

**RESEARCH GRANTS COUNCIL (RGC)**

**Group Research and Renewal Funding of  
Collaborative Research Fund (CRF) 2012/13**

**Explanatory Notes (CRF(GR&R)2) for completing  
the Application Form CRF(GR&R)1**

You must read this Explanatory Notes carefully before completing and submitting your research proposal. The RGC may stop processing your application if it does not comply with any of the requirements as set out in the Explanatory Notes.

**GENERAL**

- (a) These notes intended to be read by applicant(s) / related staff of institution(s) before completion and submission of a CRF application for group research and renewal funding. Please note that the item numbers in these notes correspond to those in the application form.
- (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 approval.
- (c) For applications which have genuine special needs to be completed in a language other than English, applicants(s) / institution(s) are required to provide an English version on the Abstract and Research Details (i.e. 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 documents, in the following standard RGC format.

Font: Times New Roman  
Font Size: 12 point  
Margin: 1-inch all round  
Spacing: Single-line spacing

Failure to comply with the application format and / or the allowable page may 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) Each application should be submitted in **four hard copies and 1 soft copy**, including the one-page summary to the UGC Secretariat through the Research Offices of respective institutions **by 5:00 p.m. on 9 July 2012**. For shortlisted applications, additional hard copies of the proposals (number to be advised on announcement of shortlisting result) should be submitted to the UGC Secretariat through respective Research Offices on or before **21 November 2012**.
- (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) It is the obligation of the Project Coordinators (PCs) 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 an application.
- (i) Starting from 2012/2013, there will be new arrangement for calculating and disbursing the on-costs related to research projects funded by the RGC. The full amount 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. PCs are not required to include the calculation of on-costs on the application forms. They have to include the project costs only.

### **INFORMATION UPDATE**

- (j) A brief update of the proposal, if any, should be submitted to the UGC Secretariat on or before **8 October 2012**, indicating any significant changes, e.g. changes in the eligibility of the PC and changes in investigator(s), modification of the budget proposals, personnel, alternative funding obtained, updated positions on the declarations of similar / related proposals, investigator(s)'s CVs, grant record and relationship with

nominated reviewers, *etc.* It should be emphasized that such update should normally be confined to the above-said changes, and applicants should not use the opportunity to revise their research proposals. The information update should be appended to the shortlisted proposals when additional hard copies are submitted to the Secretariat on or before **21 November 2012**.

- (k) 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 October 2012**. 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.

### **ENQUIRIES**

- (l) Enquiries about the contents of these Explanatory Notes and other related matters about the CRF Group Research Grant should be directed to the Research Offices of the Institutions which, if in doubt, should consult the UGC Secretariat for clarification. Also, correspondence regarding the CRF Group Research Grant matters including enquiries, appeals and complaints should be made through the Research Offices of the Institutions.
- (m) The guidelines on handling the information and personal data contained in the CRF's group research / renewal applications are at Annex B. 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.

## **PART I SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH PROPOSAL**

[To be completed by the applicant(s)]

### 1. Particulars of the Project

- (a)(ii) To encourage new appointees in the academia to apply under the CRF exercise, applicants are requested to declare under this section if they are within two years of full-time paid appointment to their first substantive position equivalent to staff grades “A” (Professor) to “I” (Assistant Lecturer) as defined in the CDCF in any university (local or overseas) at the time of the submission deadline of this funding exercise, and their proposals should be printed in green-colour paper for easy identification.
- (a)(iii) The project title should be informative, but short and concise.
- (a)(iv) The applicant(s) must indicate the nature of the application being submitted. “New” refers to the research topic which the PC and/or Co-I(s) applies / apply for RGC funds for the first time. “Re-submission” refers to the research topic which the PC and/or Co-I(s) have previously applied for UGC / RGC funds but not supported. “On-going” refers to the application extending work previously funded by the UGC / RGC.
- (b)(i) For all proposals, the primary and secondary field area / code should be stated clearly. Please refer to the list of field areas and codes in the Explanatory Notes used by the General Research Fund (GRF) exercise of the Research Grants Council (RGC) (GRF2), which is available at the RGC website: <http://www.ugc.edu.hk/eng/doc/form/GRF2.pdf>. The field area / code should be selected from among the list of areas / codes as prescribed under the subject area relevant to the proposal. For example, if a proposal’s primary area / code is “Water (2106)”, it should come under the subject area of “Civil Engineering, Surveying, Building & Construction (E1)”. A maximum of two fields are accepted. To indicate the interdisciplinary nature of a proposal, a PC can select the secondary field area / code from a subject area which is different from that of the primary field area / code.
- (b)(ii) Please give a maximum of five keywords to characterize the work of the proposal.
- (b)(iii) Group research grant projects to be funded from the CRF should normally last for no more than **three** years.
- (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. Sections 1-3(a) together, excluding references, should not exceed 13 A-4 pages in standard RGC format.

#### **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 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**

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. Outline what motivates you to undertake the proposed research, previous and alternative approaches to the problem and their deficiencies, key references to relevant research by you and others. For on-going / continuing 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.

#### **3. Project description**

- (a) Research Plan and Methodology – 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.

- (b) All references should be provided in full and include all authors. Please note that the page limit of Sections 1–3(a) does not include references.

## 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.

### Permissible items

A detailed budget for the project throughout the project period should be given. Applications for longer-term grant (i.e. more than three years) may include a budget for the 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> year as appropriate. PC 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.

### Outsourcing of Research Work

In principle, research grants awarded by the RGC should primarily be used in undertaking research work in Hong Kong by the PCs and their teams in order to train and groom research talents in Hong Kong. It would be legitimate for the PCs to subcontract out a small part of the research work (regardless of geographic locations) only if specified conditions are fulfilled. For subcontracting services or research work to be conducted outside Hong Kong, the PCs have to submit a separate request to RGC for approval. The RGC would deal with the matter on a case-by-case basis, having regard to the merits and justification given by the PCs and whether the specified

conditions have been fulfilled. The detailed guidelines on outsourcing of research work will be provided in the “Disbursement, Accounting and Monitoring Arrangements for Funding Schemes Administered by the Research Grants Council”.

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

#### 4. Cost and justification

(a)(i) & Staff

(b)(i) Please state the number, rank, duration and cost of staff involved, with justifications for the proposed rank and duration. The RGC normally supports research support staff at the RA level, Post-doctoral Fellows or Research Postgraduate Students. If a higher grade of supporting staff and / or other personnel is required, detailed justification should be provided. The rates for RA and Senior RA (SRA) in the academic year 2011/12 are HK\$197,000 per annum and HK\$315,000 per annum respectively. The rates are only meant for reference. The rates will be reviewed in May every year. The RAs / SRAs will be funded at the indicative rates or the rates proposed by the PCs concerned, whichever is lower. In the case of applications for funding for Post-doctoral Fellows, the CV of the post-doc in one A-4 page should also be attached if available.

(a)(ii) & Equipment

(b)(ii) Please itemize all equipment expenses. While RGC may fully or partially fund the approved projects, institutions are expected to provide necessary infrastructural and overheads supports such as normal academic equipment, consumables, postage, fax, stationery and overseas telephone charges to funded projects. RGC fund must not be used to purchase personal electronic devices such as cell phones, iPods, MP3 Players, digital cameras, PDAs and iPADS 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:

- Why is the equipment / system essential to the project?
- Has the department / institution already provided such equipment?

- Is there similar equipment elsewhere in other institutions and what is the possibility of sharing?
- Cost of equipment / system - give information supporting the estimates e.g. quotes from suppliers. Items costing over HK\$200,000 and without supporting quotations will NOT be considered.

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 HK\$2.5 million, the following supplementary information is required:

- Has the institution already been provided with similar equipment? If yes, please explain the need for the purchase.
- Is there similar equipment elsewhere in other institutions? If yes, please provide the following information regarding such in other institution 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 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)& General Expenses

(b)(iii) Please itemize all general expenses. Research-related Software Licence / Dataset should be procured under general expenses. For requests for purchase / subscription of database(s), price quotations should be provided

as far as possible. Requests without quotations may not be considered. The Institution should not use the RGC Funds to purchase standard software licences / dataset. For services / purchase over HK\$200,000, price quotations 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.

(a)(iv) Conference Expenses

The RGC encourages researchers to present their work internationally and to exchange information with others in their particular research areas. A provision of up to HK\$12,000 per year, irrespective of the number of investigators involved in the project, is normally allowed for each funded project.

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

5. Existing facilities and major equipment available for this research project

Please elaborate the existing facilities and equipment available for this research project.

6. Funds secured or to be secured

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 4(a) of Part II.

DECLARATION OF SIMILAR OR RELATED PROPOSALS

7. Re-submission of a proposal not supported previously

(a) In case the proposal is a re-submission or is largely similar to a proposal that has been submitted to the UGC / RGC / other funding agencies, please revisit the main concerns / suggestions previously expressed by external reviewers if an earlier / similar version of the proposal has been assessed before.

(b) & (c) These sections allow the applicant to respond to those comments, and explain whether and if so 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 Collaborative Research Fund Sub-Committee (CRFSC) will take into account the PCs' responses to the reviewers' comments, the CRFSC is not obliged to invite the same group of external reviewers.

#### 8. Submission of a new proposal or proposal similar or related to on-going and completed projects; and projects pending funding approval

It is the responsibility of applicants (both PC and Co-I) to ensure that no duplicate funding from all sources will be sought for the same / substantially similar research project. Failure to declare similar or related proposals in this section may result in disqualification of the application and debarring from applying future UGC/RGC grants. In Section 8(a), PCs / Co-Is are required to explain the differences of all their applications submitted in this exercise in the capacity of PCs or Co-Is if their applications are similar or related. In Sections 8(b) to (d), PCs and Co-Is should declare if the proposal is similar or related to any on-going and completed projects, and projects pending funding approval.

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

### COLLABORATION PLAN

#### 9. Particulars of PC and Co-Is

- (a) Each application should be submitted with only one applicant nominated as the PC and no applicant should submit more than one application in this capacity. Other joint applicants, if any, will be regarded as Co-investigators (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 funding is awarded. A change of PC during the period of processing the application will not be approved.

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

- (i) having a full-time<sup>1</sup> appointment in the institution proper<sup>2</sup>;
- (ii) being in Staff Grades from “A” to “T”<sup>3</sup> as defined in the Common Data Collection Format (i.e. from “Professor” to “Assistant Lecturer”, see Annex A);
- (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<sup>4</sup> by the institution proper.

PCs falling in the following categories 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 9 July 2012 and that his / her appointment would take effect on or before 1 November 2012.
- (b) A staff member employed on a fixed term contract should be eligible at the time of funding award being made in December 2012 / January 2013 and throughout the whole project period; or
- (c) A visiting scholar should have a full-time employment at the institution proper covering the whole project period.

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

Notwithstanding these, cases of exceptional circumstances 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 PCs, PCs should use the standardized format of names as agreed with respective institutions when submitting all RGC grant applications:

	PC Surname	PC 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.

<sup>1</sup> Excluding part-time staff and staff holding honorary appointments.

<sup>2</sup> Excluding schools / arms of continuing education and professional training and other analogous outfits.

<sup>3</sup> Excluding polytechnic staff grades.

<sup>4</sup> Excluding staff member who is receiving income from paid appointments outside the institution proper or who is supported by external research grants.

- (b) This section should summarize the qualifications of the PC and each Co-I(s) who will be involved in the project. The CVs 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.*

Each CV should be limited to one A-4 pages in standard RGC format stated in (d) of “GENERAL” above (with a maximum of 400 words).

- (c) Please give details of the plan of collaboration. The role and specific task(s) of each individual (including the PC and Co-Is) in the proposed research should be described clearly. If the research involves collaboration with other research team(s) or institution(s), letters of collaboration are required to be attached to the application.

## GRANT RECORD OF PROJECT COORDINATOR / CO-INVESTIGATORS

### 10. Details of research projects

- (a) Please provide details on the on-going research projects funded from all sources which are undertaken by the PC (in both capacity as PC / PI and Co-I).
- (b) Please provide details on the on-going research projects funded from all sources which are undertaken by each Co-I (in only the capacity as PC / PI).

### 11. 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 UGC / RGC and non-UGC / RGC funded project undertaken by the PC and Co-I(s), in descending chronological order, which are relevant to the application.

## ANCILLARY INFORMATION

### 12. Research ethics / safety approval

It is the responsibility of the institution and the PC 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 PC. The PC'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. 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 October 2012**. Please also see the respective notes in Part III below.

If the institution / PC declared that no ethics / safety approval was required but the RGC /CRFSC has turned out to think otherwise, the related application runs the risk of being disqualified.

### 13. Proposed reviewers

The RGC encourages grant applicants to nominate external reviewers in their proposals for consideration by the CRFSC. Members of the CRFSC 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. In nominating reviewers, the applicants are required to declare in the application forms their full relationship with the nominated reviewers, for fairness and transparency. Any undeclared relationships that have existed between the PCs and Co-Is and the 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.

It is the collective responsibility of all applicants involved, i.e. PC and Co-I(s), in a grant application to complete Section 13 accurately and fully. The PCs must ensure that their nominations of external reviewers are made known to the Co-Is. Otherwise, the Co-Is will not be able to declare

relationship with the nominated reviewers as required, and thus may lead to disqualification of the applications.

If, for any reason of possible conflict of interest, an applicant 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 justifications. Such request should not be made under any section of the application form CRF(GR&R)1 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.

#### 14. Release of completion report and data archive possibilities

Please assess data archive potential and opportunities for data sharing. The extent to which additional weight is given to an application where the applicants are willing to make the research data available to others will be considered by the RGC.

For projects approved in 2010/11 exercise onwards, PCs 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 PC) to the public through the RGC website.

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

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

#### INSTITUTIONAL ENDORSEMENT

##### Staff eligibility requirement for CRF

The institution should confirm that it has evaluated and given support to the application before submission to the RGC. The institution is also required to verify that a PC fully meets the criteria for the Group Research Grant under CRF.

Before giving the various confirmations required, the institution should satisfy itself that the PC in all respects meets the requirements of the RGC and can complete the project, if funded. The institution is also required to report to the RGC immediately if a PC subsequently becomes ineligible for the grant and recommend to the RGC for approval a suitable new PC, if any, to take over / conclude the commenced project.

## INSTITUTIONAL COMMITMENTS

- (g) & (h) The institution is required to verify and confirm whether the CRF Group Research Grant 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 be also made clear that the primary duty of the PC 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.
- (i),(j)&(k) For items (i) to (k), please see the notes for Sections 4(c) and (d) in Part II.
- (l) To safeguard the interests of the researcher and the institution, institutions bear primary responsibility for prevention, detection 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 (l).

## 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 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 institutions to ascertain if they involve human subjects. If they do, the institution must give approval / exemption according to their internal ethics guidelines by **29 October 2012** as is the case with other ethics / safety approval. If the institution is unable to confirm by 29 October 2012 that the required approval has been obtained, the RGC will stop processing the application which will be regarded as to have been withdrawn.

If the institution / PC declared that no ethics / safety approval was required but the RGC / CRFSC has turned out to think otherwise, the related application runs the risk of being disqualified.

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

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UGC Secretariat  
March 2012

**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. Other, including “Mod 1”

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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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