

RESEARCH GRANTS COUNCIL

The French National Research Agency (ANR) / Research Grants Council (RGC)
Joint Research Scheme 2012/13

Explanatory Notes for Completing the Application Supplement
(for Hong Kong applicants)

You must read this Explanatory Notes carefully before completing and submitting your research proposal and Application Supplement. The RGC and ANR 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 ANR / RGC Joint Research Scheme (JRS) application. Applicants should also refer to the Call Circular and Invitation for Applications issued for this exercise on 6 January 2012 for application procedures and other requirement details.
- (b) The Application Supplement form is in 3 parts, Part I: Summary of the Research Proposal; Part II: Project Funding and Declarations; and Part III: Institutional Endorsement and Declaration of Research Ethics / Safety.
- (c) The form has to be completed in English.
- (d) In order to ensure consistency and fairness to all applicants, applicants must complete the applications 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 will lead to disqualification of the application.

- (e) All sections of the relevant parts should be completed. Where information sought is not applicable or not provided under a particular section, insert “NA” or “Nil”.
- (f) Parallel submission of applications by the Hong Kong and French applicants are required. The Hong Kong and French applicants should prepare a joint proposal following ANR’s format in English which should be submitted to the RGC and ANR in parallel. French applicants should submit the joint proposals via the on-line system of the ANR by

21 March 2012 at 1300 hours (Paris local time). Hong Kong applicants should submit 7 hard copies and a soft copy each of the same joint proposals together with the Application Supplements to the RGC through the Research Offices of their respective institutions by **23 March 2012 at 1700 hours** (Hong Kong time).

- (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.
- (h) Information on this Application Supplement form should be consistent with that given in the joint proposal. If not, the application would not be processed further. It is the obligation of the Principal Investigators (PIs) to ensure that their respective applications contain sufficient and consistent information for evaluation. Incomplete submission or inconsistent / inaccurate information would lead to disqualification of 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. PIs 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 information contained in the Application Supplement, if any, should be submitted to the UGC Secretariat on or before 15 June 2012, indicating any significant changes, e.g. changes in the eligibility of the PI and changes in investigator(s), modification of the budget proposal of the Hong Kong team, 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. 7 hard copies and a softcopy of the information update should be submitted to the UGC Secretariat on or before 15 June 2012.
- (k) 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 29 June 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 ANR / RGC JRS should be directed to the Research Offices of the Institutions which, if in doubt, should consult the UGC Secretariat for clarification. Also, correspondence regarding ANR / RGC JRS 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 ANR / RGC JRS 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)& (b)(i) The project title and discipline in the Application Supplement should be the same as those used in the joint proposal.
- (a)(iii) The applicant(s) must indicate the nature of the application being submitted. “New” refers to the research topic which the PI and / or Co-investigators (Co-I(s)) apply for RGC funds for the first time. “Re-submission” refers to the research topic which the PI and / or Co-I(s) have previously applied for RGC funds but not supported. “On-going” refers to the research topic which the PI and / or Co-I(s) extending work previously funded by the RGC.
- (b)(ii) Please refer to the list of subject areas in the Explanatory Notes used by the General Research Fund (GRF) exercise of the Research Grants Council (RGC) (GRF2), which is available at the RGC website: <http://www.ugc.edu.hk/eng/doc/form/GRF2.pdf>
- (b)(iii) Please give a maximum of five keywords to characterise the work of the proposal.
- (b)(iv) Projects to be funded from the ANR / RGC JRS should last for no more than **FOUR** years.
- (b)(v)(vi) The grant sought by the Hong Kong applicants from RGC for each project should not exceed HK\$3 million. The indicative average funding from ANR for the French applicants is 250,000 € per project.
- (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 Research” (Abstract) 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.

PART II PROJECT FUNDING AND DECLARATIONS

[To be completed by the applicant(s)]

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. PIs and Co-Is are not regarded as staff and must not be remunerated with salaries. Academic staff remunerated by any UGC-funded institutions in Hong Kong must not be paid with honorarium or other forms of payment. The estimated costs should not include any ‘hidden’ costs covered by recurrent block grant expenditure, such as the normal salaries of teaching staff who spend a portion of their time on research, cost of utilities, stationery, *etc.* They should include only expenditure which would not otherwise be separately incurred. Examples of these are: salaries of Research Assistants 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 justifications 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 PIs and their teams in order to train and groom research talents in Hong Kong. It would be legitimate for the PIs 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 PIs 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 PIs 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.

1. Cost and justifications

(a)(i)& Staff

(b)(i) Please state the number, rank and cost of staff involved, with justifications for the proposed rank and duration. The RGC normally supports research support staff at the Research Assistant (RA) level, Post-doctoral Fellows or Research Postgraduate Students. If a higher grade of supporting staff and / or other personnel is required, detailed justifications 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 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 also be attached if available.

(a)(ii)& Relief Teacher

(b)(ii) 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.

(a)(iii)& Equipment

(b)(iii) 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:

- (i) Is the equipment essential to the project?
- (ii) Has the department / institution already provided such equipment?
- (iii) Is there similar equipment elsewhere in other institutions and what is the possibility of sharing?
- (iv) 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.

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.

(a)(iv)& General Expenses

- (b)(iv) 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.

The RGC funding will also provide support for reasonable expenses for passage and subsistence costs for Hong Kong researchers and research postgraduate students to visit their collaborators. For visits made by the Hong Kong project team, the number and period of visits, and number of travellers for each trip should be stated and justified. The objective which the visit(s) aimed for should also be stated. Travel of research postgraduate students must be accompanied by the PI and with justifications provided.

Project review workshops may be organized for the Hong Kong and French PIs to present their mid-term and/or final reports. The Hong Kong applicants can include the expenses for travel of the PIs (passage and subsistence costs) to attend one project review workshop in France in the budget.

(a)(v)& Conference Expenses

- (b)(v) The RGC encourages researchers to present their work internationally and to exchange information with others in their particular research areas. A provision of 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 license is available in the institution(s). If yes, please explain why such equipment / software cannot be used by the applicant(s).

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

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

3. 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 1(a)(vi) of Part II.

DECLARATION OF SIMILAR OR RELATED PROPOSALS

4. 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 the RGC / Selection Committee will take into account the PIs' responses to the reviewers' comments, the RGC / Selection Committee is not obliged to invite the same group of external reviewers.

5. 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 PI 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 5(a), PIs / Co-Is are required to explain the differences of all their applications submitted in ANR / RGC JRS 2012/13 in the capacity of PIs or Co-Is if their applications are similar or related. In 5(b) to (d), PIs 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 PI or the Co-I(s) to declare similar or related proposals when there is uncertainty. The PI or the 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 PI / Co-I is able to justify the differences of the proposals / projects for separate funding.

6. Particulars of PIs and Co-Is

- (a) Each application should be submitted with only one applicant nominated as the PI and no applicant should submit more than one application in this capacity. A PI of an on-going ANR / RGC JRS project is not allowed to submit new application unless both collaborative partners have completed the last approved project and the Hong Kong PI has submitted his completion report to the RGC before the application deadline. Nevertheless, a PI will not be subject to the above restrictions if he / she only participates as a member of other new funding proposals. Other joint applicants, if any, will be regarded as Co-Is. Each Co-I should have a clear, distinct and material role. Excessive number of Co-Is should be avoided. Save in very exceptional circumstances, the RGC will not entertain requests for the addition of Co-I to a project after the funding award. A change of PI during the period of processing the application will not be approved.

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

- (i) having a full-time¹ appointment in the institution proper²;
- (ii) being in Staff Grades from 'A' to 'I'³ as defined in the Common Data Collection Format (i.e. from 'Professor' to 'Assistant Lecturer', see 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 funded⁴ by the institution proper.

PIs falling in the following categories are subject to the following additional requirements besides meeting criteria (i) to (iv) above:

- (i) A newly appointed staff member should have formally entered into a contract of service with the institution on or before 21 March 2012 and that his / her appointment would take effect on or before 3 July 2012.
- (ii) A staff member employed on a fixed term contract should be eligible at the time of funding award being made in September/October 2012 and for at least the first year of the project's planned duration.
- (iii) A visiting scholar should have a full-time employment at the institution proper covering at least one year or the expected duration of the project whichever is the longer.

¹ Excluding part-time staff and staff holding honorary appointments.

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

³ Excluding polytechnic staff grades.

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

An academic staff member who is engaged in non-degree programmes which are still funded by the UGC may also apply as PI. 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 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 both teams’ PI and each Co-I(s) who will be involved in the project. The CV(s) to be attached should include the following information, as appropriate:

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

Each CV should be limited to one A-4 page or a maximum of 400 words in the standard RGC format stated in (d) of “General” above.

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

GRANT RECORD OF HONG KONG INVESTIGATORS

7. Details of Research Projects

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

8. Major research output of previously funded projects

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

ANCILLARY INFORMATION

9. 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 applications as being withdrawn if no confirmation of approval is provided to the RGC by 29 June 2012. Please also see the respective notes in Part III below.

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

10. Proposed reviewers

The RGC encourages grant applicants to nominate external reviewers in their proposals for consideration by the RGC / Selection Committee.

Committee members have found that the nominated lists of external reviewers are very helpful in assisting them to identify international peers to evaluate the proposals. The nomination of reviewers by the applicant(s) is optional, but is highly encouraged especially when the research is a very specialized area. 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 Co-Is of both teams 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. PI and Co-I(s) of both teams, in a grant application to complete Section 10 accurately and fully. The Hong Kong PIs must ensure that their nominations of external reviewers are made known to the Hong Kong Co-Is and French PI and Co-Is. Otherwise, the Hong Kong Co-Is and French PI and 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 Supplement form and joint proposal which in its entirety will be sent to external reviewers for assessment. In all cases, the RGC reserves the right of final decision on the selection and invitation of external reviewers having regard to the merits involved.

11. 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.

For projects approved in 2010/11 onwards, PIs are required to release the completion reports (of Hong Kong PI, containing abstract in non-technical terms, objectives, research output including the list of conference papers / publications / journals and research findings and contact information of PI) to the public through the RGC website.

PART III INSTITUTIONAL ENDORSEMENT AND DECLARATION OF RESEARCH ETHICS / SAFETY

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

INSTITUTIONAL ENDORSEMENT

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 the PI fully meets the criteria for the ANR / RGC JRS grant; and / or (ii) to confirm the salary for the relief teacher proposed by the PI not exceeding the salary of Staff Grade 'G'.

Before giving the various confirmations required, the institution should satisfy itself that the PI 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 and recommend to the RGC for approval a suitable new PI, if any, to take over / conclude the commenced project.

INSTITUTIONAL COMMITMENTS

- (a)(b) The institution is required to verify and confirm whether the application is in line with its role, and that adequate supervision, research facilities and training provisions are in place to meet the need of RPg students so employed under the research grant if the application is supported by the RGC. Nevertheless, it should also be made clear that the primary duty of the PI of the RGC grant is to complete the project according to plan and that the training of RPg students and/or undergraduate students should not be used to justify any delay in project completion nor unsatisfactory project performance.
- (c)(d) For items (c) and (d), please see the notes for Items 1(c) and (d) in Part II.
- (f) To safeguard the interests of the researcher and the institution, institution 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 (f).

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 institutions must give approval / exemption according to their internal ethics guidelines by **29 June 2012** as is the case with other ethics / safety approval. If the institution is unable to confirm by 29 June 2012 that the required approval has been obtained, the RGC and ANR will stop processing the application which will be regarded as to have been withdrawn.

If the institution / PI declared that no ethics / safety approval was required but the RGC / Selection Committee 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.

UGC Secretariat
January 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”

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 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.

Annex B
(2 of 3)

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); and
- (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 / travel grants applications) will be provided anonymously to the Hong Kong 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:

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