAL ENDORSEMENT AND DECLARATION OF RESEARCH ETHICS / SAFETY APPROVAL**

**[To be completed by the appropriate authority of the PI's institution]**

**INSTITUTIONAL ENDORSEMENT**

**1. Eligibility Requirement for IIDS**

The institution should confirm that:

- (a) the application has been evaluated and endorsed by the institution concerned before submission to the RGC;
- (b) the PI fully meets the eligibility requirement for the IIDS as stated in Part I Section 1(b) of the Application Form and is not debarred from applying for any UGC / RGC grants;
- (c) the PI will abide by the in-house guidelines of his / her institution, 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;
- (d) the institution will inform the RGC as soon as the PI ceases to be eligible to apply, receive or hold a IIDS grant, and will withdraw the application; or recommend to the RGC for approval a suitable new PI if applicable, to take over the funded project once it is funded and commenced. As a matter of policy, change of PI will normally not be approved within the first six months of an approved project and the application. However, change of PI 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 grant, if given, will be withdrawn if the project does not start within six months of the announcement of funding result. The institution should report to the RGC as soon as possible when a PI 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 project 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.

- (g) the Co-PI(s) and his / her institution have completed / will complete the declaration form at Annex of the Application Form and the completed declaration form is submitted together with the application form or to be submitted by 29 June 2018. Please give reasons if the declaration of the Co-PI(s) could not be provided.

## **INSTITUTIONAL COMMITMENTS**

### **2. Support to PI**

The institution is required to verify and confirm whether the research project under the IIDS application is in line with the role of the institution, and that adequate supervision and research facilities will be in place if the application is supported by the RGC. Nevertheless, it should also be made clear that the primary duty of the PI of the RGC grant is to complete the project according to plan. The institution is also required to confirm that the events / programmes offered in this proposal should be opened to other institutions and to the public.

### **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 (e.g. 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 confirm that the case has been granted with other ethics / safety approval. **If the institution is unable to confirm with the RGC by 29 June 2018 that the required approval has been obtained, the RGC will stop processing the application and will regard it as a withdrawn case.**

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

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 29 June 2018 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 / PI declared that no approval was required but the RGC Committee / Panel eventually considered otherwise, the application concerned may be disqualified.**

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

UGC Secretariat  
November 2017

**Annex A****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 Principal Investigators. It also reserves the right to stop processing or reject any applications if the applicants’ requests render it impossible for the applications to be adequately peer-reviewed.

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

4. Applicants should note the following:

- (a) all proposals will have undergone a very rigorous peer-review process which involves external assessments and the relevant RGC panels / committees which are made up of experts from the local and international academic / professional community;
- (b) grants are allocated on a competitive basis and each year is a different exercise (the success rate is based on the general quality of the proposals as assessed by the relevant RGC panels / committees, and the availability of funds, in that particular year);
- (c) the RGC is gradually raising the quality threshold, meaning that only the top and the best quality proposals will be ‘funded’; and
- (d) comments from all external reviewers on each proposal (except for conference grants / travel grants / fellowship applications) will be provided anonymously to the applicants concerned through their 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 right to request access to personal data held by the RGC about you / your research proposal and to update / 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 / fax, addressed as follows:

Assistant Secretary General (Research) 3  
University Grants Council Secretariat  
7/F Shui On Centre  
6-8 Harbour Road  
Wanchai  
Hong Kong

Fax: 2845 1183

\* \* \* \* \*

**Annex B(1)**

**List of Research Field Areas and Code  
for Biology & Medicine Research Proposals**

**Biological Sciences**

(Subject Area : M1)

<u>Field Area</u>	<u>Code</u>
Behaviour and Psychology	1101
Biochemistry	1102
Cell Biology	1103
Developmental Biology	1104
Ecology	1105
Environmental Research	1106
Food Science	1107
Gene Regulation	1108
Genomic Biology	1109
Growth & Development	1110
Marine Biology	1111
Microbiology	1112
Molecular Biology	1113
Morphology and Anatomy	1114
Physiology	1115
Signal Transduction	1116
Structural Biology	1117
Traditional Chinese Medicine (basic)	1119
Ageing	1120
Biodiversity and Systematics	1121
Bioinformatics, Systems and Synthetic Biology	1122
Biological Imaging	1123
Brain Pain Learning and Memory	1124
Comparative Endocrinology	1125
Comparative Immunology	1126
Fish Biology	1127
Genetics	1128



Neuroscience	1129
Plant Sciences / Plant Biology	1130
Stem Cell Biology	1131
Virology	1132
Others – relating to Biological Sciences (please specify : )	1199

Medicine, Dentistry & Health

(Subject Area : M2)

<u>Field Area</u>	<u>Code</u>
Allergy / Immunology	1201
Anaesthesia	1202
Blood / Hematology	1203
Cancer	1204
Cardiovascular Research	1205
Clinical Trials	1206
Connective Tissues	1207
Dentistry	1208
Diabetes / Metabolism	1209
Endocrinology	1210
Epidemiology	1211
Gastroenterology / Hepatobiliary	1212
Genetic Disease	1213
Geriatrics / Gerontology	1214
Health Services	1215
Hearing	1216
Imaging	1217
Infection / Parasitology	1218
Neonatology	1219
Nephrology / Urology	1220
Nursing	1222
Nutrition	1223
Orthopaedics / Traumatology	1224
Paediatrics	1225
Pathology	1226

Pharmacology / Toxicology	1227
Population Health	1228
Psychosocial & Behavioural Research	1229
Reproduction	1231
Respiration	1232
Rheumatology	1233
Surgical Research	1234
Transplantation	1235
Vision	1236
Chinese Medicine (clinical)	1237
Proteomics	1238
Regenerative Medicine	1239
Molecular Diagnostics	1240
Biomedical Engineering	1241
Biomaterials	1242
Clinical Microbiology	1243
Clinical Virology	1244
Disease Model Development	1245
Drug Discovery and Delivery	1246
Drug Pharmacokinetics and Pharmacodynamics	1247
Genomic Medicine	1248
Genomics	1249
Human Genetics / Clinical Genetics	1250
Neurobiology and Neuromedicine	1251
Personalized Medicine	1252
Rehabilitative and Physical Medicine	1254
Stem Cell Therapy	1256
Others – relating to Medicine, Dentistry & Health (please specify : )	1299



Electrical & Electronic Engineering

(Subject Area : E3)

<u>Field Area</u>	<u>Code</u>
Communication	2301
Electronics	2302
Photonics	2303
Signal & Image Processing	2305
Bioelectronics	2306
Power Electronics	2307
Power System	2308
Microwave and Terahertz Engineering	2309
Others – relating to Electrical & Electronic Engineering (please specify : _____ )	2399

Mechanical, Production & Industrial Engineering

(Subject Area : E4)

<u>Field Area</u>	<u>Code</u>
Design	2401
Engineering Management	2402
Fluid	2403
Marine Engineering	2404
Materials	2405
Mechanics & Dynamics	2406
Operations Research	2407
Production & Manufacturing	2408
Robotics & Automation	2409
Textile	2410
Thermal	2411
Biomechanics	2412
Fuel Engineering	2413
Others – relating to Mechanical, Production & Industrial Engineering (please specify : _____ )	2499

**Annex B(3)**

List of Research Field Areas and Code  
for Physical Sciences Research Proposals

Chemical Engineering

(Subject Area : P1)

<u>Field Area</u>	<u>Code</u>
Chemical Engineering	3101
Biophysics	3102
Energy	3103
Environmental Sciences	3104
Biochemical Engineering	3105
Food Science and Technology	3106
Others – relating to Chemical Engineering (please specify : )	3199

Physical Sciences

(Subject Area : P2)

<u>Field Area</u>	<u>Code</u>
Chemical Sciences	3201
Earth Sciences	3202
Materials Sciences	3204
Physics	3205
Planetary Sciences	3206
Physical Geography	3207
Scattering Methods	3208
Nanomaterials	3209
Nanocomposites	3210
Mass Spectrometry	3211
Environmental Studies and Science	3212
Others – relating to Physical Sciences (please specify : )	3299

Mathematics

(Subject Area : P3)

<u>Field Area</u>	<u>Code</u>
Applied Mathematics	3301
Pure Mathematics	3302
Probability & Statistics	3303
Mathematical Finance and Insurance	3304
Others – relating to Mathematics (please specify : )	3399

**Annex B(4)**

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

Psychology and Linguistics

(Subject Area : H1)

<u>Field Area</u>	<u>Code</u>
Psychology	4104
Linguistics and Languages	4108
Psycholinguistics	4109
Cognitive Neuroscience of Language	4110
English Languages and Literature	4121
Chinese Languages and Literature	4122
Language Development, Second Language Acquisition, Audiology	4123
Sociolinguistics and Discourse Analysis	4124
Criminology	4125
Others – relating to Psychology and Linguistics (please specify : )	4196

Social Sciences

(Subject Area : H2)

<u>Field Area</u>	<u>Code</u>
Anthropology	4101
Public Administration & Political Science	4105
Sociology	4106
Architecture	4401
Law	4402
Urban Studies and Planning	4412
Archaeology	4417
Human Geography	4418
Social Policy	4419
Others – relating to Social Sciences (please specify : )	4197

Humanities and Arts

(Subject Area : H3)

<u>Field Area</u>	<u>Code</u>
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



Education

(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

Professional & Vocational Studies

(Subject Area : H5)

<u>Field Area</u>	<u>Code</u>
Nursing	4408
Public Health	4409
Social Work	4410
Social Services / Management	4411
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
Others – relating to Professional & Vocational Studies (please specify : _____ )	4499



**Annex C****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.