<u>**RESEARCH GRANTS COUNCIL**</u>

<u>**Collaborative Research Fund**</u>
<u>**Overview and Guidance Notes (CRPG & CREG) -**</u>
<u>**Preliminary Proposals**</u>

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Preamble: How to Use this document and further advice

All Collaborative Research Fund (CRF) Collaborative Research Project Grant (CRPG) and Collaborative Research Equipment Grant (CREG) applicants and their universities should read this "Overview and Guidance Notes (CRPG & CREG) – Preliminary Proposals" carefully before completing and submitting an application to the scheme. For applicants of CRF Young Collaborative Research Grant (YCRG), please refer to "Overview and Guidance Notes (YCRG)".

The Guidance Notes is in two parts: SECTION 1 summarises the key information about CRPG and CREF while SECTION 2 is structured to mirror the application form sections and provide section-by-section guidance on completion of the application documentation.

Enquiries about the contents of this Guidance Notes and other related matters about the CRF (such as appeals and complaints) should be directed to the Research Offices of your university.

The guidelines on handling the information and personal data contained in applications submitted to RGC are contained in https://www.ugc.edu.hk/doc/eng/rgc/guidelines/code/code_of_conduct.pdf.

SECTION 1 – OVERVIEW

1. Purpose and Objectives of Collaborative Research Fund

The CRF supports multi-investigator, multi-disciplinary projects in order to encourage more research groups to engage in creative and high-quality cross-disciplinary/ cross-institutional projects.

2. Types of Grants

There are three types of grants under CRF:

Collaborative Research Project Grant

The main objective of CRPG is to encourage research groups in UGC-funded universities to engage in collaborative research across disciplines and across universities with a view to enhancing the research output of universities in terms of the level of attainment, quantity, dimensions and/or impact. It provides funding for staff, equipment and general expenses related to the supported projects. In assessing proposals, RGC puts emphasis on capacity building and the potential of a proposal to develop into an area of research strength. On approval, the project teams should not break the award down into individual components. They should pursue genuine collaborative research.

Project Coordinators (PC) of group research projects may apply for "renewal" funding. To qualify for "renewal" funding, the research teams must demonstrate that remarkable results have been achieved in their current research and there is a good argument and prospect for further research work to continue in the relevant area. A "renewal" proposal should be an extension of the current project led by the same PC and should not constitute any major overlap with research work supported by other UGC/RGC grants. A "renewal" proposal should have its own goal and a new or extended research objective.

Collaborative Research Equipment Grant

The main objectives of CREG are to:

(a) enable the acquisition of major research facilities or equipment, including major library acquisitions for research, which cannot otherwise be afforded by one university and which can be used for collaborative research;

(b) assist universities in "leveraging" support from equipment suppliers with a view to stretching the value of RGC's fund further than could normally be possible by making small allocation with individual projects; and

(c) provide funding for group user fee (for users from RGC funded collaborative research projects) to access major user facilities (e.g. to pay for the access/use of

some existing core facilities/equipment instead of procuring new ones)[1].

<u>Young Collaborative Research Grant</u>

The YCRG aims to support early-stage academic staff members in gaining first-hand experience in leading and managing collaborative research, so that they will be better prepared in competing for larger collaborative research funding in the next stage of their career.   Only group research proposals can apply for YCRG.   Equipment proposals should be submitted to CREG.

The following Guidance Notes will cover CRPG and CREG only.   Please refer to "Overview and Guidance Notes (YCRG)" for details of YCRG.

3. Applicant Eligibility to Apply

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

(i)   having a full-time[2] appointment in the university proper[3];
(ii)   being in Staff Grades from "A" to "I"[4] as defined in the Common Data Collection Format (CDCF) (i.e. from "Professor" to "Assistant Lecturer", see <u>Annex B</u>);
(iii)   being primarily engaged in and spending at least 80% of time in degree or higher degree work[5] at the university proper; and
(iv)   salary being wholly funded[6] by the university 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 university on or before the application deadline and that his/her appointment would take effect on or before 1 September 2024;

(b)   A staff member employed on a fixed term contract should be eligible at the time of funding award being offered tentatively in December 2024/January 2025 as well as throughout the whole project period; or

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[1] The requirement of 50% matching funding from participating universities still applies.
[2] Excluding part-time staff and staff holding honorary appointments.
[3] Excluding schools/arms of continuing education and professional training and other analogous outfits.
[4] Excluding polytechnic staff grades.
[5] A PC who is/will be seconded to work full-time or part-time at the two Innovation and Technology clusters (i.e. Health@InnoHK and AIR@InnoHK) at the Hong Kong Science Park; or to conduct research in a university or a research institute/body/agency in the Mainland/overseas jurisdiction, is still considered eligible to apply for CRF.
[6] Excluding staff member who is receiving income from paid appointments outside the university proper or who is supported by external research grants.

(c)   A visiting scholar should have a full-time employment at the university proper covering the whole project period.

Applicants may choose to submit **one** application as PC under CRF (i.e. CRPG, CREG or YCRG) in each funding cycle.

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

Notwithstanding these, cases of exceptional circumstances may be considered by RGC on a case-by-case basis. The university should seek RGC's special approval for such cases before submitting the application.

4. Funding Thresholds and Duration

Thresholds

The net amount of funding requested from RGC (excluding matching funding from university and funds obtained from other sources) should range from $2 million to $10 million per project.

The proposal should justify the proposed amount. Besides, universities are required to commit at the application stage that they would provide partnership/matching funding in real money on a 50% (RGC) (excluding on-costs)/50% (universities) basis for equipment cost for a funded project.

Duration

Collaborative research projects to be funded from the CRF should normally last for no more than **three** years except for applications of which the research objective(s) can only be achieved in a time span of four to five years.

5. Scheme Timetable

Preliminary proposals for CRPG should be submitted on CRF(GR&R)1P and those for CREG should be submitted on CRF(E)1P through RGC Electronic System to the UGC Secretariat **by 23 February 2024**. The application forms in pdf format are also available on RGC website (https://www.ugc.edu.hk/eng/rgc/funding_opport/crf/how_to_apply.html) for downloading. Late applications will NOT be considered.

In addition to electronic submission, universities are required to provide **one hard copy** and **one soft copy** (allowing search function) of the proposals. For the soft copy, please save all files in one CD/USB flash drive, with the file names follow that of the project reference number.

For "renewal" funding, an up-to-date progress report on the current research project should be submitted together with the application form.

Universities will be informed of the shortlisting results and invited to submit full proposals in early June 2024. Results of further shortlisted applications to interview will be announced around early November 2024. The PC of the shortlisted full proposals will be invited to attend selection interviews in around early December 2024. The funding decision will be announced in around end December 2024/early January 2025. Universities will be notified of the information nearer the time.

6. Assessment Process for Applications

A two-stage peer-review assessment process is adopted. Applicants are required to submit preliminary proposals in the application stage.

The assessment criteria are as follows:

Collaborative Research Project Grant

(a) academic merits;
(b) long-term goal of the proposal and its potential to develop into an area of research strength;
(c) opportunities for effective synergism among the participating researchers, research groups and universities/institutions; and
(d) viability of the proposal, particularly in terms of project management. The project team's ability to put in place an effective governance structure to monitor collaborating work and to ensure prudent deployment of resources would be important considerations.

Collaborative Research Equipment Grant

(a) merits of the proposal, its contribution to academic/professional development, potential for application, and benefit to the tertiary institutions in particular and Hong Kong in general;
(b) scope of the collaborative research/joint use, and the degree of such usage;
(c) feasibility of implementation;
(d) any university's support, including that of the sponsoring/collaborating universities/institutions;
(e) prospect of external funding;
(f) maximum value of money; and
(g) availability of similar facilities/library acquisitions elsewhere in Hong Kong.

No change on preliminary proposal is allowed after the application deadline.

7. Submission Processes

At the preliminary proposal stage, when applications are submitted through RGC Electronic System, a project reference number will be automatically generated for each of the proposals for identification purposes.   This project reference number should be used and quoted in all future correspondences.

It is important that applicants should comply with the page/word limits specified in various sections of the application form.   Applications may risk being disqualified if the proposals are found to have exceeded the allowable page/word limits.   Applicants shall not include links to external websites (e.g. cloud storage) in their applications which contain extra information about the proposed project in the research proposal.

8. Enquiries

Enquiries about the contents of the Guidance Notes and other related matters about the CRF CRPG and CREG should be directed to the **Research Offices of the universities** which, if in doubt, should consult the UGC Secretariat for clarification.   Also, correspondence regarding the CRF CRPG and CREG matters including enquiries, appeals and complaints should be made through the Research Offices of the universities.

The guidelines on handling the information and personal data contained in the CRF applications are at <u>Annex A</u>.   Applicants requiring additional information about internal deadlines, application procedures or assistance in completing the application form may contact the Research Offices of their own universities.

RGC is fully committed to the principle of honesty, integrity and fair play in the conduct of its business.   To uphold public trust and protect public interest, it is important for all applicants to note and observe the "RGC Code of Conduct" and "Extracts from the Prevention of Bribery Ordinance" at
https://www.ugc.edu.hk/doc/eng/rgc/guidelines/code/code_of_conduct.pdf.

SECTION 2 - COMPLETING THE APPLICATION MATERIALS

Format and font

In order to ensure consistency and fairness to all applicants, applicants must complete the applications and all **pdf documents** in the following standard RGC format:

> **Font: Times New Roman**
> **Font Size: 12 point**
> **Margin: 2.5 cm all round**
> **Spacing: Single-line spacing**
> **PDF version: compatible with Adobe Acrobat Reader 5**

Failure to comply with the format requirements may result in the removal of your application from processing. **Do not exceed the page or word limits for any section.** Applications may risk being disqualified if the proposals are found to have exceeded the allowable page/word limits of the respective sections.

All sections of the application forms should be completed. Where information sought is not applicable or not provided under a particular section, insert "N.A." or "Nil". It is the obligation of the PCs to ensure that their respective applications contain sufficient information for evaluation. Incomplete submission (such as those lacking substantial data/information for evaluation) or inconsistent/inaccurate information may be rejected by RGC as uncompetitive.

To help reduce the processing cost 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.

Applicants are not allowed to mention anything not related to the research proposal per se in the application form with a view to communicating to the reviewers that the latter should give a certain rating if they intend to support the projects. Should such act be discovered, the applications concerned will be disqualified.

Applicants are prohibited to communicate with RGC and CRF Selection Panel Members on the applications submitted with a view to influencing the latter in assessing their applications. Should such act be discovered, the applications concerned will be disqualified.

PCs should include the project costs only (excluding on-costs) in the application.

Unless otherwise stated, all funding levels stated in the application form are in Hong Kong Dollars.

For applications which have genuine special needs to be completed in a language other than English, applicant(s)/university(ies) are required to provide an English version on

the Research Details (i.e. Project objectives; Proposed outline of research plan and methodology, Collaboration plan and Pathways to Impact Statement) in pdf file format.

PART I RESEARCH PROPOSAL
[To be completed by the applicant(s)]

1. Particulars of the Project

(a)(i)   Name and Academic Affiliation of Applicants

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 will be regarded as Co-Principal Investigators (Co-PIs). Each Co-PI should have a clear, distinct and material role. Excessive number of Co-PIs should be avoided. Save in very exceptional circumstances, RGC will not entertain requests for the addition of Co-PI(s) to a project after the funding award. After the proposal is submitted, a change of PC during the period of processing the application will **not be** approved.

To ensure record accuracy and to facilitate identification of PCs, PCs should enter the name as shown on his/her Hong Kong Identity Card/passport (where applicable) and use the standardised format of names for all project team members including Collaborators as agreed with respective universities 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.

The applicant should indicate whether he/she or any of the team members is/are UGC/RGC/RGC Panel/Committee Member(s) as at the deadline of the application and provide the number of hours per week to be spent by the PC and each Co-PI on the proposed project.

ORCID is a unique researcher identifier facilitating the identification of researchers with expertise in specific areas. Local applicants in all capacities are required to provide an ORCID iD to facilitate identification of researchers. Non-local academics in the capacity of Co-PIs are encouraged to provide one. ORCID iD can be registered for free at http://orcid.org.

(a)(ii)   <u>Duration of Full-time Paid Appointment</u>

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)   <u>Eligibility Criteria of YCRG</u> *(for CRPG only)*

The applicant should indicate if the project team meet(s) the eligibility criteria of YCRG and provide the relevant information.   Details of eligibility for YCRG can be found in the "Overview and Guidance Notes (YCRG)".

(a)(iv)   <u>Title of Project (in English and Traditional Chinese)</u>
(i.e. (a)(iii) for CREG)

The project title should be informative, but short and concise.   Applicants normally should not change the project title throughout the preliminary proposal stage.

(a)(v)   <u>Nature of Application</u>
(i.e. (a)(iv) for CREG)

All applicants must indicate with caution the nature of the application being submitted:

- "New" refers to the application on research topic which the PC and/or Co-PI(s) applies/apply for RGC funds for the first time.
- "Re-submission" refers to the application on research topic which the PC and/or Co-PI(s) have previously applied for UGC/RGC funds but not supported.   To facilitate the CRF Selection Panel's assessment, applicants of re-submitted proposals would be required to include information of all their previous submissions and the revisions/improvement made to each of the previous submissions.
- "Renewal" refers to the application on research topic which the PC and/Co-PI(s) extending work previously funded by UGC/RGC.   To qualify for "renewal" funding, the research team must demonstrate that remarkable results have been achieved in their current research and there is a good argument and prospect for further research work to continue in the relevant area.   A "renewal" proposal should not constitute any major overlap with research supported by other UGC/RGC grants and should have its own goal and a new or extended research objective.

Applicants should not change the nature of the application in the full proposal if shortlisted.

(b)   Re-submission of a Proposal Not Supported Previously

(b)(i)   Applicants need to provide details in case the proposal is a re-submission (submitted to the UGC / RGC before) or is largely similar to a proposal that has been submitted to the UGC/RGC or other funding bodies.   It is the responsibility of the applicants to declare clearly and honestly whether the proposal is a re-submission.   RGC reserves the right to discount the rating of an application for its failure to acknowledge the fact that it is a re-submission of a previous application.   Applicants should provide the number of times of re-submission under the CRF since its first submission and proposal reference number(s) *(if applicable)*.

(b)(ii)   (A maximum of one A4 page in standard RGC format) Applicants should re-visit the main concerns/suggestions previously expressed by external reviewers if an earlier/similar version of the proposal has been assessed before, and provide a summary of all the previous submissions and the revisions made to each of the previous submissions.   Applicants should make sure that sufficient revisions and improvement based on the comments provided by the assessment panels have been made.

(b)(iii) & (iv)   These sections allow the applicant to respond to those comments, and explain whether and 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 CRF Selection Panel will take into account the PCs' responses to the reviewers' comments, the CRF Selection Panel is not obliged to invite the same group of external reviewers for assessment of the new application.

(c)(i)   Primary and Secondary Field

Applicants are required to specify the percentage of relevance of the project to the primary and secondary fields.

In general, to facilitate the appointment of the right experts to evaluate the proposal, PC should select a specific primary field area[7] as far as possible. If a PC selects a non-specific primary field area, i.e. Others, for his/her proposal, he/she must select a specific secondary area close to the field area of the proposal.

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[7] Please refer to the list of field codes/areas in the Guidance Notes used by the General Research Fund exercise of RGC (GRF2), which is available on RGC website: http://www.ugc.edu.hk/doc/eng/rgc/form/GRF2.pdf.

To indicate the cross-disciplinary nature of a proposal, a PC is allowed to select the secondary field area/code from a subject area which is different from that of the primary field area/code. Cross-disciplinary proposals will be evaluated jointly by experts from different subject areas. RGC reserves the authority to decide whether an application is cross-disciplinary or not.

(c)(ii)   Keywords

Please give a maximum of five keywords to characterise the work of the proposal. Applicants normally should not change any of the keywords.

(c)(iii)   Project Duration
(i.e. (c)(iv) for CREG)

Collaborative research projects to be funded from the CRF should normally last for no more than **three** years except for applications of which the research objective(s) can only be achieved in a time span of four to five years.

(c)(iv)   Funding Requested
(i.e. (c)(v) for CREG)

PC and Co-PIs are not regarded as project staff and whose salaries must not be funded by the project. Academic staff remunerated by any UGC-funded universities in Hong Kong must not be paid with honorarium or other forms of payment from the project. The estimated cost should not include any "hidden" costs covered by the recurrent block grant expenditure, **such as normal salaries of teaching staff who spend a portion of their time on research, cost of utilities, stationery, etc.** They should only include expenditure which would not otherwise be separately incurred.

Net amount requested from RGC should range from HK$2 million to HK$10 million.

Applicants' attention is particularly drawn to the page/word limits of the following sections in the preliminary proposal form. Applications may risk being disqualified if the proposals are found to have exceeded the allowable page/word limits.

2. Project Objectives
–   should not exceed 800 words in total. The objectives of the project must be presented in point form.

3. **Proposed Outline of Research Plan and Methodology** *(for CRPG)* / **Proposed Outline** *(for CREG)*
   – should not exceed four A4[8] pages in total, excluding quotations but including all other attachments and references, in standard RGC format for Sections 3 and 4.

   (in particular for CREG)
   Please answer all the questions in the application form, including:
   - Background of proposal and motivation;
   - Equipment acquisition plan;
   - Brief description of research projects to be supported by the equipment;
   - Is the equipment to be placed in a shared facility?
   - Brief governance and maintenance plan for the life span of the equipment;
   - Any similar equipment being set up or already set up elsewhere in Hong Kong?

4. **Collaboration Plan**
   – should not exceed four A4 pages in total, excluding quotations but including all other attachments and references, in standard RGC format for Sections 3 and 4.

   (a) Please identify the role and specific task(s) the PC and each of the Co-PIs (if any) is responsible for and describe the added value from the collaboration.

   (b) Project teams are encouraged to elaborate in their proposals on the linkage between various research elements and collaboration among the team members apart from stating their roles in the proposed project, e.g. how collaboration could enhance the synergy, achievements and delivery of the project.

5. **Pathways to Impact Statement**

   – should not exceed **two pA4 ages**.

   (a) The Pathways to Impact Statement shall demonstrate how the research team will realise the "impact" beyond the academia by the findings/outcome of the research proposal and by addressing any associated risks. For the purpose of this section, impact is defined as the demonstrable contributions, beneficial effects, valuable changes or advantages that research qualitatively brings to the economy, society, culture, public policy or services, health, the environment or quality of life; and that are **beyond the academia**. The impacts may occur in any geographical location whether locally, regionally, nationally or internationally.

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[8] A two-sided A4 page will be counted as two pages.

(b)   The statement shall address the following:

(i)   Who are the potential beneficiaries of the proposed research in the short (one to three years), medium (four to ten years) and long term (over ten years)?

(ii)   How will the potential beneficiaries benefit?   What will be the objective demonstrable/measurable benefits beyond academia?

(iii)   What will be done during and/or after the project to increase the likelihood of achieving the identified benefit and reaching the identified beneficiaries?

(iv)   What are the potential risks that might adversely affect the achievement of the stated impact and how will such risks be mitigated?

(c)   The statement shall be comprehensible to a lay person.

(d)   Applicants may find the impact case studies available on the Research Assessment Exercise 2020 Impact Database (https://impact.ugc.edu.hk/) useful reference to understand more about research impact.   These case studies demonstrated the impact generated by the underpinning research undertaken from January 2000 to September 2019.   For the purpose of this Pathways to Impact Statement, the research team should describe how the research findings arising from this proposal **would/could be used**, and what the research team and universities **would do**, in bringing about and achieving future impact beyond academia.   It should be noted that research impact may or may not be arising from a single research.   Hence, the expected impact as described in the Pathways to Impact Statement may also include findings from other research, but the part to be contributed by this research proposal should be clearly defined.

6. <u>Technology Transfer Plan</u> *(Optional for CRPG only)*
–   should not exceed one A4 page.

[Applicants who contemplate applying for funding support from the Government's Innovation and Technology Fund at a later stage may provide a technology transfer plan in the preliminary proposal in <u>one</u> separate page.   The plan will be passed to the Innovation and Technology Commission for advance information.   This plan will not be assessed by RGC for the purpose of shortlisting proposals.   The Technology Transfer Plan should include information such as:

(a)   Activities to be undertaken to:
–   disseminate the R&D deliverables;
–   realise the application of the R&D deliverables in the public sector, i.e. the R&D deliverables being used in government departments, public bodies, trade associations, charitable organisations, etc.; and/or

     – market the R&D deliverables in the commercial world, e.g. target markets and customers.

(b) Potential industry partners for technology transfer/manufacturing. If possible, please provide information in relation to the future positioning of the product/technology in the market.

(c) Associated/complementary technology development projects which may synergise with this project for technology transfer.   In this case, please give some brief information of such project(s).

(d) Future plans to apply for Innovation and Technology Fund to support the applied research component of the proposed project.

7. <u>Statement on Public Policy Element</u> *(Optional for CRPG only)*
    – should not exceed one A4 page.

To set up a linkage between research projects with a public policy element with the appropriate policy bureaux so that they could be considered for possible implementation, any funded projects with a public policy element would be informed to the Chief Secretary for Administration's Office (CSO) for perusal after announcement of the funding results. This would help formulate innovative policy response that could effectively address societal challenges and is supported.

Applicant who wishes to have his/her project details released to the CSO if his/her application is successful, please provide in <u>one</u> separate page a statement on the public policy element of the project. This statement will not be assessed by RGC for the purpose of shortlisting proposals.

8. <u>Confirmation of the Project Coordinator</u> *(i.e. Section 6 for CREG)*

The PC has to confirm that all the Co-PIs listed in the preliminary proposal have explicitly agreed to serve in the project team and a copy of the preliminary proposal has been provided to each of the Co-PIs.   Written proof on the collaboration has to be provided upon the request of RGC/the Secretariat.

By submitting the application, the PC also undertakes that the research activity(ies) /expenditure(s) of the project if funded will be carefully monitored for its/their compliance with applicable laws, health and safety guidelines and ethical standards.

9. <u>Brief Curriculum Vitae (CV) for Applicants</u> *(i.e. Section 7 for CREG)*
    – should not exceed one A4 page for the PC and each Co-PI.

PART II   UNIVERSITY'S   ENDORSEMENT
<div style="text-align:center">[To be completed by the appropriate authority of the PC's university]</div>

1.   **University's Endorsement on Staff Eligibility Requirement for CRF**

The university should confirm that it has evaluated and given support to the application before submission to RGC.   The university is also required to confirm that (i) the PC fully meets the criteria for CRPG/CREG under CRF; and (ii) the applicant will have the number of hours per week as declared in Part I to supervise the proposed project without prejudice to his/her existing commitment in other research work, teaching and administrative duties.

The university is also required to report to RGC immediately if a PC subsequently becomes ineligible for the grant and recommend to RGC for approval a suitable new PC, if any, to take over/conclude the commenced project.

2.   **University's Commitments**

(a)   The university is required to verify and confirm whether the CRF CRPG/CREG application is in line with its role.

At the full proposal stage, the university is required to confirm 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 RGC.   Nevertheless, it should be also made clear that the primary duty of the PC of 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.

(b)   Starting from 2013/14, **universities are required to provide partnership/matching funding in monetary terms on a 50% (RGC) (excluding on-costs)/50% (university) basis for the total cost of equipment**.   RGC also reserves the right to impose penalty on any universities which fail to screen out non-compliant applications.

For CRPG:

(c)   Starting from the 2016/17 exercise, the coordinating university is required to undertake to provide a video clip to publicise the project's research achievements within three months upon satisfactory rating of completion report, if the project is funded.

(d)   To safeguard the interests of the researcher and the university, universities bear primary responsibility for prevention, detection and investigation of research misconduct, including but not limiting to misusing of funds, data

falsification, plagiarism and seeking duplicate funding for projects which the applicant has already completed partially or entirely.   University is strongly advised to use anti-plagiarism software before submitting the application to RGC and verify if this application has been scanned by anti-plagiarism software in item (d) and provide reason(s) for not doing so.

For CREG:

(c)   To safeguard the interests of the researcher and the university, universities bear primary responsibility for prevention, detection and investigation of research misconduct, including but not limiting to misusing of funds, data falsification, plagiarism and seeking duplicate funding for projects which the applicant has already completed partially or entirely.   University is strongly advised to use anti-plagiarism software before submitting the application to RGC and verify if this application has been scanned by anti-plagiarism software in item (c) and provide reason(s) for not doing so.

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

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UGC Secretariat
January 2024

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 university, to apply for a competitive grant from Research Grants Council (RGC);

(b) assessment of the merits of the research proposal which you have submitted for funding support;

(c) assisting RGC committees/subject panels in identifying external reviewers to assess your research proposal;

(d) compilation of periodic reports and statistical returns for analysis and research by RGC/UGC in relation to the use of public funds;

(e) sharing of data with other government departments/research funding agencies for the avoidance of duplicate funding; and

(f) for successful projects, such data will be used for project monitoring, promotion, publicity and may also be published on RGC website.

Handling of your information and personal data

2.　　　　Your research proposal including your personal data (e.g. CVs) will be handled with care by RGC.　Staff of the UGC Secretariat, members of RGC and RGC committees/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 RGC.　Information so collected by 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 RGC separately when you submit your research proposal.　RGC does not accept research proposals that are classified "confidential" by the applicants.　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 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 RGC policy on providing feedback to grant applicants 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 committees/panels 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 committees/panels, and the availability of funds, in that particular year);

(c) 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 universities.

Physical retention of applications

5.　　　　Applications that are funded by 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 RGC about you or your research proposal and to update or correct such data.   Nevertheless, RGC reserves the right to charge a reasonable fee for the processing of any such request(s) in accordance with the prevailing Government regulations.

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 RGC should be made in writing, by post or by fax, addressed as follows:

Assistant Secretary General (Research) 2
Research Grants Council
7/F Shui On Centre
6-8 Harbour Road
Wanchai
Hong Kong

Fax: 2845 1183

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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. Others, including "Mod 1"

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