

University Grants Committee

Guidance Notes on Funding Scheme for Teaching and Learning Related Proposals in the 2016-19 Triennium

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Introduction

This guidance notes will apply to all projects supported by the Funding Scheme for Teaching and Learning Related Proposals (Funding Scheme) in the 2016-19 triennium. The objective of the Funding Scheme is to incentivise universities in exploring and developing further in the sector-wide strategic areas of teaching and learning, language enhancement and internationalisation.

2. The indicative funding allocation to each strategic theme and funding caps are as follows –

Strategic theme	Total allocation (HK\$ million)	Funding cap per project¹ (HK\$ million)
(a) Innovation	70	1 university: 2.5 2-3 universities: 10 ≥ 4 universities: 15
(b) Enhancement of student learning experience	70	1 university: 2.5 2-3 universities: 10 ≥ 4 universities: 15
(c) Enhancement of internationalisation and engagement with Mainland China	25	1 university: 1 2-3 universities: 4 ≥ 4 universities: 7
(d) Language enhancement	35	1 university: 1.5 2-3 universities: 5 ≥ 4 universities: 8
Total:	200	-

The allocation for each strategic theme set out in the table above is indicative to facilitate planning by both the University Grants Committee (UGC) and universities. Subject to the response to the Funding Scheme and the results of the assessment, the allocation for individual themes

1 Only UGC-funded universities will be counted for the purpose of determining the funding caps.

may be adjusted to maximise utilisation of the funding provision.

3. Universities should carefully study the following guidelines before submitting project proposals.

Guidelines

A. Themes

- A1. Universities are invited to submit funding proposals on one or more of the following themes -
- (a) **Innovation** – in terms of adoption and development of new pedagogies, comprehensive implementation of e-learning strategy, fostering the culture of innovation and creativity in curriculum and other institutional activities;
 - (b) **Enhancement of student learning experience** – including curriculum review given the first cohort’s completion of the four-year programme under the “3+3+4” academic structure; and such as curriculum development to take into account present-day needs, fostering the culture of entrepreneurship in curriculum and institutional activities;
 - (c) **Enhancement of internationalisation and engagement with Mainland China** – such as development of curriculum that inculcates a global perspective, initiatives/strategy that enhances student integration, further internationalisation efforts, incorporation into and development of curriculum to introduce to students content that are relevant to students living in a globalised environment; and
 - (d) **Language enhancement** – experiment with and test innovative ideas on language enhancement collaboratively.
- A2. The examples provided under each theme are not exhaustive. Universities may submit any proposals that they deem relevant to the themes. While a proposal may cover aspects related to more than one of the themes, the university(ies) should decide the theme under which the proposal should be submitted after

taking into account the focus area(s) of the proposal.

B. Funding proposals

- B1. Universities should complete the proforma at Appendix A for each funding proposal.
- B2. Funding under the Funding Scheme should be used to support the activities and students of the UGC-funded programmes. Nevertheless, we welcome universities to share the outcomes of their proposals with the higher education sector in general. If universities' proposals involve partnership with non-UGC-funded institutions, non-local institutions or non-profit-making organisations, universities should provide justifications for such proposals and specify the relevant funding arrangements involved. Universities' proposals should not involve partnership with profit-making organisations. In any case, no funding from UGC under the Funding Scheme will be provided to institutions or organisations outside the UGC sector.
- B3. Proposals involving scholarship of teaching and learning to facilitate the achievement of project objectives will be considered under this Funding Scheme. However, universities should approach other available funding avenues (e.g. channels of Research Grants Council) for proposals purely on educational research.
- B4. Project duration should not exceed three years. The start date of the project has to be within the 2016-19 triennium, while the end date could be beyond the 2016-19 triennium.
- B5. All proposals should be endorsed and signed off by the Vice-President (Teaching and Learning) / Vice-President (Global Affairs) or holders of equivalent offices of the (lead) university.
- B6. Funding proposals should be prepared using the "Times New Roman" font (size 12). Each proposal should be no more than 15 pages (excluding attachments). Universities should provide an electronic copy of the proposals and the attachments.

C. Selection criteria

- C1. The proposals will be selected for funding based on the following criteria -
- (a) **Relevance:** to what extent the proposed project encourages the adoption of necessary pedagogical changes and innovations, enhances student learning experience, enhances internationalisation and/or engagement with Mainland China or enhances students' language abilities;
 - (b) **Design:** to what extent the project is designed with clear project objectives, specific activities and intended learning outcomes, and includes feasible budgets and timelines;
 - (c) **Collaboration:** whether the proposed project in itself involves inter-institutional collaboration and/or to what extent it contributes to more effective inter-institutional collaboration in terms of its impact;
 - (d) **Influence:** whether there is an outreach strategy to share outcomes of the proposed project in UGC/higher education sector, and how well the strategy is formulated;
 - (e) **Sustainability and capacity building:** whether there is any plan to sustain and scale up the initiative in the future and how well the proposed plan is formulated; and
 - (f) **Monitoring and evaluation:** whether a suitable mechanism has been put in place and how well it operates to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness and outcome of the proposed project.

D. Contributions to funding

- D1. For proposals supported under the Funding Scheme, UGC will fund 70% of the project costs whereas the participating university(ies) will contribute the remaining 30% of the funding required. University(ies)' contribution must be monetary. No "in-kind" or "on-costs" matching would be accepted. No

funding is or will be provided by UGC for recurrent consequences, if any.

- D2. Universities should ensure that no more than a single source of funding from the Government or other public funding bodies will be sought/has been sought for the same project/substantially similar projects. Universities should declare if the proposal submitted under the scheme is similar or related to any on-going and completed projects, or proposals pending funding approval. It is for UGC to make the final judgment on whether the proposals/projects are similar. Therefore, it is always advisable for universities to declare similar or related proposals when there is uncertainty.
- D3. Regarding the matching funds from universities, there should be no “double matching” or “double subsidies”, i.e. public funds and funds from the government (e.g. block grants, earmarked grants from UGC, reserves from UGC funding, grants from other government bureau/departments), and donations already matched with public funds under other matching schemes should not be regarded as the matching funds from universities.
- D4. For collaborative projects, the project fund will be disbursed to the lead university. Universities should decide on their respective shares of institutional contributions. UGC does not set out any rules/regulations on the sequence of using UGC funding and the universities’ matching fund. However, project teams should set out the amount of UGC funding and institutional funding used in the financial statement.

E. Budget

- E1. The budget proposal should be prudent and realistic. Justification should be provided for every expenditure item in the proposal. Request for additional funding after funding approval is granted will not be accepted and any unused funding from UGC should be returned to UGC when the final report is

submitted (see paragraph M1 below).

- E2. The budget proposal 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 the project under the Funding Scheme, cost of utilities, stationery, etc. They should include only expenditure which would not otherwise be separately incurred, such as the salaries of Project Assistants specifically employed for the project.
- E3. The funding is allocated on a specific project basis and virement between projects is not allowed. Virement between the approved budget items within the same project, including revision to the allocation among participating universities and adjustments to the costs of expenditure items listed in the proposals, subject to agreement among the universities involved (if applicable), does not require UGC’s prior approval.
- E4. Addition of new expenditure items to a funded project is not normally accepted. Under very exceptional circumstances which could be justified, the lead university may seek UGC’s approval for adding new expenditure items or revising the approved expenditure items, e.g. to employ a Technical Assistant or to contract out the relevant service instead of employing a Project Assistant as stated in the proposal and approved by UGC.

F. Employment of staff

- F1. All Project Leaders and Co-Leaders cannot be regarded as project staff and must not be remunerated with salaries. Staff remunerated by any UGC-funded universities in Hong Kong must not be paid with honorarium or other forms of payments under the Funding Scheme.
- F2. In any case where an individual staff (such as a Project Assistant) is employed for several projects under this Funding Scheme or projects supported by other funds of UGC or the Government,

his/her salary should be apportioned accordingly. When estimating the staff cost, the lead university should take account of the salaries adopted by different collaborating universities for employing the project staff at the same rank (e.g. Project Assistant, Technical Assistant).

F.3 Project teams could include funding for employment of relief teachers for Project Leaders/Co-Leaders in their budget proposals. Project teams should state in their proposals the rank (with reference to the Common Data Collection Format) of the relief teacher, the number of months and costs involved. Allowing the engagement of relief teachers solely aims to relieve the Project Leaders/Co-Leaders of their day-to-day teaching loads and administrative burden related to teaching work. The relief teacher is not supposed to take up non-teaching related works, such as purely administrative work, of the Project Leader/Co-Leader. In this connection, universities are requested to confirm the salaries for the relief teachers proposed by the Project Leaders/ Co-Leaders do not exceed the salary of Staff Grade “G” (i.e. Lecturer (U)) of the universities concerned. Project teams should state clearly in proposals the total numbers of classroom hours per academic year of the Project Leaders/Co-Leaders with universities’ confirmation or proof provided if they wish to engage relief teachers.

F.4 Staff of the non-UGC-funded institutions or organisations participating in the projects are not eligible for remuneration or engagement of relief teachers using funding under the Funding Scheme.

G. Eligibility of Project Leaders

G1. The Project Leaders of projects under the Funding Scheme must be a full-time² academic/teaching staff member or a non-academic staff whose duties involve aspects of teaching and

2 Part-time staff and staff holding honorary appointments are excluded.

learning, internationalisation or language enhancement of the UGC-funded programmes in the university proper³ of the UGC-funded universities.

- G2. Visiting staff will only be eligible as the Project Leader if they have a full-time appointment in the university proper covering the whole project period, and their duties involve aspects of teaching and learning, internationalisation or language enhancement of UGC-funded universities.

H. Minor works and purchase of equipment

- H1. To facilitate universities to utilise new developments in pedagogy, universities may submit proposals involving (1) minor works projects for adaptations made to learning environments; and/or (2) purchase of equipment with the cost of purchase of equipment not exceeding 30% of the total project cost so that it can be covered by the matching funds from the university(ies).

I. Conferences/seminars/forums

- I1. Guidelines in this section (I2 to I4) apply only to events to be held in Hong Kong. For events to be held outside Hong Kong, please refer to the guidelines at **Annex**.
- I2. Organisation of conferences, seminars or forums may be included in the funding proposals. As a general principal, the events should be non-profit making. The UGC funding could be used to support the following items –
- (a) actual costs of air passages (return passages by the most direct route in Economy Class), in-town travelling expenses related to the events, hotel accommodation and subsistence allowance for speakers based outside Hong

³ Schools/arms of continuing education and professional training and other analogous outfits are excluded.

Kong. Any top-up of air passages should be covered by matching funds from the universities if considered necessary;

(b) hotel accommodation (tax and service charge inclusive) and subsistence allowance at a total rate of up to \$1,800 per night of stay in Hong Kong for speakers based outside Hong Kong. The period of provision of hotel accommodation and subsistence allowance will depend on the number of nights of stay actually required, subject to a ceiling of not more than seven nights for each speaker invited. Should the Project Leader consider it absolutely necessary for the speaker based outside Hong Kong to stay longer than seven nights, prior approval from UGC should be sought;

(c) honorarium for speakers (local and non-local) as stated in the proposal, considered on a case-by-case basis and approved by UGC;

(d) direct organising costs of the events, e.g. direct staff costs, rental of meeting venues, production of conference/seminar/forum materials, purchase/rental of equipment (purchase of equipment should be covered by the matching funds from universities, see paragraph H1 above); and

(e) up to 5% of the amount allocated to each event can be used for purchasing prizes or souvenirs for the participants of the event, but this portion should be covered by the matching funds from the universities.

I3. UGC funding must not cover insurance and meals/refreshments for participants of the events. Such expenses should be covered by the matching funds from the universities, and in any event, should not exceed 30% of the total project cost.

I4. Therefore, the total sum for (1) purchasing equipment; (2) topping up air passage for speakers based outside Hong Kong; (3) purchasing prizes or souvenirs for participants of an event; and (4) insurance and meals/refreshments for participants of the

events should not exceed 30% of the total project cost (see paragraphs H1, I2(a), I2(e) and I3 above).

J. Copyright

- J1. All project deliverables and outputs, including but not limited to publications and audio/visual materials, shall not infringe copyright or intellectual property rights and shall not be produced for sale.

K. Acknowledgement

- K1. While UGC does not claim copyright or other intellectual property right of the output produced in projects under the Funding Scheme, a suitable acknowledgment of the UGC funding should be included in any facilities purchased and any publication/publicity arising from the work done on the project funded.

L. Approval for amendments to project proposal

- L1. The objective, scope and duration of each funded project should be as stated in the relevant proposal. Universities have the responsibility to ensure that the funding is used appropriately and reasonably within the approved scope and timeframe. All major changes to the approved projects, including but not limited to the following, require UGC's prior approval –
- (a) revision of project scope or deliverables;
 - (b) change of the lead university or collaborating university(ies);
 - (c) change of the Project Leader;
 - (d) change of project duration or project completion date beyond six months (please see paragraph L2 – L4 below); and
 - (e) termination of projects.

- L2. For (1) one-time extension of the project period of six months or less; or (2) one-time advancement / postponement of the project start and end date by six months or less without changing the project period, the authority is with the lead university. The Project Leader should apply to the lead university direct. From prudent project management angle, universities are expected to exercise their judgement to ensure that only fully justifiable cases are approved, particularly during the first half of the project life in the case of project extension. Specifically, universities should ensure that as a result of the extension of the project period, or advancement or postponement of the project start and end dates: (i) no additional funding will be required from UGC; (ii) there will be no impact on the project deliverables, and (iii) the proposed activities in the extend project period, regardless of whether they have been originally included in the proposal, are within the scope of the project deliverables. The lead university is required to notify UGC the extension of the project period or the advancement or postponement of the project start and end dates and provide justifications of the approval within one month of the approval issued. UGC reserves the right to void the approval if it considers the case unjustified.
- L3. For one-time extension of the project period of more than six months, or one-time advancement or postponement of the project start and end dates of more than six months, UGC's approval is required. The project team is required to submit an up-to-date progress report and a recommendation from the lead university together with their requests. As at the date of application for extension, if the project team has submitted progress reports ending within the previous three months, the requirement for an up-to-date progress report would be waived. The lead university should exercise its judgement and recommend only the justifiable cases to UGC for consideration. In any case, UGC will not approve extension of the project period or advancement or postponement of the project start and end dates for more than 12 months except under extraordinary circumstances.

- L4. Requests for further extension of the project period, or further advancement or postponement of the project start and / or end dates (i.e. after approvals have been given with reference to paragraph L2 or L3 above) will not be considered except under extraordinary circumstances.

M. Reporting arrangements

- M1. For monitoring purpose, the project teams are required to submit annual progress reports two months after the completion of the 12-month and if applicable, completion of the 24-month period of the project. Final reports should be submitted four months after the completion of project to UGC. Timely submission of these reports is important and reflects on the diligence and ability of the Project Leader in managing a project. Templates for the annual progress report, final report and financial statement are at Appendices B – D.
- M2. In the final reports, it is important that the project teams report on the outcomes of the approved projects and demonstrate with evidence (with provision of relevant performance indicators) the effectiveness of the projects in achieving its objectives. The project teams should also report on how the various universities taking part in the project have cooperated and how the projects contribute to more effective inter-institutional collaboration, if applicable. The project teams should also set out how the outcomes of the projects have been / can be shared in the UGC / higher education sector.
- M3. Recognising the achievements of the project teams in implementing the initiatives, information on the project will be posted on the UGC homepage. This will also facilitate the sharing of outcomes in the UGC / higher education sector. The Project Leaders are therefore required to include a layman summary of the project outcomes in the final reports (see paragraph M1 above).

- M4. The project teams are invited to provide critical evidence-based assessments to enable UGC to appropriately assess the effectiveness of the Funding Scheme as a whole and the way forward.

N. Responsibility

- N1. UGC shall have no responsibility, financial or otherwise, for expenditure or other liabilities arising from the project it supports, beyond the funding allocated for those projects.

UGC Secretariat
July 2016

Guidelines for events to be held outside Hong Kong

1. Organisation of events (e.g. conferences, seminars, forums, tours, etc) outside Hong Kong may only be included in the funding proposals under the theme “*Enhancement of internationalisation and engagement with Mainland China*” (see paragraph A1(c) of Guidance Notes). The guidelines in this Annex shall apply to these events.
2. Activities/events already funded by the UGC or the Government under other schemes or through other sources of funding will not be considered for funding under this scheme. Example of these events include participation in international education conferences separately funded by the UGC and exchange activities for financially needy students supported by the Education Bureau.
3. Universities have the responsibility to ensure that the funding is used appropriately and reasonably. As a general principal, the events should be non-profit making. If universities’ proposals involve partnership with non-local institutions, universities should specify the relevant funding arrangements involved. The expenses outside Hong Kong should be covered by the matching funds from the universities, and in any event, should not exceed 30% of the total project cost. The expenses may cover the following items –
 - (a) actual costs of air passages (return passages by the most direct route in Economy Class), in-town travelling expenses related to the events, hotel accommodation and subsistence allowance for speakers. Any top-up of air passages, if universities considered absolutely necessary, should be stated in the proposal. For such expenses incurred by universities’ staff, they should be administered in accordance with the universities’ internally established mechanism and guidelines on duty visits;
 - (b) hotel accommodation (tax and service charge inclusive) and subsistence allowance at a rate in accordance with universities’ internally established mechanism and guidelines. The period of provision of hotel accommodation and subsistence allowance

will depend on the number of nights of stay actually required, subject to a ceiling of not more than seven nights for each speaker invited. Should the Project Leader consider it absolutely necessary for the speaker to stay longer than seven nights, it should be stated in the proposal.

- (c) honorarium for speakers (local and non-local) should be stated in the proposals;
- (d) direct organising costs of the events, e.g. direct staff costs, rental of meeting venues, production of conference/seminar/forum materials, purchase/rental of equipment;
- (e) up to 5% of the amount allocated to each event can be used for purchasing prizes or souvenirs for the participants of the event,; and
- (f) insurance and meals/refreshments for participants of the events.

**Funding Scheme for Teaching and Learning Related Proposals
(2016-19 Triennium)**

Proposal

(Please read the Guidance Notes on Funding Scheme for Teaching and Learning Related Proposals in the 2016-19 Triennium before filling in this form.)

Project Title	
Strategic Theme <i>(please tick one of the appropriate boxes)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Innovation <input type="checkbox"/> Enhancement of student learning experience <input type="checkbox"/> Enhancement of internationalisation and engagement with Mainland China <u>or</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Language enhancement
Lead University	
Collaborating University(ies), if any	

A. Particulars of Project Leader

Name	
Post Title	
Faculty/Department	
Telephone	
Email	

B. Particulars of Co-Leader(s), if any

	Name	University	Post Title
1.			
2.			
3.			

C. Contact Person of the Project¹

Name	
Post Title	
Telephone	
Email	

D. Objectives of the proposal

E. Work plan / activities

F. Expected outcome with quantitative indicators

G. Partner(s) (where applicable, such as non-UGC funded institutions)

H. Budget showing total project cost and breakdown as well as funding sources (including funding from each university or other sources, if applicable)

¹ The contact person could be the Project Leader or a staff of a teaching and learning centre / administration office who will act as a liaison between the UGC Secretariat and the project team.

I. Implementation timetable

J. Monitoring and evaluation mechanism

K. Declaration on similar proposals funded by the Government or other public funding bodies (if applicable)

L. A layman summary of the proposal (maximum 400 words), comprehensible to a non-specialist

M. Other relevant information

**Funding Scheme for Teaching and Learning Related Proposals
(2016-19 Triennium)**

Annual Progress Report

Report for the period ending _____

Part A: The Project

1. Project Title

2. Project Team

Name	Post	Unit/Department/University
<i>Project Leader</i>		
<i>Co-Leaders</i>		

3. Project Duration

	Original	Revised	Date of UGC Approval (must be quoted)
Project Start Date			
Project Completion Date			
Duration (in month)			

Part B: Report on Project Progress

4. Project Objectives

4.1 Objectives as per original application

- (1)
- (2)
- (3)

4.2 Revised objectives, if applicable (and details of approval from the UGC)

4.3 Activities in relation to the project objectives that were carried out up to the last Annual Progress Report (including the types and brief descriptions of the activities, number of participants and feedback from participants)

- (1)
- (2)
- (3)

4.4 Ways of collaboration among universities

4.5 Implementation timetable of the project, if different from the original timetable

4.6 Other relevant information as considered appropriate

Project Leader

Signature:

Name:

Date:

**Funding Scheme for Teaching and Learning Related Proposals
(2016-19 Triennium)**

Final Report

Part A: The Project

1. Project Title

2. Project Team

Name	Post	Unit/Department/University
<i>Project Leader</i>		
<i>Co-Leaders</i>		

3. Project Duration

	Original	Revised	Date of UGC Approval (must be quoted)
Project Start Date			
Project Completion Date			
Duration (<i>in month</i>)			

Part B: Report on Project Progress

4. Project Objectives

4.1 Objectives as per original application

(1)

(2)

(3)

4.2 Revised objectives, if applicable (and details of approval from the UGC)

4.3 Activities in relation to the project objectives that were carried out up to the last Annual Progress Report (including the types and brief descriptions of the activities, number of participants and feedback from participants)

(1)

(2)

(3)

4.4 Evaluation of effectiveness of the project against clear indicators in realisation of the objectives

4.5 Ways of collaboration among universities

4.6 Contribution of the project to inter-institutional collaboration

4.7 Measures taken/can be taken to share the project outcomes in the UGC/higher education sector

4.8 Plans to sustain the initiative in future

4.9 Other relevant information as considered appropriate

Part C: Summary of the Project

Please provide a layman summary of the project (including the project objectives, project activities, project outcomes and project impact on the UGC/higher education sector) -

[no more than 400 words, in English, Traditional Chinese and Simplified Chinese]

Project Leader

Signature: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

**Funding Scheme for Teaching and Learning Related Proposals
(2016-19 Triennium)**

Financial Statement

Project Title:
Lead University:
Collaborating University(ies):

<u>Funding</u>	<u>HK(\$)</u>	<u>HK(\$)</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
(a) UGC	XXX,XXX		(i)
(b) University(ies)			
University A	XXX,XXX		(ii)
University B	<u>XXX,XXX</u>		(iii)
etc.			
Total Funding		<u>XXX,XXX</u>	(iv) = (i)+(ii)+(iii)
<u>Less Expenditure Funded by UGC</u>			
(a) Expenditure item A	(XXX,XXX)		(v)
(b) Expenditure item B	<u>(XXX,XXX)</u>		(vi)
etc.			
UGC funding used		(XXX,XXX)	(vii) = (v) + (vi); (vii) ≤ (xi) x 70%
<u>Less Expenditure Funded by Universities</u>			
(c) Expenditure item C	(XXX,XXX)		(viii)
(d) Expenditure item D	<u>(XXX,XXX)</u>		(ix)
etc.			
Institutional funding used		(XXX,XXX)	(x) = (viii) + (ix); (x) ≥ (xi) x 30%
Total Expenditure		<u>(XXX,XXX)</u>	(xi) = (vii) + (x)
<u>Unspent Balance</u>		<u>XXX,XXX</u>	(xii) = (iv) – (xi)
<u>Unspent balance to be returned to UGC</u>			
		<u>XXX,XXX</u>	(xiii) = (i) – (vii)