RESEARCH GRANTS COUNCIL

National Natural Science Foundation of China (NSFC) / Research Grants Council (RGC) Joint Research Scheme 2016/17

Explanatory Notes for Completing the Application Form for Full proposal

You must read the Explanatory Notes carefully before completing and submitting your full research proposal.   The RGC may stop processing your application if your application is found to be not in compliance with any of the requirements as set out in the Explanatory Notes.

GENERAL

(a) These notes are intended to be read by applicant(s) / related staff of institution(s) before completion and submission of a NSFC / RGC Joint Research Scheme (JRS) application.   Applicants should also refer to the Call Circular and Invitation for Applications issued for this exercise on 21 December 2015 for application procedures and other requirement details.

(b) The form is in 3 parts, Part I: Summary of the Research Proposal; Part II: Details of the Research Proposal; and Part III: Institutional Endorsement and Declaration of Research Ethics / Safety.

(c) 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 Research Details (Impact and Objectives, Background of Research, Research Plan and Methodology) in pdf file format.

(d) In order to ensure consistency and fairness to all applicants, applicants must complete the applications, including attached pdf documents, in the following standard RGC format.

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

    Failure to comply with the application format and / or the allowable page will lead to disqualification of the application.

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

(f) Hong Kong applicants of shortlisted proposals should submit their full proposals in <u>6 hard copies and 1 soft copy (with size up to 5Mb per proposal)</u> to the UGC Secretariat through the Research Offices (ROs) of their respective institutions by **5:00 p.m. on <u>17 June 2016</u>**.

(g) To help reduce the cost of processing and save paper, applicants are urged to keep the length of proposals and attachments to the minimum and use double-sided printing / photocopying when making copies. It is important that applicants should comply with the page / word limits specified in various sections of the application form. Applications will be disqualified if the proposals are found to have exceeded the allowable page / word limits in various sections of Part II of the application form. Attachments are allowed only to cater for the needs of essential documents such as letters of collaboration or price quotations. Supplementary materials such as papers, manuscripts, publications or detailed research work are not acceptable.

(h) Information on this full proposal form should be consistent with that given in the initial application. If not, the full proposal would not be processed further. 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 disqualification of application.

(i) 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.

(j) Applicants are prohibited to communicate with RGC Council and 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.

(k) The on-costs related to research projects funded by the RGC will be disbursed to the institutions for their disposal. The UGC Secretariat will liaise with the Research Offices of the institutions on the calculation and disbursement details separately. PIs are not required to include the calculation of on-costs on the application forms. They have to include the project costs only.

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

INFORMATION UPDATE

(m) A brief update of the proposal, if any, should be submitted to the UGC Secretariat on or before **29 July 2016**, indicating any significant changes, e.g. changes in the eligibility of the PI, alternative funding obtained, declarations of similar / related proposals / projects, investigator(s)'s CVs, grant records, relationship with nominated reviewers, etc.   It should be emphasized that such update should be confined to the above-said changes, and applicants should not use the opportunity to revise their research proposals substantially.   6 hardcopies and a softcopy of the information update should be submitted to the UGC Secretariat on or before 29 July 2016.

(n) If an update is provided for ethics / safety approval for an application, the respective Research Offices should submit the relevant updated data to the RGC on or before **29 July 2016**.   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.

(o) If an update is provided for approval for access to Government / official / private data and records for an application, the respective Research Office should submit the relevant updated data to the RGC on or before 29 July 2016.   Evidence of approval should also be submitted at this stage.

ENQUIRIES

(p) All enquiries about the contents of these Explanatory Notes and other related matters about the NSFC / RGC JRS should be directed to the Research Offices of the Institutions which, if in doubt, should consult the UGC Secretariat for clarification..   Also, correspondence regarding NSFC / RGC JRS matters including enquiries, appeals and complaints should be made through the Research Offices of the Institutions.   Their contact details are as follow:

Ms Laurel Xiao	Tel.: 3442 4014
City University of Hong Kong	Fax : 3442 0136
83 Tat Chee Avenue	
Kowloon Tong	
Kowloon	
Ms Kit Ng	Tel.: 3411 7940
Hong Kong Baptist University	Fax : 3411 5133
Kowloon Tong	
Kowloon	

Ms Connie Lam	Tel.: 2616 7683
Lingnan University	Fax : 2591 9618
8 Castle Peak Road	
Tuen Mun	
New Territories	

Ms Carmen Tang	Tel.: 3943 1996
The Chinese University of Hong Kong	Fax : 3942 0993
Shatin	
New Territories	

Ms Clara Fong	Tel.: 2948 7700
The Hong Kong Institute of Education	Fax : 2948 7697
10 Lo Ping Road	
Tai Po	
New Territories	

Miss Christine Yeung	Tel.: 2766 4046
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University	Fax: 2355 7651
Hung Hom	
Kowloon	

Mrs Jenny Cheng	Tel.: 2358 6946
The Hong Kong University of Science	Fax: 2358 1541
and Technology	
Clear Water Bay	
Kowloon	

Miss Annie Ngai	Tel.: 2859 1911
The University of Hong Kong	Fax : 2803 0558
Pokfulam Road	
Hong Kong	

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

(r) 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 "Extract from the Prevention of Bribery Ordinance" at http://www.ugc.edu.hk/eng/rgc/fs/code_of_conduct.pdf.

PART I   SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH PROPOSAL
[To be completed by the applicant(s)]

1. Particulars of the Projects

(a)(ii)
(b)(i)(ii)   The RGC project reference number, project title, focus area and project field(s) of the full proposal should be the same as those used for the initial proposal.

(a)(iii)   The applicant(s) must indicate with caution the nature of the application being submitted.   "New" refers to the application on research topic which the PI and / or Co-investigators (Co-I(s)) applies / apply for RGC funds for the first time.   "Re-submission" refers to the application on research topic which the PI and / or Co-I(s) have previously applied for RGC funds but not supported.   "Continuation" refers to the application continuing the work previously funded by the RGC.

(b)(ii)   Please refer to the list of subject areas in the Explanatory Notes used by the General Research Fund (GRF) exercise of the RGC (GRF2), which is available   at   the   RGC   website: http://www.ugc.edu.hk/eng/doc/rgc/form/GRF2.pdf

(b)(iii)   Please give a maximum of five keywords to characterise the work of the proposal.

(b)(iv)(v)   The Scheme aims to support research projects with duration of four years. For Hong Kong applicants, the grants sought for each project should not exceed HK$1.25 million (exclusive of on-costs).

(c)   A short abstract of a maximum of 400 words comprehensible to a non-specialist should be given.   This should be informative and indicative of the nature of research to be conducted.   If a proposal is funded, the abstract of the research proposal will be uploaded on the RGC website for public's information.   The applicant will be approached for a Chinese version of the abstract for public access shortly after the announcement of the funding results, or an English version if the original abstract is presented in Chinese.

PART II   DETAILS OF THE RESEARCH PROPOSAL
[To be completed by the applicant(s)]

RESEARCH 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 research and to permit a meaningful evaluation of the worthiness of the project.   The RGC will not further process the application if insufficient / incomplete information is provided on the application form.

1. Impact and Objectives
   (a maximum of 800 words in total for long-term impact and project 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 research project, its relevance, significance and value, such as contribution to academic, educational, scientific or professional development or potential for practical application.

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

2. Background of research, research plan and methodology
   (a maximum of seven A4 pages in total for (a) and (b))
(a)   State whether work has been / is being carried out by you and / or others on a related subject.   Outline previous and alternative approaches to the problem and their deficiencies, list key references to relevant research by you and others.   For continuation of previous projects, the progress made and results achieved during the previous years should be clearly summarized.   The summary should be sufficiently detailed to allow an evaluation of the worthiness of the project for continuation of support.   For new projects, the reasons for investigation and the relevant findings should be clearly demonstrated.

(b)   A complete description of the research plan and the selected approach to the problem solution should be given.   Where appropriate, experiments, tests and required facilities should be described.   The relevant scientific principles and techniques on which the problem solution depends should also be presented.   Outline uniqueness and justification of the proposed approach with its plan of investigation, giving citation from literature where applicable.

(c)   A maximum of two additional A4 non-text pages for diagrams, photos, charts and tables etc, if any.

(d)   The above page limit in Sections 1 – 2 does not include references.   All references should be provided in full and include all authors.

PROJECT FUNDING

The RGC may not process your application if the proposed budget does not comply with the requirements as set out below.   The RGC also reserves the right to impose penalty on any institutions which fail to screen out non-compliant applications.

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

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

- The estimated costs should not include any 'hidden' costs covered by recurrent block grant expenditure, such as the normal salaries of teaching staff who spend a portion of their time on research, cost of utilities, stationery, etc.   They should include only expenditure which would not otherwise be separately incurred.   Examples of these are: salaries of Research Assistants (RA) specifically employed for this project; purchase of equipment necessary for the investigation but not available in the institution(s).

- In cases where a particular RA is employed for several projects, his salary should be apportioned accordingly.

- Detailed justification should be provided.   Otherwise, the RGC will not consider the request.

- The "General Expenses" item is a catch-all category for costs which cannot be included in any of the other items.

3. Cost and justification

One-line Vote Items

(a)(i)   Supporting Staff
Please state the number, rank, duration and cost of staff involved, with justification for the proposed rank and duration.   The RGC normally

supports research support staff at the Research Assistant (RA) level. The grants assumes an indicative rate which is currently at HK$256,000 per annum for RA and HK$410,000 per annum for senior RA (SRA). These indicative rates are only meant for reference. The rates will be reviewed regularly by the Council. The total staff costs supported will then depend on the indicative rates or the rates proposed by the PIs concerned, whichever is lower. In the case of applications for funding for Post-doctoral Fellows, the CV of the post-doc in one A4 page should also be attached if available.

(a)(ii)   Equipment
RGC fund must not be used to purchase personal electronic devices such as cell phones, iPods, iPad, MP3 Players, digital cameras, PDAs except with sound justification as approved by the RGC. In addition, the RGC will not provide funding for the purchase or use of standard equipment such as desktop PCs, servers, laptop computers, printers and scanners known to be available, or reasonably expected to be provided in the institutions concerned. Institutions may be required by the RGC to confirm the availability of institutional resources prior to their acceptance of an award. This is what the RGC means by "institutional commitment".

For equipment, the following points should be addressed:

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

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

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

(iv)   Provide information supporting the estimated cost of equipment e.g. quotes from suppliers. Items costing over $200,000 and without supporting quotations will **NOT** be considered. Up to two A4 pages can be attached, if necessary.

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

For purchase of equipment at or over $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 or per year as appropriate);

  ➢ the estimated number of hours (say per month or per 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 the 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 number of staff members and / or students expected to use the equipment under application and the estimated number of hours per annum of utilization.

- Will the equipment be available for use by 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.

(a)(iii) Outsourcing of Research Work Outside Hong Kong

Research grants awarded by the RGC should primarily be used in undertaking research work in Hong Kong by the PIs and their teams in order to train and groom research talents in Hong Kong. It will be legitimate for the PIs to subcontract out a small part of the research work (regardless of geographic locations) only if:

(i) The proposed activity is a necessary and justified part of the research and is outlined in the proposal for approval;

(ii) The PIs should have identified and possessed a high level of research expertise in their teams when they submit research applications to the RGC. The activity to be subcontracted out, for instance, data collection work, should not be the main intellectual focus of the research project;

(iii) The persons/organizations providing the subcontracting services should be at arm's length with the PIs or their serving institutions (for instance, employees, friends, relatives, subsidiary companies, etc. should be avoided) and the procurement should be done in accordance with the institutional procedures and guidelines; and

       (iv)   The PIs or their team members should be involved in monitoring the subcontracting services or the supervision of the subcontracting services.

For subcontracting services or research work to be conducted outside Hong Kong, the PIs have to justify in their proposals to the RGC / Selection Committee for approval.   The RGC / Selection Committee will evaluate the merits and justification of the case according to the conditions specified above.   For service/work over $200,000, price quotation must be provided.

(a)(iv)   <u>General Expenses</u>
Outsourcing services other than those specified in (iii) above should be included under general expenses.   For services / purchase over $200,000, price quotation must be provided.   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.

The RGC funding will also provide support for reasonable expenses for receiving, and subsistence allowance for, the Mainland collaborators in Hong Kong, and passage for Hong Kong researchers to visit collaborators in the Mainland.   For visits made by Hong Kong project team, the city to be visited, estimated passage cost, duration of visits, and number of travellers for each trip should be stated and justified.   The objective which the visit(s) aimed for should also be stated.   Travel of research postgraduate students must be accompanied by the PI and with justification provided.   For the trips made by the Mainland team to Hong Kong, the number of travellers, proposed subsistence rate and the duration of stays for each trip should also be clearly stated.   The information should be consistent with that appearing in the proposal submitted by the Mainland team.   The prevailing reference rate for subsistence is HK$900 per day and the subsistence allowance for receiving the Mainland team will be funded at the reference rate or the rate proposed by the PIs concerned, whichever is lower.

(a)(v)   <u>Conference Expenses</u>
The RGC encourages researchers to present their work internationally and to exchange information with others in their particular research areas.   A provision of HK$20,000 per year, irrespective of the number of investigators involved in the project, is normally allowed for each funded project.

Earmarked Items

(a)(vi)   <u>High-performance Computing Services</u>
A provision of up to HK$100,000 will be allowed for the subscription of high-performance computing services for each funded project. Price quotation should be provided. Requests without quotations may not be considered.

(a)(vii)   <u>Research-related Software License / Dataset</u>
For requests for purchase / subscription of database(s), price quotations should be provided. Requests without quotations may not be considered. The institution should not use the RGC Funds to purchase standard software licences / dataset.

(b) to (d)   Please confirm whether or not the requested equipment / high-performance computing services / research-related software license / dataset is available in the institution(s). If yes, please explain why such equipment / high-performance computing services / software cannot be used by the applicant(s).

4. <u>Existing facilities and major equipment available for this research project</u>
Please elaborate the existing facilities and equipment available for this research project.

5. <u>Funds secured or to be secured</u>
Other sources of funds can include private donations, awards or grants from other organizations, contract research funds from commercial enterprises, or special allocations made by the institution from the block grant or the indicated grant for equipment, etc. It should be noted that the amount secured from other sources will be deducted from the total cost of the project in Section 3(a) of Part II.

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

<u>DECLARATION OF SIMILAR OR RELATED PROPOSALS</u>

6. <u>Re-submission of a proposal not supported previously</u>
(a)   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 other funding bodies. PI should revisit the main concerns / suggestions previously expressed by external reviewers if an earlier / similar version of the proposal has been assessed before. The RGC reserves the right to discount the rating of an application for its failure to acknowledge the fact that it is a re-submission of a previous application.

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

7. Submission of a new proposal or proposal similar or related to on-going and completed projects, and proposals pending funding approval

It is the responsibility of applicants (both PI 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 research project. Failure to declare similar/related projects/proposals in this section may result in disqualification of the application and debarring from applying future UGC/RGC grants. In Section 7(a), PIs/Co-I(s) are required to explain the differences of all their applications submitted in this exercise in the capacity of PIs or Co-I(s) if their applications are similar or related. In Sections 7(b) to (d), PIs and Co-I(s) should declare if the proposal is similar or related to any on-going and completed projects, and proposals pending funding approval.

It is the RGC to make the final decision on whether two proposals/projects are similar. The judgement of the RGC is final. Therefore, it is always advisable for the PI or the Co-I(s) to declare similar or related proposals when there is uncertainty. The PI and the 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-I is able to justify the differences of the proposals/projects for separate funding.

8. Particulars of PIs and Co-Is
(a) 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. A PI of an on-going NSFC / RGC JRS project is not allowed to submit new application unless both collaborative partners have completed the last approved project and the Hong Kong PI has submitted his completion report to the RGC before the initial application deadline. Nevertheless, a PI will not be subject to the above restrictions if he/she only participates as a member of other new funding proposals. Other joint applicants, if any, will be regarded as Co-Is. Each Co-I should have a clear, distinct and material role. Excessive number of Co-Is should be

avoided.   Save in very exceptional circumstances, the RGC will not entertain requests for the addition of Co-I to a project after the funding award.   Once the application is submitted, a change of PI during the period of processing the application will not be approved.

The PI of an RGC project grant must be an academic staff member of an UGC-funded institution with conditions of employment meeting <u>ALL</u> the following requirements:

(i)   having a full-time[1] appointment in the institution proper[2];
(ii) being in Staff Grades from 'A' to 'I'[3] as defined in the Common Data Collection Format (i.e. from 'Professor' to 'Assistant Lecturer', see <u>Annex B</u>);
(iii) being primarily engaged in and spending at least 80% of time in degree or higher degree work at the institution proper; and
(iv) salary being wholly funded[4] by the institution proper.

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

(a) A newly appointed staff member should have formally entered into a contract of service with the institution on or before 4 February 2016 and that his / her appointment would take effect on or before 1 August 2016.
(b) A staff member employed on a fixed term contract should be eligible at the time of funding award being made in October 2016 and for at least the first year of the project's planned duration.
(c) A visiting scholar should have a full-time employment at the institution proper covering at least one year or the expected duration of the project whichever is the longer.

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

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

To ensure record accuracy and to facilitate identification of PIs, the PIs should enter the name as shown on his/her Hong Kong Identity Card /

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[1] Excluding part-time staff and staff holding honorary appointments.
[2] Excluding schools / arms of continuing education and professional training and other analogous outfits.
[3] Excluding polytechnic staff grades.
[4] Excluding staff member who is receiving income from paid appointments outside the institution proper or who is supported by external research grants.

passport (where applicable) use the standardized format of names as agreed with respective institutions when submitting all RGC grant applications:

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

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

The applicant should indicate whether he/she or any of the Co-I(s) is/are RGC Council / Subject Panel Member(s) as at the deadline of the submission of full proposals; for the Hong Kong team, please provide the number of hours per week to be spent by the Hong Kong PI on the proposed project.

(b)   This section should summarize the qualifications of both teams' PI and each Co-I(s) who will be involved in the project.   The CV(s) to be attached should include the following information, as appropriate:

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

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

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

(c)   Please give details of plan of collaboration.   The role and specific task(s) of each individual (including the PI and Co-Is) of both teams in the proposed research should be described clearly.   Letters of collaboration are required to be attached to the application.

GRANT RECORD OF HONG KONG INVESTIGATORS

9. Details of Research Projects

(a) For the PI, please provide details on each of the research projects undertaken by the PI (in capacity as PI/PC/Co-I/Co-PI) including (a) completed projects funded from all sources (irrespective whether from UGC/RGC) in the past five years; (b) on-going projects funded from all sources (irrespective whether from UGC/RGC); (c) terminated projects funded by UGC/RGC in the past five years; and (d) unsuccessful proposals or withdrawn projects submitted to UGC/RGC in the past five years. Please also provide the objectives for each of the completed / on-going / terminated projects under (a), (b) and (c) as well as the number of hours per week spent on each of the on-going projects (except the involvement as Co-I in General Research Fund / Joint Research Schemes projects) under (b).

(b) For each Co-I, please provide details on the on-going research projects funded from all sources which are undertaken by each Hong Kong Co-I (in only the capacity as PC/PI).

10. Major research output of previously funded projects

Please include a summary of a maximum of 400 words in standard RGC format on the key results and publications in respect of each previously RGC and non-RGC funded project undertaken by the PI and each Co-I of the Hong Kong team, in descending chronological order, which are relevant to the application.

ANCILLARY INFORMATION

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

(a) Research ethics / safety approval

It is the responsibility of the 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 or psychological harms, discomfort or stress to human participants that a research project might generate, subjects' privacy etc.). The primary responsibility of seeking the relevant approval and ethics clearance rests with the PI. The PI's institution is required to complete and sign Part III of this application form to confirm whether the research proposal involves human subjects and certify whether the relevant approval is required and if required, the relevant approval has been given / is being sought.

(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 Part III of this application form to confirm the relevant approval, if necessary, has been given/ is being sought.

For both Section 11(a) and (b), applications should not be submitted unless the approval of the appropriate authority(ies) has/have been or is/are being sought. The RGC will regard the applications as being withdrawn if no confirmation of approval is provided to the RGC by 29 July 2016.

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

12. Proposed reviewers

The RGC encourages grant applicants to nominate external reviewers in their proposals for consideration by the RGC / Selection Committee. Committee members have found that the nominated lists of external reviewers are very helpful in assisting them to identify international peers to evaluate the proposals. The nomination of reviewers by the applicant(s) is optional, but is highly encouraged especially when the research is a very specialized area. The Hong Kong PI assumes full responsibility for reporting all the relationship(s) between the PIs and Co-Is of both teams with each of the nominated external reviewers. To avoid any possible or perceived conflict of interests, external reviewer(s) having any of the following relationship(s) with either PI of both teams should not be nominated:

(a) Is currently employed / was employed by the institution of the PI from 18 June 2014 to 17 June 2016;
(b) Holds adjunct, honorary or visiting position(s) in the institution of the PI;
(c) Serves as consultant / advisor to a committee or department of the institution of the PI;
(d) Submitted applications as Project Coordinator, Principal Investigator (PI), Co-PI, Co-Investigator or Collaborators in the same funding exercise;
(e) Has pre-reviewed the application;
(f) Has advisor / advisee relationship (such as tutor and PhD student relationship) with the PI;
(g) Has co-authorship of patents with the PI;
(h) Has close personal relationship (e.g. partner, spouse, immediate family member, long-term close friend) with the PI;

(i) Has co-authorship of paper or publications with the PI from 18 June 2013 to 17 June 2016;

(j) Is a collaborator (in the capacity of Co-PI or Co-I) in research projects or programmes held by the PI from 18 June 2013 to 17 June 2016; or

(k) Serves the same editorial board with an appointer-appointee relationship.

All applicants involved, i.e. PI and Co-I(s) of both teams, are required to declare in the application forms their full relationship(s) with the nominated reviewers, for fairness and transparency. Any undeclared relationships existed between the PIs and Co-Is of both teams and the nominated external reviewers, and subsequently come to the attention of the RGC will be treated most seriously, and may result in disqualification and debarring from applying future UGC / RGC grants. Any change or update in relationships between the PI/Co-I(s) of both teams and the nominated reviewers should also be reported to the RGC by 29 July 2016 when submitting the proposal updates.

It is the collective responsibility of all applicants involved, i.e. PI and Co-I(s) of both teams, in a grant application to complete Section 12 accurately and fully. The Hong Kong PIs should also ensure that PIs and Co-I(s) of both teams understand the requirements and have declared all the relationships with the nominated external reviewers. Failing to do so may render the disqualification of the application and other debarment of applying future UGC/RGC grants for a certain period of time.

If, for any reason of possible conflict of interest, PI wants to exclude a person from reviewing his or her application, he or she should submit the request in writing separately through the respective Research Office setting out the full circumstances and justification. Such request should not be made under any section of the full proposal which in its entirety will be sent to external reviewers for assessment. In all cases, the RGC reserves the right of final decision on the selection and invitation of external reviewers having regard to the merits involved.

13. <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>
PIs are required to release the completion reports (of Hong Kong PI, 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) to the pubic through the RGC website. PIs 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.

Public access of publication resulting from research funded by the RGC

(a) Upon acceptance of a paper for publication, the Hong Kong PI should check whether the publisher already allows (i) full open access to the publisher's version, or (ii) 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;

(b) if both (a)(i) and (ii) are not allowed, the Hong Kong 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

(c) subject to the publisher's agreement on (a) or (b) 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.

14. Education Plan

PIs are required to provide the proposed educational activities relating to the proposed research.

PART III   INSTITUTIONAL ENDORSEMENT AND DECLARATION OF RESEARCH ETHICS / SAFETY
[To be completed by the appropriate authority of the Hong Kong PI's institution]

(1) Institutional Endorsement

The institution should confirm that it has evaluated and given support to the application before submission to the RGC.   The institution is required to confirm that (i) a PI fully meets the criteria for the NSFC / RGC JRS grant; (ii) the existing teaching load is verified; and (iii) the applicant will have the number of hours per week as declared in Part II Section 8(a) to supervise the proposed project without prejudice to his / her existing commitment in other research work, teaching and administrative duties.

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

(2) Institutional Commitment

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

(e) to (g) For items (e) to (g), please see the notes for Items 3(b) to (d) in part II.

(h)   To safeguard the interests of the researcher and the institution, institutions bear primary responsibility for prevention, detection and investigation of research misconduct, including but not limiting to misusing of funds, data falsification, plagiarism and self-plagiarism.   Institution is strongly advised to use anti-plagiarism software before submitting the application to the RGC and verify if this application has been scanned by anti-plagiarism software in item (h).

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

(a) 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 or human subjects including those in social sciences research (e.g. potential physical or psychological harms, discomfort or stress to human subjects in a research project, subjects' privacy etc). It should be noted that all applications must be vetted by the institution to ascertain if they involve human subjects. If they do, the institution must give approval / exemption according to their internal ethics guidelines by **29 July 2016** as is the case with other ethics / safety approval.   If the institution is unable to confirm by 29 July 2016 that the required approval has been obtained, the RGC will stop processing the application which will be regarded as to have been withdrawn.

(b) The 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 critical to the proposed research. If the institution is unable to confirm by 29 July 2016 that the required approval has been obtained, the RGC will stop processing the application which will be regarded as to have been withdrawn.

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

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

UGC Secretariat
May 2016

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

Purpose of Collection of Information and Personal Data

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

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

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

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

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

Handling of your information and personal data

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

3.   When the RGC obtains external assessments on your research proposal, external reviewers will be made aware of the existence of a Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance in Hong Kong, and be forewarned that all written comments about the applicant and research proposal are liable to be released to the applicant concerned upon request.   External reviewers will also be advised of the RGC policy on providing feedback to grant applicants, which is 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 or your research proposal and to update or correct such data. Nevertheless, the RGC reserves the right to charge a reasonable fee for the processing of any such request(s).

Further Information

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

        Assistant Secretary General (Research)1
        Research Grants Council
        7/F Shui On Centre
        6-8 Harbour Road
        Wanchai
        Hong Kong

        Fax: 2845 1183

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Staff Grades, Modes and Funding Sources

Academic Grades

Academic, Senior

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

Academic, Junior

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

Academic Supporting Staff

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

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

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

Non-Academic Grades

Non-academic, Senior

O. Admin, Senior
Q. Technical, Senior

Non-academic, Junior

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

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