RESEARCH GRANTS COUNCIL

Collaborative Research Fund
Overview and Guidance Notes (YCRG)

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Preamble: How to Use this document and further advice

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

The Guidance Notes is in two parts: SECTION 1 summarises the key information about YCRG 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].

Young Collaborative Research Grant

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 YCRG only.   Please refer to "Overview and Guidance Notes (CRPG & CREG) – Preliminary Proposals / Full Proposals" for details of CRPG and CREG.

3. Applicant Eligibility to Apply

The **PC** and **at least half of the number of Co-Principal Investigator(s) (Co-PI(s))** of YCRG must be an academic staff member of an UGC-funded university with conditions of employment meeting **ALL** the following requirements:

(a)   having a full-time[2] appointment in the university proper[3];

(b)   **at the closing date of the application, not exceeding three years of his/her full-time academic job as an Associate Professor or career equivalent (including those at a lower rank)[4]** involving teaching and research duties and in substantiation track / tenure track position[5] in any university (local or overseas), **or not exceeding 12 years of post-doctoral or equivalent terminal qualifications in the relevant fields (e.g. medical and law degrees) experience, whichever is shorter**;

(c)   being in Staff Grades from "C" to "I"[6] as defined in the Common Data Collection Format (CDCF) (i.e. from "Senior Lecturer (U)" to "Assistant Lecturer", see Annex B);

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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] For avoidance of doubt, an academic staff **at or below** the rank of Associate Professor or career equivalent may apply, subject to his/her satisfaction of the eligibility criteria.

[5] For academic staff not in substantiation track / tenure track, the PC and/or the Co-PI under paragraph 3 must meet the following requirement:

    (i)   is a newly appointed academic staff member who has formally entered into a contract of service with the submitting university on or before the submission deadline and his/her appointment would take effect on or before 1 October of the same year; or

    (ii)   is an academic staff member employed on a fixed term contract at the time of funding award (usually in December of the year or January of the next year) **and** throughout the whole YCRG project period.

[6] Excluding polytechnic staff grades.

(d)   being primarily engaged in and spending at least 80% of time in degree or higher degree work[7] at the university proper; and

(e)   salary being wholly funded[8] by the university proper.

Unlike CRPG and CREG, visiting scholar is not eligible for YCRG[9].

Eligible applicants may choose to submit **one** application as PC under CRF (i.e. CRPG, CREG or YCRG) in each funding cycle.   New junior academic staff members meeting the eligibility criteria of YCRG are encouraged to compete in the Grant.   The grantees and awardees[10] of YCRG cannot compete in YCRG as PC again but those who failed will be allowed to re-submit applications, which can be a new research topic or research topics previously applied but not supported, within the eligible period.

Provided that the PC and at least half of the number of Co-PI(s) meet the eligibility criteria mentioned in (a) to (e) above, senior academic staff member(s) may participate in the project team as Co-PI(s) or Collaborator(s).

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 $5 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

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[7] The PC and/or the Co-PI under YCRG 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.

[8] Excluding staff member who is receiving income from paid appointments outside the university proper or who is supported by external research grants.

[9] Visiting scholar is not eligible to apply for YCRG as the PC. They may participate in the project team as Co-PI, but they will not be counted as one of the Co-PIs for the purpose of meeting the eligibility criteria required on "the PC and at least half the number of Co-PI".

[10] Only Project Coordinator of a project will be counted as "grantees and awardees" for the purpose of this requirement.

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

Full proposals for YCRG should be submitted on CRF(YCRG) through the Research Offices of the respective coordinating universities to the UGC Secretariat **by 5:00 pm on 19 April 2024.**   The application form in pdf format is available on RGC website (https://www.ugc.edu.hk/eng/rgc/funding_opport/crf/how_to_apply.html)   for downloading.   Each university can submit **no more than five applications**[11] in each exercise.   Late applications will NOT be considered.

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 further shortlisted applications to interview, additional hard copies of the proposals should be submitted to the UGC Secretariat through respective Research Offices **in late November 2024**.   Universities will be notified of the exact number of copies needed nearer the time.

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 one-stage peer-review assessment process is adopted.   Applicants are required to submit full proposals in the application stage.

The assessment criteria of YCRG are as follows:

(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

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[11] Counting the number of applications submitted by the coordinating university, in which the PC of the application is employed.

(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.

Information Update

A brief update of the proposal, if any, should be submitted to the UGC Secretariat on or before **5:00 pm on 26 July 2024**, indicating any significant changes, e.g. changes in the eligibility of the PC, alternative funding obtained, declarations of related proposals/projects/research work, investigator(s)'s CVs, grant records, etc.   It should be emphasised 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 proposals (number of copies required and timing will be confirmed separately) which should be submitted to the UGC Secretariat.

If an update is provided for ethics/safety approval for an application, the respective Research Office should submit the relevant updated data to RGC on or before **5:00 pm on 26 July 2024**.   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.

If an update is provided for approval for access to Government/official/private data and records for an application, the respective Research Office should submit the relevant updated data to RGC on or before **5:00 pm on 26 July 2024**.   Evidence of approval should also be submitted at this stage.

If an update is provided on any related research work that is being/has been conducted in relation to the proposal, the PC/Co-PI(s) should submit the relevant update to RGC on or before **5:00 pm on 26 July 2024**.

7. Submission Processes

A project reference to be assigned by the Research Office of the coordinating university, in the format of CX00X-24Y (i.e. C[Single digit of University Code]00[Serial number]-24Y) should be placed on the right top corner of the cover page of each part.

For any updated documents to be submitted in July 2024, please mark the reference number at the top-right hand corner of each page for easier identification.   This project reference number should be used and quoted in all future correspondence.

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 YCRG 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 YCRG 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 or have abused the purpose of the "Supporting Documents" in Section 12 of Part II of the application form (only education plan, technology transfer plan, letters of collaboration and supporting documents for the purpose of research ethics/safety approval are allowed to be attached. Supplementary materials such as papers, manuscripts, publications or detailed research work are not acceptable). Unless otherwise instructed, applicants should not make use of Section 12 to supplement the contents of other 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 Abstract and Research Details (i.e. Impact and objectives; Background of research, research plan and methodology) in pdf file format.

PART I   SUMMARY OF THE 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)   Eligibility of the Project Team for YCRG

Please refer to the eligibility criteria of YCRG mentioned in SECTION 1(3) above and demonstrate that the project team is eligible for YCRG. The submitting university is required to confirm the eligibility under the Part III of the application form - University's Endorsement.

(a)(iii)   Title of Project (in English and Traditional Chinese)

The project title should be informative, but short and concise.

(a)(iv)   Nature of Application

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.
- "Continuation" refers to the application on research topic which the PC and/Co-PI(s) extending work previously funded by the UGC/RGC. To qualify for "continual" 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 "continual" 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.

(b)(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[12] 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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[12] 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.

(b)(ii)   <u>Keywords</u>

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

(b)(iii)   <u>Project Duration</u>

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.

(b)(iv)   <u>Funding Requested</u>

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$5 million.

(c)   <u>Abstract</u>

A short abstract of a maximum of 400 words comprehensible to a non-specialist, which should be informative and indicative of the nature of the research to be conducted, should be provided in one A4 page of PDF document in standard RGC format. If a proposal is funded, the abstract of the research proposal will be uploaded on RGC website for public's information. The applicant will be approached for a Chinese version of the abstract for public access shortly after the announcement of the funding results, or an English version if the original abstract is presented in Chinese.

PART II   DETAILS OF THE RESEARCH PROPOSAL
[To be completed by the applicant(s)]

RESEARCH DETAILS

This is the major portion of the proposal.   It should be presented clearly and concisely and at the same time be detailed enough to indicate the significance and merits of the proposed research and to permit a meaningful evaluation of the worthiness of the project.   RGC will not further process the application if insufficient/incomplete information is provided on the application form.

1. Impact and objectives

(a)   Project objectives *[in point form and 800 words at maximum]*

(b)   Pathways to Impact Statement *[not exceeding two A4 pages]*

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.

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?

The statement shall be comprehensible to a lay person.

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.

2. <u>Background of research, research plan and methodology</u>
[A maximum of 10 A4 pages <u>in total</u> in standard RGC format for Section 2 (a) and (b), excluding the non-text pages in Section 2(c) and (d) and references in Section 2(e)]

(a)   <u>Background of research</u>

State whether work has been/is being carried out by you and/or others on a related subject and the expected project commencement date.   Outline what motivates you to undertake the proposed research, previous and alternative approaches to the problem and their deficiencies, and list key references to relevant research by you and others.   For on-going/continuing projects, the progress made and results achieved during the previous years should be clearly summarised. 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)   <u>Research plan and methodology</u>

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.

(c)   <u>Gantt Chart</u> *[one page at maximum]*

 A one-page Gantt chart showing the research activities should be given.

(d)   <u>Others</u>

A maximum of two additional A4 pages for diagrams, photos, charts and tables, etc., if any.

(e)   <u>Reference on publications listed in Sections 2(a) and 2(b)</u> *[three pages at maximum]*

The page limit of Sections 2(a) and (b) does not include references.   All references should be provided in full and include all authors.

3. <u>Re-submission of a proposal not supported previously</u>

(a)(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)*.

(a)(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) & (c)   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.

PROJECT FUNDING

RGC may not process your application if the proposed budget does not comply with the requirements as set out below.   Applicants should also note when completing this part of the application, that 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.

While RGC may fully or partially fund the approved projects, universities are expected to provide necessary infrastructural and overhead supports such as normal academic equipment, consumables, postage, fax, stationery, reference books and overseas telephone charges to funded projects.

Permissible items

- A detailed budget for the project throughout the project period should be given. Applications for longer-term grant (i.e. more than three years) may include a budget for the 4th or 5th year as appropriate.   PC and Co-PIs are not regarded as project staff and their salaries must not be paid from RGC's project fund.   Academic staff remunerated by any UGC-funded universities in Hong Kong must not be paid with honorarium or other forms of payment.

- The estimated costs should not include any "hidden" costs covered by recurrent block grant expenditure, such as the normal salaries of teaching staff who spend a portion of their time on research, cost of utilities, stationery, etc.   They should include only expenditure which would not otherwise be separately incurred.   Examples of these are: salaries of Research Assistants (RA) specifically employed for this project; purchase of equipment necessary for the investigation but not available in the university(ies).

- In cases where a particular RA is employed for several projects, his salary should be apportioned accordingly.

- The "General Expenses" item is a catch-all category for costs which cannot be included in any of the other items.

- Detailed justification should be provided.   Otherwise, RGC will not consider the request.

4. **Cost and justification**

One-line Vote Items

(a)(A)(i) Supporting Staff
Please state the number, rank, duties, duration and cost of staff involved, with justifications for the proposed rank and duration. RGC normally supports research support staff at the RA level, Post-doctoral Fellows or Research Postgraduate Students. If a higher grade of supporting staff and/or other personnel is required, detailed justification should be provided. The indicative rates for RA and Senior RA (SRA) in the academic year 2023/24 are HK$348,000 per annum and HK$558,000 per annum respectively. The rates are only meant for reference. The indicative rates will be reviewed regularly by the Council. The total staff costs supported will then depend on the indicative rates or the rates proposed by the applicants concerned, whichever is lower. In the case of applications for funding for Post-doctoral Fellows, the CV of the post-doc in one A4 page should also be attached if available.

(a)(A)(ii) Equipment
Please itemise all equipment expenses. Please note that partnership/matching funding in monetary terms on a 50% (RGC)(excluding on-costs)/50% (university) basis on the total cost of equipment is required. Applicants should provide the full amount of Equipment expenses when providing the detailed breakdown while the amount of matching funding provided by university should be separately inputted in Section (C) item (ix). RGC fund must not be used to purchase personal electronic devices such as cell phones, iPods, iPad, MP3 Players, digital cameras and PDAs except with sound justification as approved by RGC. In addition, 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 universities concerned. Universities may be required by RGC to confirm the availability of university's resources prior to their acceptance of an award. This is what RGC means by "university's commitment".

For equipment, the following points should be addressed:

(i) Why is the equipment essential to the project?

(ii) Has the department/university already provided such equipment?

(iii) Is there similar equipment elsewhere in other universities and what is the possibility of sharing?

(iv) Provide information supporting the estimated cost of equipment e.g. quotes from suppliers. <u>Items costing over HK$200,000 and without supporting quotations will **NOT** be considered.</u>

Please mark respective item number(s) clearly in the quotation(s). The quotation(s) must be submitted together with the application on or before the deadline of submission of applications. No late submission will be accepted.

For purchase of equipment at or over HK$2.5 million, the following supplementary information is required:

- Has the university already been provided with similar equipment? If yes, please explain the need for the purchase.

- Is there similar equipment elsewhere in other universities? If yes, please provide the following information regarding such equipment in other universities as far as possible:

  - brand/model details and the year of purchase of the equipment;
  - the number of hours of its utilisation and percentage of utilisation (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 universities per year;
  - whether and how it can perform more/less functions and capabilities than the equipment under application;
  - whether there is a practice of shared use of the equipment with other universities currently and in the past two years; and
  - any other reasons that preclude the shared use of the equipment with other universities.

- Level of use: please provide the estimated number of staff members and/or students expected to use the equipment under application and the estimated number of hours per annum of utilisation.

- Will the equipment be available for use by universities/institutions other than the collaborating universities/institutions under the application? If yes, please state the extent of shared use by other universities/institutions such as the number of hours available for sharing per week.

(a)(A)(iii) <u>Outsourcing Expenses of Research Work Outside Hong Kong</u>
Research grants awarded by RGC should primarily be used in undertaking research work in Hong Kong by the PCs and their teams in order to train and groom research talents in Hong Kong. It will be legitimate for the PCs to subcontract out a small part of the research work (regardless of geographic locations) only if:

(i)   The proposed activity is a necessary and justified part of the research and is outlined in the proposal for approval;

(ii)   The PCs should have identified and possessed a high level of research expertise in their teams when they submit research applications to RGC. The activity to be subcontracted out, for instance, data collection work, should not be the main intellectual focus of the research project;

(iii)   The persons/organisations providing the subcontracting services should be at arm's length with the PCs or their serving universities (for instance, employees, friends, relatives, subsidiary companies *etc.* should be avoided) and the procurement should be done in accordance with the university's procedures and guidelines; and

(iv)   The PCs or their team members should be involved in monitoring the subcontracting services or the supervision of the subcontracting services.

For subcontracting services or research work to be conducted outside Hong Kong, the PCs have to justify in their proposals to RGC/CRF Selection Panel for approval. RGC/CRF Selection Panel will deal with the matter on a case-by-case basis, having regard to the merits and justification given by the PCs and whether the conditions specified above have been fulfilled. For services/work over HK$200,000, price quotations must be provided. Applicants should also provide detailed justification of sample sizes and costs for surveys conducted outside Hong Kong.

(a)(A)(iv) <u>General Expenses</u>

Outsourcing services other than those specified in (iii) above should be included under general expenses. Please itemise all general expenses. For services/purchase over HK$200,000, price quotations must be provided. Applicants should also provide detailed justification of sample sizes and costs for surveys conducted in Hong Kong.

(a)(A)(v) <u>Conference Expenses</u>

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$20,000 per year, irrespective of the number of investigators involved in the project, is normally allowed for each funded project.

Earmarked Items

(a)(B)(vi) <u>High-performance Computing Services</u>
A provision of up to HK$100,000 will be allowed for the subscription of high-performance computing services for each funded project. Price quotation should be provided. Requests without quotations may not be considered.

(a)(B)(vii) <u>Research-related Software Licence/Dataset</u>
For requests for purchase/subscription of research-related software licence(s)/dataset(s), price quotations should be provided. Requests without quotation may not be considered. The university should not use RGC Funds to purchase standard software licences/dataset.

(b) to (d) Please confirm whether or not the requested equipment/high-performance computing services/research-related software licence/dataset is available in the university(ies). If yes, please explain why such related equipment/high-performance computing services/software cannot be used by the applicant(s).

5. <u>Existing facilities and major equipment available for this research project</u>
Please elaborate the existing facilities and equipment available for this research project.

6. <u>Funds secured or to be secured</u>
Other sources of funds can include private donations, awards or grants from other organisations, contract research funds from commercial enterprises, or special allocations made by the university from the block grant or the indicated grant for equipment, etc. It should be noted that the amount secured from other sources will be deducted from the total cost of the project in Section 4(a) of Part II.

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

COLLABORATION PLAN

7. Particulars of PC and Co-PIs

(a)   This section should summarise the qualifications of the PC and each Co-PI(s) who will be involved in the project.   The CVs to be attached should include the following information, as appropriate:

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

The author list of the publications in the CV should be presented in full and cited exactly as written in the original publication.   In particular, the applicant should indicate clearly his/her position especially in the long author list, say author 13 out of 40 for facilitating CRF Selection Panel's consideration.   Failure to comply with the above requirements may lead to disqualification of the concerned application.

Each CV should be limited to either **two A4 pages or a maximum of 800 words in standard RGC format** stated in "Format and Fonts" above.

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

This section should be limited to either two A4 pages in standard RGC format or a maximum of 800 words. If the research involves collaboration with other research team(s) or university(ies)/institution(s), letters of collaboration are required to be attached to Section 12.   The PC should confirm that the Co-PIs listed in the proposal have explicitly agreed to serve in the project team and a copy of the proposal has been provided to each of the Co-PIs. Letter(s) of collaboration from the Co-PI(s) should be attached to Section 12. Further documentary proof on the collaboration should be provided upon request of RGC/the Secretariat.

DECLARATION OF TIME COMMITMENTS, RELATED PROPOSALS/RESEARCH WORK & GRANT RECORD

8. Declaration of time commitments

Please provide
(i) the number of on-going individual research projects being held by the PC in any capacity (e.g. PI, Co-I, Collaborator, etc.); and
(ii) the number of on-going collaborative research projects being held by the PC in any capacity (e.g. PC, Co-PI, Co-I, Collaborator, etc.).

Research projects funded from all sources (irrespective of whether from UGC/RGC) should be included, except those funded under the joint research schemes and the fellowship schemes administered by RGC. A project is regarded as "on-going" if the completion report of the project has not been submitted/will not be submitted by the application deadline of the current CRF YCRG exercise.

If the number declared in (i) exceeds three or the number declared in (ii) exceeds two, please provide (iii) overall amount of time spent on research by the PC in percentage terms; and (iv) justifications on how the PC would be able to take up this additional research project if funded while maintaining the research quality.

9. Grant Record of Project Coordinator/Co-Principal Investigators

It is the responsibility of applicants (both PC and Co-PI(s)) to ensure that no duplicate funding from all sources including RGC will be sought/has been sought for the same/substantially similar research project. Failure to declare related projects/proposals/work (irrespective of whether submitted to/funded by UGC/RGC and not limited to those in the past five years) in this section may result in disqualification of the application and debarring from applying future UGC/RGC grants. PC/Co-PI(s) are required to declare any related research work that is being/has been conducted in relation to the proposal, and provide clarifications that distinguish that related research work from the work requested to be funded through this proposal.

It is RGC to make the final decision on whether two proposals/projects/research work are similar. The judgement of RGC is final. Therefore, it is always advisable for the PC or the Co-PI(s) to declare related research work when there is uncertainty. The PC and the Co-PI(s) are advised to make the declaration and elaborate the difference in the proposals/projects/research work to avoid misunderstanding. Declaration of related proposals/projects/research work does not necessarily mean that the proposals concerned will be adversely affected. RGC may still fund the proposals concerned if the applicants are able to justify the differences of the proposals/projects/research work for separate funding.

(a)   For the PC, please provide details on each of the research projects/proposals/work undertaken/submitted by the PC (in capacity of PC/PI/Co-PI/Co-I) including:

   (i)   completed research work funded from all sources (irrespective of whether from UGC/RGC) in the past five years;

   (ii)   on-going research work funded from all sources (including work funded but yet to commence; irrespective of whether from UGC/RGC); and

   (iii)   proposals pending funding approval (irrespective of whether submitted to UGC/RGC).

Please also provide the objectives for each of the completed/on-going/ pending projects/proposals/work under (i), (ii) and (iii) as well as the number of hours per week spent on each of the on-going projects (except the involvement as Co-I in General Research Fund/Joint Research Schemes projects funded by RGC) under (ii).

The PC should also declare

   (iv)   any related research work that is being/has been conducted in relation to the proposal (irrespective of whether from UGC/RGC and not limited to the past five years), including but not limited to data collection, preliminary research, working papers, publications (such as journal papers, conference papers and books, etc.), presentations, media interviews and other submitted proposals, etc.   The PC is also required to provide the details (such as the title of the projects and/or papers/publications, or a brief description of the preliminary research work, etc.) whether or not such work was part of a funded project; and provide clarifications that distinguish that related research work from the work requested to be funded through this proposal.   Any researcher who fails to disclose any related research work that is being/has been conducted in relation to the proposal will be subject to disciplinary action.

(b)   For each Co-PI, please provide details on each of the research projects/proposals/work undertaken/submitted by each Co-PI (in capacity of PC/PI/Co-PI/Co-I) including:

   (i)   on-going research projects funded from all sources (including work funded but yet to commence; irrespective of whether from UGC/RGC); and

   (ii)   proposals pending funding approval (irrespective of whether submitted to UGC/RGC).

Please also provide the number of hours per week spent on each of the on-going projects (except the involvement as Co-I in General Research Fund/Joint Research Schemes projects funded by RGC).

Each Co-PI should also declare

(iii)   any related research work that is being/has been conducted in relation to the proposal (irrespective of whether from UGC/RGC and not limited to the past five years), including but not limited to data collection, preliminary research, working papers, publications (such as journal papers, conference papers and books, etc.), presentations, media interviews and other submitted proposals, etc.   The Co-PI is required to provide the details (such as the title of the projects and/or papers/publications, or a brief description of the preliminary research work, etc.) whether or not such work was part of a funded project; and provide clarifications that distinguish that related research work from the work requested to be funded through this proposal. Any researcher who fails to disclose any related research work that is being/has been conducted in relation to the proposal will be subject to disciplinary action.

(c)   Please include a summary of a maximum of 400 words in standard RGC format, one summary per application, on the key results and publications in respect of each previously UGC/RGC and non-UGC/RGC funded project undertaken by the PC and Co-PI(s), in descending chronological order, which are relevant to the application.

ANCILLARY INFORMATION

10. Research Ethics/Safety approval and Access to Government/Official/Private Data and Records

(a)   <u>Research Ethics/Safety Approval</u>
It is the responsibility of the university and the PC to ensure that the research proposal is carefully reviewed for its compliance with applicable laws, health and safety guidelines and ethical standards. Ethics clearance should be sought for research involving artefacts, living animals and/or human subjects including social sciences research involving human subjects (e.g. potential physical or psychological harms, discomfort or stress to human participants that a research project might generate, subjects' privacy etc.). The primary responsibility of seeking the relevant approval and ethics clearance rests with the PC. The PC's university is required to complete and sign Part III of the application form to confirm whether the research proposal involves human subjects/artefacts and certify whether the relevant approval is required and if required, the relevant approval has been given/is being sought. For research involving clinical trials, PCs are allowed to obtain relevant ethics approval before the release of funding and project commencement. Please also see the respective notes in Part III below.

(b)   <u>Access to Government/Official/Private Data and Records</u>
It is the responsibility of the university and the PC to ensure that approval has been sought for access to Government/official/private data and records if the related data/records are critical to the research proposal. The primary responsibility of seeking the relevant approval rests with the PC. The PC's university is required to complete and sign Part III of this application form to confirm the relevant approval, if necessary, has been given/is being sought.

For both Section 10(a) and (b) with the exception of research involving clinical trials, applications should not be submitted unless the approval of the appropriate authority(ies) has/have been or is/are being sought. RGC will regard the applications as being withdrawn if no confirmation of approval is provided to RGC by **26 July 2024**.

If the university/PC declared that no approval was required but RGC/CRF Selection Panel eventually considered otherwise, the related application may be disqualified.

11. **Release of completion report, data archive possibilities, and public access of publications resulting from research funded by RGC**

Release of completion report

PCs are required to release the completion reports (containing abstract in non-technical terms, objectives, research output including the list of conference papers/publications/journals and research findings and contact information of PC) to the public through RGC website. PCs should assess data archive potential and opportunities for data sharing. Due additional weight will be given to an application where the applicants are willing to make research data available to others.

PCs are required to include in the completion reports the URL links to the university's repositories or the publishers' websites so that the public could have quick and easy access to the manuscripts or journal articles. PCs are also encouraged to include in their completion reports the data repositories where research data of their projects could be accessed and shared, where appropriate.

With a view to further promoting open access and obtaining a more in-depth understanding of the local open access landscape, RGC will collect open-access-related information of peer-reviewed journal publications arising directly from the project.

Public access of publication resulting from research funded by RGC

(i)   Upon acceptance of a paper for publication resulting from the work done on a research project funded in whole or in part by RGC, the PC should check whether the publisher already allows (A) full open access to the publisher's version, or (B) the author's depositing a copy of the paper (either the publisher's version or the final accepted manuscript after peer-review) in the university's repository for open access;

(ii)   if both (i) (A) and (B) are not allowed, the PC should request the publisher's permission to place either version in his/her university's repository for restricted access immediately upon publication or after an embargo period of up to twelve months if required by the publisher; and

(iii) subject to the publisher's agreement on (i) or (ii) above, the PC should deposit a copy of the publication in his/her university's repository as early as possible but no later than six months after publication or the embargo period, if any.

12. <u>Education Plan, Letters of Collaboration and Supporting Documents</u>

<u>Appendix I: Education Plan (Mandatory)</u>
Applicants should describe how they will leverage the research in an educational context with a view to strengthening the teaching-research integration. As there may be different expectation within different disciplines, a wide range of educational activities will be acceptable (with a maximum of 400 words in standard RGC format).

<u>Appendix II: Technology Transfer Plan (Optional)</u>
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 full 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 making funding decisions. 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.

<u>Appendix III: Statement on Public Policy Element (Optional)</u>

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.

<u>Appendices IV & V: Letters of Collaboration and Supporting Documents</u>
Only letter(s) of collaboration and supporting documents (e.g. ethics/safety approval letters) are allowed.

Other than the abovementioned, applicants should not make use of this section to supplement the contents of other sections.   Applications may be disqualified if the proposals are found to have abused the purpose of this section.

13. **Undertaking of the Project Coordinator**

It is the responsibility of the PC to ensure 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.

PART III   UNIVERSITY'S   ENDORSEMENT   AND   DECLARATION   OF RESEARCH ETHICS/SAFETY
[To be completed by the appropriate authority of the PC's university]

1.   University's Endorsement

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 YCRG 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) & (b)   The university is required to verify and confirm whether the CRF YCRG 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 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.

(c) to (g)   For items (c) to (g), please see the notes for Section 4 in Part II.

(h)   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.

(i)   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 (i) and provide reason(s) for not doing so.

3. **Research Ethics/Safety Approval and Access to Government/Official/Private Data and Records**

(a) The university 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 artefacts, 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 universities to ascertain if they involve human subjects/artefacts. For applications involving clinical trials, PCs are allowed to obtain relevant ethics approval before the release of funding and project commencement. For other non-clinical applications involving human subjects, the university must give approval/exemption according to their internal ethics guidelines by **26 July 2024** as is the case with other ethics/safety approval. If the university is unable to confirm by 26 July 2024 that the required approval has been obtained, RGC will stop processing the application which will be regarded as to have been withdrawn.

(b) The university should confirm that the approval of the appropriate authority(ies) has/have been or is/are being obtained in respect of access to data/records critical to the proposed research. If the university is unable to confirm by **26 July 2024** that the required approval has been obtained, RGC will stop processing the application which will be regarded as to have been withdrawn.

For (a) and (b) above, if the university/PC declared that no approval was required but RGC/CRF Selection Panel eventually considered otherwise, the related application may be disqualified.

Part III 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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<div align="right">**Annex B**</div>

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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