

RESEARCH GRANTS COUNCIL**GENERAL RESEARCH FUND
EMPLOYMENT OF RELIEF TEACHERS
UNDER THE HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES PANEL****Supplementary Notes for Applicants****Objective**

This funding scheme is aimed at addressing the special needs of humanities and social sciences projects which may require relief support in terms of freeing up the Principal Investigators' time for research and writing.

Justification for Application

2. Under this scheme for the relief support, universities will be required to confirm their full support for the PIs of disciplines under the Humanities and Social Sciences Panel to seek teaching relief for a duration proposed by the PI and their agreement to release the PIs upon the RGC's approval. However, if the PIs also wish to employ research assistants in addition to relief support, they need to provide relevant justification in the proposals.

Assessment Criteria

3. The evaluation criteria for the relevant General Research Fund (GRF) research proposal application will be subject to the same criteria as other GRF applications, with academic merit being the primary consideration.

Eligibility

4. The same eligibility requirements of GRF apply to this funding scheme.

5. Under the existing policy, each applicant can hold at most one UGC/RGC grant with an element of relief teacher (save for Humanities and Social Sciences Prestigious Fellowship Scheme (HSSPFS)). To this end, holders of grant for employment of relief teacher under UGC/RGC funding schemes are considered eligible to apply for grant for relief teachers under this scheme by the deadline in November if and only if he / she will submit the completion report of his / her existing project (except HSSPFS) on or before 15 April in the following year. The concerned university is requested to confirm the applicant's declaration and where appropriate, undertake to follow up with the applicant on the withdrawal of such budget item in the application in writing to the Secretariat by 15 April in the following year.

Type of Research Activities

6. During the time-off, PIs may conduct research and writing. They should work full-time on the proposed research and should not accept any teaching assignment (invited seminars and public lectures excluded) or undertake other major duties. The research may be performed in or out of Hong Kong as justified by the nature and scope of the research (e.g. location of archives or subject populations).

Duration of Employment of Relief Teachers

7. Under the proposed funding scheme, the duration of employment of relief teachers should normally range from six to a maximum of twelve months for a typical 24 to 36-month project. Upon receipt of this grant, the PI should ensure that teaching duties are covered by a relief teacher during the time-off approved by the universities. Failing that, the RGC will withdraw the award.

Rate of Salary for Relief Teachers

8. It is not necessary to find a relief teacher with equivalent salary, status and experience as the PI concerned. The relief teacher is also not supposed to take up non-teaching related duties, such as administrative work, of the PI. In this connection, academic staff in the rank of Staff Grade 'G' (i.e. 'Lecturer') as defined in the Common Data Collection Form of the UGC or equivalent should be competent enough to carry out teaching-related duties for degree courses. As the salary rates for 'Lecturer' vary among the eight universities, the universities are requested to confirm that the salaries for the relief teachers proposed by the PIs do not exceed the salary of Staff Grade 'G'. If the applicant or the university intends to employ a relief teacher with salary higher than that for 'Lecturer', strong and detailed justification must be provided for consideration by the RGC. Nevertheless, universities could recruit visiting faculty members to take up the teaching duties and top-up the higher salary using their own funds.

UGC Secretariat
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