

RESEARCH GRANTS COUNCIL

EARLY CAREER SCHEME (ECS) 2012/2013

Explanatory Notes (ECS 2) for completing the Application Form

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 are intended to be read by applicant(s)/related staff of institution(s) before completion and submission of an ECS application. Please note that item numbers under Parts I to III 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.
- (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 (Objectives and Long-term Impact, Background of Research and 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. Failure to comply with the following format may lead to disqualification of their applications.

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

- (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) When proposals are submitted through the ECS Electronic System, a project reference number will be automatically generated for each of the

proposals for identification purposes. The project reference number should be used and quoted in all future correspondence. While an application could be made to a particular panel, the RGC shall have the discretion to decide on the panel responsible for the final assessment of each application.

- (g) Applications should be submitted in multiple copies by two batches. A hard copy of each proposal needs to be forwarded to the UGC Secretariat as the first batch by 16 December 2011, and additional copies as the second batch together with the information updates should be forwarded to the UGC Secretariat by 4 May 2012. Institutions will be notified of the exact number of extra copies needed for the second batch in March 2012.
- (h) 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 or have abused the purpose of the “Supporting Documents” in Section 13 of Part II of the application form (apart from the Education Plan and Dissemination Plan, only Letter of Collaboration and supporting documents for the purpose of research ethics/safety approval are allowed to be attached). Applicants should not make use of Section 13 to supplement the contents of other sections.
- (i) It is the obligation of the PIs to ensure that their respective applications contain sufficient and consistent information for evaluation. Incomplete submission (such as those lacking substantial data / information for evaluation) or inconsistent/inaccurate information would lead to the disqualification of an application.
- (j) 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. Principal Investigators are not required to include the calculation of on-costs on the application forms. They have to include the project costs only.

INFORMATION UPDATE

- (k) A brief update of the proposal, if any, should be submitted through the ECS System to the UGC Secretariat on or before 30 April 2012, indicating any significant changes, e.g. changes in the eligibility of the PI, modification of the scope of the project and the budget proposals, personnel, alternative funding obtained, PI's 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 proposals substantially. The information update in hard copy should be appended to the second batch of proposals (number of copies required will be confirmed in March 2012) which should be submitted to the UGC Secretariat on or before 4 May 2012.
- (l) If an update is provided for ethics / safety approval for an application, the respective Research Office should submit the relevant updated data to the RGC on or before 30 April 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

- (m) Enquiries about the contents of these Explanatory Notes and other related matters about the ECS funding exercise should be directed to the Research Offices of the Institutions which, if in doubt, should consult the UGC Secretariat for clarification. Also, correspondence regarding ECS matters including enquiries, appeals and complaints should be made through the Research Offices of the Institutions.
- (n) The guidelines on handling the information and personal data contained in ECS 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.

PART I SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH PROPOSAL

[To be completed by the applicant(s)]

1. Particulars of the Project

- (a)(ii) Applicants are requested to declare under this section if they are within three years of their full time academic job as an Assistant Professor or career equivalent.

- (iii) The project title should be informative, but short and concise. For all proposals, the primary and secondary fields of research and codes should be stated clearly under the “Project Title”.
 - (iv) All applicant(s) must indicate the nature of the application being submitted. “New” refers to the research topic which the PI applies for RGC funds for the first time. “Re-submission” refers to the research topic which the PI has previously applied for RGC funds but not supported. “Continuation” refers to the application continuing the work previously funded by the RGC.
- (b)(i) The primary field area / code should be selected from among the list of field areas / codes as prescribed under the relevant subject area of the assessment panel to which the proposal is submitted. For example, if a proposal's primary field area / code is "Water (2106)", it should come under the subject area of “Civil Engineering, Surveying, Building & Construction (E1)” of the Engineering Panel. The schedules showing the field area descriptions and the corresponding codes are at Annex B(1) to B(5). A maximum of two fields are accepted. To facilitate the appointment of the right experts to evaluate the proposals, a PI should select a specific primary field area as far as possible. If a PI selects a non-specific primary field area, i.e. Others, for his/her proposal, he / she must select a specific secondary field area close to the field area of the proposal.
- To indicate the interdisciplinary nature of a proposal, a PI is allowed to select the secondary field area / code from an assessment panel which is different from that of the primary field area/code. Interdisciplinary proposals will be evaluated jointly by experts from different panels. The RGC reserves the authority to decide whether an application is interdisciplinary or not.
- (ii) Please give a maximum of five keywords to characterise the work of the proposal.
 - (iii) To encourage the applicants who are junior academics to conduct longer term projects, a maximum of 5-year project duration is allowed for applicants in their first year of full time academic job, a 4-year duration for applicants in their second year and a 3-year duration for applicants in their third year, if the proposed duration is deemed appropriate and necessary by the RGC.
- (c) A short abstract of a maximum of 400 words comprehensible to a non-specialist should be typed in the text box. This should be informative and indicative of the nature of the research to be conducted. One A-4 page of abstract in standard RGC format should be uploaded as pdf file only when there are special symbols which the system cannot support. If a proposal is funded, the “Abstract of Research” (Abstract) will be mounted 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.

- (d) Please refer to Enclosure I for employment of relief teachers under the Humanities and Social Sciences Panel.

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.

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. On proposals concerning Creative Arts, applicants should ensure that proposals submitted to the RGC should contain research elements which contribute to academic attainments. PIs should approach other funding authorities such as the Hong Kong Arts Development Council if their proposals have no research elements.
- (b) The objectives of the project must be presented in point form and reasons for undertaking the project.

Item 1 should be limited to 800 words.

2. Background of research, research plan and methodology

- (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. All Biology & Medicine proposals should include appropriate sample size and power estimates.

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

Threshold Limits for applications

The threshold limits for applications are \$150,000 for projects in the fields of Biology & Medicine, Engineering and Physical Sciences, and \$100,000 for projects in the fields of Business Studies and Humanities & Social Sciences.

Permissible items

A detailed budget for the project throughout the project period should be given. Academic staff remunerated by any UGC-funded institutions in Hong Kong must not be paid with honorarium or other form of payments. 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 specifically employed for this project; purchase of equipment necessary for the investigation but not available in the institution(s). In cases where a particular Research Assistant 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.

Part II Section 3 is for indicating the proposed budget for research work only; proposed budget for educational activities such as the training of undergraduate students should be given in the Education Plan at Part II Section 13.

Outsourcing of Research Work

In principle, research grants awarded by the RGC should primarily be used in undertaking research work in Hong Kong, and that any outsourcing amounting to the sub-contracting of research work should be strictly

prohibited. Nevertheless, it would be legitimate for the PIs to use the grant for data collection outside Hong Kong if this is a necessary and justified part of the research, and the RGC would consider such request on a case-by-case basis, having regard to the merits and justification provided by the PI.

3. Cost and justification

(a)(i) Staff

Please state the number, rank and cost of staff involved. The RGC normally supports research support staff at the Research Assistant (RA) level. The grant assumes an indicative rate which is currently at \$197,000 per annum for RA and \$315,000 per annum for senior RA (SRA). These indicative 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 PIs 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 be attached if available.

(ii) Relief Teacher

Please state the rank of the relief teacher, the months and costs involved. The RGC agrees in principle to provide, in cases where there is genuine need, funding for relief teachers so as to enable the PI to allocate sufficient time for research. Relief teachers engaged for this purpose are meant to relieve the PIs of their day-to-day teaching loads and administrative burden related to teaching work. Nevertheless, the RGC is of the view that it is the primary responsibility of the institutions to put their resources in areas where they would be best used. Hence, such funding will be provided only exceptionally and upon detailed and sound justification. 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 purely administrative work, of the PI. In this connection, the institutions are requested to confirm that the salaries for the relief teachers proposed by the PIs do not exceed the salary of Staff Grade 'G' (i.e. Lecturer (U)) of the institutions concerned. If the applicant or the institution intends to employ a relief teacher with salary higher than that for 'Lecturer (U)', strong and detailed justification must be provided for consideration by the RGC. If a relief teacher is required, the CV of the teacher in one A-4 page should be attached, if available, for consideration by the RGC.

For employment of relief teachers under the Humanities and Social Sciences Panel, please see the Explanatory Notes at Enclosure I.

(iii) Equipment

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. RGC fund must not be used to purchase personal electronic devices such as cell phones, iPod, MP3 Players, digital cameras and 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 :

- Is the equipment 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 - give information supporting the estimates e.g. quotes from suppliers. Items costing over HK\$200,000 and without supporting quotations will NOT be considered. Up to two A4 pages can be attached if necessary.

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 numbers 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.

(iv) General Expenses

Research-related Software Licence / Dataset should be procured under general expenses. For requests for purchase / subscription of database(s) under general expenses, 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.

(v) 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, is normally allowed for each funded project.

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

4. Existing facilities and major equipment

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

5. 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 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.

DECLARATION OF SIMILAR OR RELATED PROPOSALS

6. 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 or other funding bodies, 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) This section allows 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 subject panels will take into account the PIs' responses to the reviewers' comments, the panels are not obliged to invite the same group of external reviewers.

7. Submission of a new proposal or proposal similar or related to present, pending and completed projects

It is the responsibility of applicants to ensure that no duplicate funding from all sources will be sought for the same / substantially similar research project. Breach of this rule or failure to declare similar or related proposals in this section may result in disqualification of the application and debarment from applying future UGC / RGC grants. In 7(a) to (c), PIs should declare if the proposal is similar or related to any present, pending and completed projects. It is the RGC to decide whether two proposals / projects are similar. The judgment of the RGC is final. Therefore, it is always advisable for the PI to declare similar or related proposals when there is uncertainty. The PI is 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 is able to justify the differences of the proposals / projects for separate funding.

8. Particulars of PI

- (a) Each application should be submitted with only one applicant nominated as the Principal Investigator (PI) and no applicant should submit more than one application in this capacity. Eligible applicants may choose to submit their research proposals under the ECS or the General Research Fund (GRF) but not both in each funding cycle. New junior academics falling under the eligibility criteria of the ECS are encouraged to compete in the scheme. The awardees of ECS cannot compete in the scheme again but those who failed will be allowed to re-submit applications within the eligible period.

A change of PI during the period of processing the application will not be approved.

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

- (i) within three years of his / her full time¹ academic job as an Assistant Professor or career equivalent involving teaching and research duties and in substantiation track / tenure track position in any university (local or overseas) at the time of the submission deadline of this funding exercise;
- (ii) being primarily engaged in and spending at least 80% of time in degree or higher degree work at the institution proper²; and
- (iii) salary being wholly funded³ by the institution proper;

For ECS 2012/2013, applicants whose appointment in the first full time academic job as an Assistant Professor or career equivalent level in any local or overseas university took effect on or after 21 November 2008 and have met other criteria mentioned above will be eligible for Early Career Scheme. A newly appointed staff member should have formally entered into a contract of service with the Institution on or before the submission deadline of this funding exercise and that their appointments would take effect on or before 1 May 2012.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, cases of exceptional circumstances such as career break due to family or health reasons 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.

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 staff members who is receiving income from paid appointments outside the institution proper or who is supported by external research grants.

Collaborators on the proposal should not be listed as the Co-Investigators of the proposal.

To ensure record accuracy and to facilitate identification of PIs, PIs should 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

- (b) This section should summarize the qualifications of the PI. The CV to be attached should include the following information, as appropriate :

Name, academic qualifications, previous academic positions held (with date(s)) & present position, previous relevant research work, publication records 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 A4 page in the standard RGC format stated in “d” of “General” above for attached pdf documents or maximum 400 words for direct input in the text box.

- (c) Please give details of plan of collaboration. The role and specific task(s) of each individual (including the PI and Collaborator(s), if any) in the proposed research should be described clearly.

GRANT RECORD OF PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

9. Details of Research Projects

Please provide details on the on-going projects funded from all sources which are undertaken by the PI (in both capacity as PI and Co-I).

ANCILLARY INFORMATION

10. 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. 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 application as being withdrawn if no confirmation of approval is provided to the RGC by 30 April 2012.

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

11. Proposed reviewers

The RGC encourages grant applicants to nominate external reviewers in their proposals for consideration by RGC panels. Panel 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 the research is a very specialised 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 PIs 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. Any conflict or potential conflict of interests should be avoided. Any change or update in relationships between the PI and nominated reviewers should also be reported to the RGC by 30 April 2012 when submitting the proposal updates.

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 justification. Such request

should not be made under any section of ECS(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.

12. 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 research data available to others will be considered by the RGC.

PIs are required to release the completion reports (containing abstract in non-technical terms, objectives, research output including the list of conference papers / publications / journals and research findings and contact information of PI) to the public through the RGC website.

13. Education Plan, Dissemination Plan and supporting documents

Education Plan

A maximum amount of \$100,000 will be provided to the awardees of ECS for educational activities including the training of undergraduate students at a monthly rate of \$2,500 per undergraduate student helper. Applicants should provide a proposal for activities that will strengthen the training of undergraduate students in research. The results of the undergraduate students' participation in the research projects must be included in the progress report and completion report of the projects.

Dissemination Plan

Applicants should describe how the outcomes of the research will be shared.

Supporting documents

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

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

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

INSTITUTIONAL ENDORSEMENT

1. Staff eligibility requirement for ECS

Institutions are responsible for interpreting whether the applicants are at the substantiation track / tenure track Assistant Professor or career equivalent level with reference to the established ranks in their Institutions. The institution should confirm that it has evaluated and given support to the application before submission to the RGC. The institution is also required (i) to verify that a PI fully meets the criteria for the ECS grant, including the eligibility rules of requesting relief support under special funding template for Humanities and Social Sciences Panel and to confirm the salary for the relief teacher proposed by the PI not exceeding the salary of Staff Grade 'G' as set out in the Supplementary Notes for Applicants of ECS for Relief Support under the Humanities and Social Sciences Panel.

INSTITUTIONAL COMMITMENTS

2. Support to PI and students

The institution should confirm that the applicant will be permitted to be the primary supervisor of research student(s) (MPhil/PhD) during the project period.

Before giving the various confirmations required, the institution should satisfy itself that the PI is 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 PI subsequently becomes ineligible for the grant.

The institution is required to verify and confirm whether the ECS 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 PI of the RGC grant is to complete the project according to plan and that the training of RPg students and / or undergraduate students should not be used to justify any delay of project completion nor unsatisfactory project performance.

For Items (d) to (f), please see the notes for Items 3(b) and (c) in Part II.

3. 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 harm, 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 institutions must give approval / exemption according to their internal ethics guidelines by 30 April 2012 as is the case with other ethics / safety approval. If the institution is unable to confirm by 30 April 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 / PI declared that no ethics approval was required but the RGC / Panel has turned out to think otherwise, the related application runs the risk of being disqualified.

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

UGC Secretariat
August 2011

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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Medicine, Dentistry & Health
(Subject Area : M2)

<u>Field Area</u>	<u>Code</u>
Allergy/Immunology	1201
Anaesthesia	1202
Blood/Hematology	1203
Cancer	1204
Cardiovascular Research	1205
Clinical Trials	1206
Connective Tissues	1207
Dentistry	1208
Diabetes/Metabolism	1209
Endocrinology	1210
Epidemiology	1211
Gastroenterology/Hepatobiliary	1212
Genetic Disease	1213
Geriatrics/Gerontology	1214
Health Services	1215
Hearing	1216
Imaging	1217
Infection/Parasitology	1218
Neonatology	1219
Nephrology/Urology	1220
Nervous System	1221
Nursing	1222
Nutrition	1223
Orthopaedics/Traumatology	1224
Paediatrics	1225
Pathology	1226
Pharmacology/Toxicology	1227
Population Health	1228
Psychosocial & Behavioural Research	1229
Rehabilitation	1230
Reproduction	1231
Respiration	1232
Rheumatology	1233
Surgical Research	1234
Transplantation	1235
Vision	1236
Chinese Medicine (clinical)	1237
Proteomics	1238
Regenerative Medicine	1239

List of Research Field Areas and Code
for Engineering Research Proposals

Electrical & Electronic Engineering
(Subject Area : E3)

<u>Field Area</u>	<u>Code</u>
Communication	2301
Electronics	2302
Photonics	2303
Power	2304
Signal & Image Processing	2305
Bioelectronics	2306
Others	2399
(please specify :)	

Mechanical, Production & Industrial
Engineering
(Subject Area : E4)

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

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

Social Sciences
(Subject Area : H1)

<u>Field Area</u>	<u>Code</u>
Anthropology	4101
Psychology	4104
Public Administration & Political Science	4105
Sociology	4106
Geography	4107
Linguistics and Languages	4108
Psycholinguistics	4109
Cognitive Neuroscience of Language	4110
Media and Communication	4151
Others - relating to Social Sciences (please specify :)	4197

