

RESEARCH GRANTS COUNCIL**GENERAL RESEARCH FUND (GRF)
EMPLOYMENT OF RELIEF TEACHERS
UNDER HUMANITIES SUB-PANEL****Supplementary Notes for Applicants****Objective**

This funding scheme is aimed at addressing the special needs of humanities projects which normally require relief support in terms of freeing up the PIs' staff time for personal research and writing, rather than funding for research assistants and research infrastructure (e.g. equipment).

Establishment of Humanities Sub-Panel

2. A Humanities Sub-Panel has been established under the Humanities, Social Sciences and Business Studies Panel since 2007/08 to consider all the applications in the four disciplines specified below in the General Research Fund (GRF) Exercise. For other disciplines, the PIs can continue to apply for relief support funding currently operated by the RGC under GRF.

Disciplines to be covered

3. The Humanities Sub-Panel will cover the following four disciplines –
- (i) Anthropology ;
 - (ii) Humanities and the Arts;
 - (iii) Literature, Languages and Linguistics; and
 - (iv) Law.

Funding template

4. The funding template of this scheme is based on the existing GRF funding template but with more flexible consideration for the employment of relief teachers to free up the PIs' staff time.

5. Under this scheme for the relief support, PIs of the four disciplines specified above and the related institutions will only be required to confirm that the PIs are still unable to carry out the proposed research projects through various efforts such as re-arrangements of teaching schedule, employment of Research Assistants, utilization of time-off, school holidays, entitled sabbatical or extended period of paid leave. However, if the PIs also wish to employ research assistants in addition to relief support, they need to provide sound and strong justification in the proposals. Applications from the four disciplines which do not apply for relief teachers are also

examined by members of the Humanities Sub-Panel who are humanities experts.

6. For other disciplines, the PIs can continue to apply for relief teachers and research assistants currently operated by the RGC under GRF.

Assessment Criteria

7. The evaluation criteria for the relevant GRF research proposal application will be subject to the same criteria as other GRF applications, with academic merit being the primary consideration.

Eligibility

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

9. Holders of the grant for employment of relief teacher under this scheme are not eligible to apply for another grant for relief teachers under this same scheme again until his/her project supported under this grant has been completed and the related completion report has been submitted. However, they are still eligible to apply for another grant under this Sub-Panel if they do not request for relief teachers in the new proposals.

Type of research activities

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

Other specified use of the grant

11. Apart from employment of relief teachers, the grant can cover expenses arising directly from the approved GRF projects, such as airfare, accommodation and travel per diem of the PI (if out of Hong Kong). It can also be used to extend the period of research supported by an institutional grant for similar purposes and such details should be provided in the proposals. Expenses covered by recurrent block grant expenditure should not be included.

Duration of employment of relief teachers

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

Rate of Salary for Relief Teachers

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

UGC Secretariat
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