

**Disbursement, Accounting and  
Monitoring Arrangements for  
Funding Schemes**

**Administered by  
the Research Grants Council**

(for University Grants Committee-funded  
universities)

# Table of Contents

		Paragraphs
<b>Part I</b>	<b>General</b>	1
	Research Funding Schemes Administered by the RGC	2
	Roles of Universities	3 – 12
	Disbursement, Accounting and Monitoring Arrangements	13 – 15
<b>Part II</b>	<b>Disbursement Arrangement</b>	16
<b>Part III</b>	<b>Accounting Arrangement</b>	
	Approved Scope	17 – 19
	On Approval of New Projects	20 – 24
	On Termination/Completion of Projects	25 – 30
<b>Part IV</b>	<b>Monitoring Arrangement</b>	
	Changes to Approved Projects	31
	Submission of Progress Reports	32 – 33
	Submission of Completion Reports	34 – 39
	Unsatisfactory, Barely Satisfactory and Overdue Reports	40 – 41
	On-site Inspection	42
	Acknowledgement	43 – 46
<b>Annex A</b>	Research Funding Schemes Administered by the RGC	
<b>Annex B</b>	Specific Guidelines Applicable to Early Career Scheme/General Research Fund	
<b>Annex C</b>	Specific Guidelines Applicable to Humanities and Social Sciences Prestigious Fellowship Scheme	
<b>Annex D</b>	Specific Guidelines Applicable to Strategic Public Policy Research Funding Schemes	
<b>Annex E</b>	Specific Guidelines Applicable to Collaborative Research Fund	
<b>Annex F</b>	Specific Guidelines Applicable to Research Impact Fund	
<b>Annex G</b>	Specific Guidelines Applicable to Joint Research Schemes	
<b>Annex H</b>	Specific Guidelines Applicable to Postgraduate Students Conference/Seminar Grants	
<b>Annex I</b>	Specific Guidelines Applicable to RGC Postdoctoral Fellowship Scheme	
<b>Annex J</b>	Specific Guidelines Applicable to RGC Research Fellow Scheme and RGC Senior Research Fellow Scheme	
<b>Appendix A(1)</b>	Statement of Accounts for RGC-funded/administered Projects	
<b>Appendix A(2)</b>	Statement of Accounts for Humanities and Social Sciences Prestigious Fellowship Scheme Awards	
<b>Appendix A(3)</b>	Statement of Accounts for RGC Postdoctoral Fellowship Scheme	
<b>Appendix A(4)</b>	Statement of Accounts for RGC Research Fellow Scheme and RGC Senior Research Fellow Scheme	
<b>Appendix B</b>	Request for Change of Project Coordinator/Principal Investigator	

<b>Appendix C</b>	Humanities and Social Sciences Prestigious Fellowship Scheme Application for Revision in Work Plan/Dissemination Plan of Newly Awarded Fellowship
<b>Appendix D</b>	Joint Research Schemes Application for Revision of Funded Project

## **Part I - General**

1. These guidelines set out the disbursement, accounting and monitoring arrangements for research funding schemes<sup>1</sup> administered by the Research Grants Council (RGC) for University Grants Committee (UGC)-funded universities. Project Coordinators (PCs) and Principal Investigators (PIs) and their respective universities should observe the requirements in the guidelines and check with the UGC Secretariat where clarification is needed.

### ***Research Funding Schemes Administered by the Research Grants Council***

2. The principal source of funding available to a UGC-funded university in Hong Kong to support research and other professional and scholarly activity is the university recurrent or block grant. A significant proportion of the university recurrent grant is provided to support the infrastructure, staff time and overhead costs associated with faculty research and professional/scholarly activities. Research grants are also provided through other channels, including the Central Allocation Vote of the UGC (for the Areas of Excellence Scheme) and the investment income of the Research Endowment Fund (REF). These UGC grants are disbursed on a competitive basis through different funding schemes to support academic research by the academics and students of the UGC-funded universities. A list of research funding schemes administered by the RGC is at **Annex A**.

### ***Roles of Universities***

#### **(A) Grant Undertakings**

3. UGC grants, though awarded to specific projects in the name of individual PCs/PIs, are actually grants allocated to universities. By accepting the grants and signing the grant undertakings (if applicable), the universities and PCs/PIs agree to abide by all the relevant UGC/RGC guidelines on disbursement, accounting and monitoring arrangements.

#### **(B) Designated Bank Accounts**

4. Universities are required to open a separate interest-bearing bank account with a licensed bank registered under the Banking Ordinance (Cap. 155) solely for depositing receipts and making payments in relation to the grants funded by the REF (see **Annex A**). All interest income generated in the said bank account should be kept in the account and returned to the UGC/RGC as appropriate on an annual basis together with supporting document such as bank statement before end of January of each year (i.e. interest received from January to December should be returned in January of the following year). A separate ledger

---

<sup>1</sup> Separate guidelines are issued for the Areas of Excellence Scheme and Theme-based Research Scheme.

designated for the sole purpose of keeping and transacting all monies of the grants funded by the REF should be kept. Bank reconciliation should be prepared promptly and regularly, at least once a month, of the balance as shown in the ledger. Universities should also draw up proper instructions and guidelines regarding the conduct of business through the said bank account.

5. Notwithstanding paragraph 4 above, universities may be exempted from opening a separate interest-bearing bank account with a licensed bank registered under the Banking Ordinance (Cap. 155) solely for depositing receipts and making payments in relation to the project grants funded by the REF provided that:

- (a) all the project funds would **not** be put in any investment instrument other than risk-free interest-bearing bank accounts with a licensed bank registered under the Banking Ordinance (Cap. 155); and
- (b) if the project funds are placed together with other funds of the university, the interest income for the project funds should be apportioned equitably from all ACTUAL monthly bank interest income generated from total bank deposits<sup>2</sup>, from the date of receipt of the project funds<sup>3</sup> up to the date of returning the unspent balance to the Government, in accordance with the following formula:

$$\frac{\begin{array}{l} \text{Average positive ledger balance} \\ \text{(i.e. the simple average of the} \\ \text{opening and closing balances) of} \\ \text{all relevant projects for the month,} \\ \text{adjusted for disallowed expenses,} \\ \text{unrecorded income, if any, and} \\ \text{accrued interest (Notes 1\&2)} \end{array}}{\begin{array}{l} \text{Average bank balance (extracted} \\ \text{from bank statements/bank} \\ \text{passbooks) for the month of} \\ \text{university's funds placed in bank} \\ \text{deposits}^2 \text{ (Note 2)} \end{array}} \times \begin{array}{l} \text{Total actual monthly} \\ \text{interest income} \\ \text{generated from total} \\ \text{bank deposits}^2 \text{ for the} \\ \text{month included in the} \\ \text{university's funds} \end{array}$$

*Important Notes:*

- (1) Negative interest is **not** allowed to be charged on any negative projects' fund balances.
- (2) As the amount of unpresented cheques would have been transferred to the current account, the effect of the unpresented cheques is contra with the current account. In other words, a proportionate share of the average bank balance of

<sup>2</sup> Total bank deposits include fixed deposits and savings accounts only.

<sup>3</sup> Applicable to new projects awarded from 2015/16 funding exercise. For projects awarded in previous exercises, interest on the remaining balances in the project ledger accounts should be apportioned with the UGC starting from 1 July 2015.

*the university's fund placed in the working capital (cash and current accounts) for the month is not provided for in the denominator. It is based on the assumption that all projects' fund balances are placed in bank deposits (fixed deposits and savings accounts only).*

### **(C) Auditors' Reports**

6. Universities are required to set out the UGC/RGC research funding in the annual audited financial statements submitted to the UGC. The assurance report should be issued by independent auditors who must be certified public accountants holding a practising certificate registered under the Professional Accountants Ordinance (Cap. 50) (the Auditors) and conducted in accordance with the latest edition of the notes issued by the UGC.

7. Universities should specify in the engagement letter for the employment of the Auditors that they should follow the requirements and the specimen stipulated in the latest version of the UGC Notes on Procedures in conducting a reasonable assurance engagement and preparing auditors' report. The universities and PCs/PIs are required to make available to the Auditors all information, invoices/receipts, documents, and explanations relating to the projects.

8. In case a project has been transferred to another university during the project period, the last university should be responsible for submission of all the necessary report(s) and Statement of Accounts covering the entire project period in one go. The last university should also include the project in their consolidated project account and assurance report.

### **(D) Internal Monitoring by Universities**

9. While the PC/PI is held responsible for the overall management, implementation and completion of a research project, the university is also required to assume the important role of managing the projects and expenditure, overseeing the procurement of equipment/services approved under the projects and putting in place an internal monitoring system.

10. Universities should make reference to the "Corruption Prevention Guide for Tertiary Education Institutions" issued by the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) in the procurement of equipment, services and other materials for the projects. Universities should also make reference to the "Best Practice Checklist on Staff Administration" issued by the ICAC in the employment of project staff for the projects. The PCs/PIs and relevant project staff should always avoid and declare conflicts of interest in the conduct of business of the projects.

11. Whenever irregularities have been detected, universities have the responsibility in rectifying and following up the cases closely. Where the RGC's approval and advice are required to be sought, universities are expected to exercise

their judgement to ensure that only fully justifiable cases are recommended to the RGC for consideration.

#### **(E) Keeping of Records**

12. Universities are required to keep all accounting records related to the UGC/RGC project grants for seven years for inspection when needed. Notwithstanding, universities should ensure that, for projects which require the submission of audited Statement of Accounts on project basis to the RGC after project completion/termination, the accounting records are properly kept to facilitate the required auditing. Other project records such as working papers or publications should be kept for at least three years after project completion/termination.

#### ***Disbursement, Accounting and Monitoring Arrangements***

13. The disbursement, accounting and monitoring arrangements in Parts II to IV below are generally applicable to the projects approved under all funding schemes covered by these guidelines, unless otherwise specified in Annexes B to J.

14. The UGC/RGC assumes no responsibility, financial or otherwise, for expenditure or other liabilities arising from the research projects it supported.

15. The RGC reserves the rights to amend, supplement, apply, interpret and make exception to these guidelines.

## Part II - Disbursement Arrangement

16. Unless otherwise specified, the RGC adopts the following disbursement arrangements:

Project Duration <sup>4</sup>	Grant Size per Project	Disbursement Arrangement
12 months or less	Irrespective of grant size	One-off payment in the year of approval.
13 to 36 months	(a) (i) Projects of \$800,000 or above approved under E, M & P Panels  (ii) Projects of \$600,000 or above approved under B & H Panels  (see notes below)	<u>First instalment</u> 60% in the year of approval.  <u>Second instalment</u> 40% subject to satisfactory assessment of annual/mid-term progress report.
	(b) (i) Projects below \$800,000 approved under E, M & P Panels  (ii) Projects below \$600,000 approved under B & H Panels  (see notes below)	<u>First instalment</u> 60% in the year of approval.  <u>Second instalment</u> 40% subject to submission of annual/mid-term progress report and no major irregularities in project progress.  Second instalment for projects with major irregularities identified in progress reports will be withheld. Payment will be made until PI proposes remedial action acceptable to the RGC.
37 months or above	Irrespective of grant size	<u>First instalment</u> In the year of approval.  <u>Second instalment</u> Subject to satisfactory assessment of second annual progress report.  The respective percentage of first and second instalments will be decided by the RGC.

### Notes on Panel Codes

E: Engineering

M: Biology & Medicine

P: Physical Sciences

B: Business Studies

H: Humanities & Social Sciences

<sup>4</sup> As originally approved by the RGC before project commencement.



## Part III - Accounting Arrangement

### *Approved Scope*

17. It is the universities' responsibilities to ensure that the UGC grants are used appropriately and reasonably within the approved scope and timeframe. In particular, the expenditure for the items should be incurred within the following respective scopes:

(A) One-line Vote

*(Virement between approved budget items under one-line vote within the same project does not require RGC's approval. Any unspent balance should be returned to the RGC together with the Statement of Accounts within six months of the project termination/completion date.)*

(a) Research Support Staff

Funding support may be provided for the remuneration of research support staff, such as Senior Research Assistants, Research Assistants, Postdoctoral Fellows and Research Postgraduate students, who assist in conducting research work of RGC funded projects concerned. UGC grants must not be used to remunerate PCs/PIs and Co-Principal Investigators (Co-PIs)/Co-Investigators (Co-Is) or to subsidise their salaries, including honorarium, in any way.

(b) Equipment

Specialised equipment essential for the approved project and not otherwise provided by the university may be funded. Universities may however be expected to meet part of such cost if the equipment will be available for other research projects or teaching during the project's duration. Upon completion of the approved project, the equipment acquired can be redeployed at the discretion of the university. Should an approved project be terminated for any reason, universities should report any major items of research equipment (costing \$500,000 and over) to the RGC. The RGC reserves the right to redeploy any such major equipment acquired by the UGC grants for use by other universities where appropriate or practicable.

Notwithstanding that the approved projects are fully funded or the equipment items have been included in the research proposals, the PIs and the universities must not use the UGC grants to purchase:

- (i) personal electronic devices such as cell phones, tablets, iPod, iPad, MP3 players, digital cameras/video recorders and PDAs; and
- (ii) standard office equipment such as personal computers, servers, laptop computers, printers, scanners and standard software/software licence/dataset known to be available, or reasonably expected to be provided in the universities, except with sound justification as specially approved by the RGC.

(c) Travel/Conference Grant

On request, a conference grant of up to \$20,000 per year is allowed to encourage the PC/PI/Co-PI/Co-I and other research personnel engaged in the approved project to meet travelling and associated expenses for attending recognised international conference(s) to deliver paper(s) related to the project. The conference grant is part of the one-line vote for the project and need not be accounted for separately.

(d) Infrastructural Support/Overheads

Approved projects may be funded fully or partially by the RGC. Where required, universities may top up partially funded projects from other funding sources to ensure that these projects can realistically work towards their goals. Apart from contributions towards specialised equipment, universities can provide necessary infrastructural and overhead support such as normal academic equipment, consumables (consumable research materials, however, may be funded by the RGC grant as necessary), postage, fax, stationery, reference books, overseas telephone charges, etc. to the approved projects.

(B) Earmarked Items

*(All earmarked items are not transferable. They should only be used to meet the expenses of the respective specified purposes. Any unspent balance should be returned to the RGC together with the Statement of Accounts within six months of the project termination/completion date.)*

(a) Relief Teacher

The salary for the relief teacher should not exceed the salary of Staff Grade 'G' (i.e. Lecturer (U)) of the university concerned. Unless RGC's approval to employ a relief teacher with higher salary is granted, the exceeding part of salary should be topped up by the university concerned.

(b) High-performance computing services

A ceiling of up to \$100,000 will be allowed for the subscription of high-performance computing services for each funded project.

(C) Outsourcing of Research Work Outside Hong Kong

18. Research grants awarded by the RGC should primarily be used in undertaking research work in Hong Kong by the PCs/PIs and their teams in order to train and groom research talents in Hong Kong. It will be legitimate for the PCs/PIs to subcontract out a small part of the research work (regardless of geographic locations) only if all the following conditions are fully met:

- (a) The proposed activity is a necessary and justified part of the research and has already been outlined in the approved proposal;
- (b) The PCs/PIs should have identified and possessed a high level of research expertise in their teams when they submit research applications to the RGC. The activity to be subcontracted out, for instance, data collection work, should not be the main intellectual focus of the research project;
- (c) The persons/organizations providing the subcontracting services should be at arm's length with the PCs/PIs 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 procedures and guidelines; and
- (d) The PCs/PIs or their team members should be involved in monitoring the subcontracting services or the supervision of the subcontracting services.

19. Any subcontracting services or research work to be conducted outside Hong Kong that are not included in the approved proposal will require RGC's prior approval.

***On Approval of New Projects***

20. Universities are required to create a reserve account, to which unexpended grant balances of projects will be transferred at the end of the academic year, to be carried forward to the following year, or to the next triennium.

21. A project grant is, unless otherwise stated, a one-line vote without further division into sub-allocations. For "One-line Vote", virement between approved budget items within the same project does not require RGC's approval.

If a PC/PI wishes to spend the money on an item that is not covered by the approved budget, he/she has to seek approval from the RGC on this new item. Virement between projects is not allowed. For “Earmarked Items”, the funding for the respective item is an earmarked sum out of the approved project grant. This earmarked amount is not transferable and should not be used to meet other items of expenses of the approved project. Any unspent balance of the project grant should be returned to the RGC.

22. The official start dates for newly approved projects are detailed in specific guidelines for individual schemes at Annexes B to J. Project grants must not be expended earlier than the project commencement date. PCs/PIs have the discretion to decline a grant before commencement of the project if they do not consider it viable to carry out the projects. The RGC will not attach any penalty to such cases.

23. To facilitate the management and public access of all newly funded projects, the concerned PCs/PIs are required to submit essential data, including the revised project estimates, revised start/scheduled completion dates, PCs’/PIs’ Chinese names, Chinese project titles, etc.

24. In case a project budget is reduced and the PC/PI accepts the grant, the concerned PC/PI is required to submit the revised budget and the revised objectives or work programme if deemed necessary for consideration and endorsement by the appropriate RGC committee/panel. Comments by the RGC on the revisions will be provided to the PC/PI through the university as soon as practicable. In any event, a PC/PI should only accept a grant when he/she is satisfied that the funding approved by the RGC plus other resources available will be sufficient for the completion of the project. For on-going projects, requests for revision of project objectives should be separately submitted to the RGC for consideration as and when deemed necessary (see paragraph 31(d)).

### ***On Termination/Completion of Projects***

25. For cases where the PC/PI becomes ineligible for the grant (e.g. on prolonged leave/leaving Hong Kong/incapable of managing the project) after commencement and prior to the completion of the project, the universities should endeavour to identify a suitable Co-PI/Co-I who has been involved in the project since commencement or a suitable PC/PI to take over the role of PC/PI and recommend to the RGC for approval. If no suitable investigator can be nominated to take over the project, the project will be terminated. Universities should notify the RGC as soon as the PC/PI’s departure/leave has been confirmed and the project account should be frozen at the same time.

26. The following accounting rules should be observed in handling project termination:

- (a) Once the project account is frozen, both the PC/PI and the university are obliged to cease immediately committing or incurring new expenditure under the account except for committed and uncancellable normal expenditure of salary to Research Assistants or equivalent employed before project termination date for a reasonable but limited time (i.e. payment in lieu of notice when staff's contracts have to be terminated as a result) and ordered equipment (where penalties are involved for cancellation of order). Such expenses must be solely and directly related to the project in question and have been committed before the project account is frozen.
- (b) Should the RGC eventually reject a PC/PI's request for change or temporary waiver of eligibility requirements, the date of termination takes retrospective effect from the date when the PC/PI becomes ineligible for the grant or original completion date. The university is required to return the expenses incurred by the project starting from the retrospective termination date except under very exceptional and justifiable circumstances.
- (c) If no suitable PI can be identified by the university to take over the role of PI of the project, the date of termination takes effect from the date when the PC/PI becomes ineligible for the grant.
- (d) Universities are required to return the unspent balance (and expenses incurred since the retrospective termination date if applicable) and submit a concluding report to the RGC within six months of termination.
- (e) The RGC will consider the possible redeployment of the equipment acquired by UGC grants where necessary. Exceptional cases will be considered by the RGC on their individual merits.

27. The project account in respect of a completed project should be frozen immediately after the completion date, and any request for additional expenses incurred after that date to the unspent balance of the project must not be entertained. Under exceptional circumstances, universities are given the discretion to allow charging certain expenses shortly after the project completion date to the unspent project account in justified circumstances. Before exercising such discretion, universities must satisfy themselves that the expenses are strictly necessary for dissemination of research results (e.g. attendance at important international conferences and essential publication work). In any case, usage of unspent balance to meet the costs of purchase of stores/equipment or staff salaries beyond the project completion date is strictly prohibited.

28. It is the onus of universities to verify any claim of expenses incurred while the account is frozen and to satisfy themselves that due efforts have been made to ascertain whether to pay the expenses incurred after the project account has been frozen. For audit purpose and in order to ensure accountability, universities and the PC/PI are required to provide an itemized report of such expenses, together with corresponding justification, in the relevant Statement of Accounts of the projects.

29. Upon termination/completion of a project, the university is required to return the unspent balance together with a Statement of Accounts at **Appendix A(1)/A(2)/A(3)/A(4) as appropriate** to the UGC Secretariat within six months of project termination/completion date.

30. The RGC reserves the right to withdraw support and project grant for particular projects by giving appropriate advance notice.

## Part IV – Monitoring Arrangement

### *Changes to Approved Projects*

31. All major changes to approved projects require RGC's prior approval.

(a) General principles

Where the proposed changes are initiated by the PC/PI, the university should consider them internally before forwarding its recommendation, with any additional information, to the RGC for consideration. Both the PCs/PIs and the universities have the responsibility to file the applications for RGC's approval in good time and well in advance of the effective date of proposed changes/waivers. If a PC/PI's request for change/waiver is submitted to the RGC after or just shortly before the effective date of the proposed change/waiver, his/her project is liable to the risk of being terminated with retrospective effect from the date of his/her departure (for change of PI), the commencement of his/her leave (for temporary waiver of eligibility requirements) or the original completion date (for project extension). In such case, the university will be required to return the expenses incurred by the project since the retrospective termination date except under very exceptional circumstances. If the RGC's approval is still pending by the original completion date or by the time the PC/PI has become ineligible to hold the grant, the project account in question should be frozen immediately until RGC's approval is granted.

(b) Change of PC/PI and Co-PI/Co-I

Change of PC/PI will not be approved within the first six months of an approved project save for very exceptional circumstances. Change of PC/PI from the seventh month may be considered by the RGC under the following circumstances:

- (i) Clear evidence can be provided by the PC/PI to the satisfaction of the RGC that when the project commences, he/she is not aware of the changing circumstances that may not allow him/her to complete the project;
- (ii) Genuine and convincing reasons in support of the change for PC/PI must be given (e.g. departure of PC/PI due to emigration, change of profession, ill health, etc.) and supported by the university concerned; and

- (iii) A suitable Co-PI/Co-I who has been involved in the project since commencement or a suitable PC/PI is available and considered suitable by the RGC to take over the role of PC/PI. In this connection, the PC/PI and the nominee are required to complete the proforma at **Appendix B** and submit it to the UGC Secretariat via the university. The university should provide confirmation that the nominee meets all the RGC eligibility requirements as the PC/PI of the approved project. A nominee who is holding another UGC/RGC project (excluding HSSPFS award) with funding support for relief teacher should not take over another project with teaching relief support unless the completion report of his/her own project is submitted by the time the application for change of PC/PI is filed.

Once the research protocol and the composition of a research team have been approved, the RGC normally would not entertain requests for additional Co-PIs/Co-Is save in very exceptional circumstances. Universities are expected to exercise their judgement before forwarding recommendations to the RGC for consideration.

(c) PCs/PIs proceeding on prolonged leave

PCs/PIs, who are on leave for a continuous or cumulative period exceeding 183 days within the project period but wish to continue as PCs/PIs, are required to seek RGC's approval in advance for temporary waiver of eligibility requirements. If the temporary waiver is approved, normally no extension and change of the objectives of the projects concerned will be allowed. Universities should seek RGC's approval for the temporary waiver before granting the leave. The application for waiver may be considered by the RGC under the following circumstances:

- (i) Evidence is provided that the PC/PI is able to continue to oversee the project during his/her leave; and
- (ii) An undertaking must be made by the PC/PI to confirm that he/she will return to the concerned university upon expiry of his/her leave.

Failure to meet these requirements will result in termination of the concerned project. As a result, the university is required to return the RGC grant spent during the leave of PC/PI.



(d) Revision of project objectives

Research projects are supported on the basis of, among other things, the objectives stated in the original proposals. The PCs/PIs should not alter the project objectives without seeking prior approval of the RGC. In case revision of project objectives is warranted, the PCs/PIs should seek formal approval through their universities. The universities will exercise their judgement, recommend the justifiable cases and confirm the university's new commitments, if any, to the RGC for consideration.

(e) Transfer of project to another university

Before the PC/PI takes up an appointment at another UGC-funded university before the completion of a project, the current university should reach a mutual consensus with the receiving university on the transfer of the balance of the allocation for the project (normally together with the equipment where justified and appropriate) to the receiving university. The current university should then report any changes in the appointment status of the PCs/PIs as well as submit the request for transfer to the RGC for prior approval. RGC's prior approval is needed to effect the transfer of projects.

(f) Extension of project completion date<sup>5</sup>

- (i) For extension of a period of six months and less, the authority is with the university. The PIs should apply to their universities direct. From prudent project management angle, universities are expected to exercise their judgement to ensure that only fully justifiable cases are approved, particularly during the first half of the project life. The RGC must be notified of the extension approved by universities before the original completion date of the project.
- (ii) For extension beyond six months, RGC's approval is needed. The PIs are required to submit up-to-date progress reports together with their requests for project extension. As at the date of extension application, if the PIs have recently submitted progress reports ending within three months, the requirement for an up-to-date progress report is waived. The universities should exercise their judgement and recommend the justifiable cases to the RGC for consideration.

---

<sup>5</sup> For CRF, please refer to the specific guidelines at Annex E.

- (iii) Requests for further extension (i.e. after approvals have been given for a total of 12 months at (i) and (ii)) will not be considered except under extraordinary circumstances (e.g. serious illness of PI).

### ***Submission of Progress Reports***

32. PCs/PIs are required to submit annual progress reports or mid-term progress reports on all on-going projects through their universities to the RGC for monitoring. The reporting period and the date of submission of the report to the UGC Secretariat are detailed in specific guidelines for individual schemes at Annexes B to J.

33. The progress report of an approved project will be reviewed by the responsible RGC Committee/Panel Member to ensure that the project is proceeding on schedule and that any problems identified are followed up. While the PCs/PIs are responsible for the submission of progress reports, the universities should put in place an internal monitoring system to ensure the PCs/PIs' compliance with all monitoring rules laid down by the RGC.

### ***Submission of Completion Reports***

34. Completion reports should be submitted no later than 12 months after the approved completion date of the project.

35. PCs/PIs of projects approved in 2010/11 onwards are required to release the completion reports to the public through the RGC website. Completion reports containing information such as abstracts in non-technical terms, objectives, research output including the list of conference papers/publications/journals and research findings and contact information of PIs should be open to public access. The PCs/PIs will be requested to give reasons for not providing any required information for public access in the new template. Arrangement of releasing completion reports to the public is applicable to all approved projects under funding schemes administered by the UGC and the RGC.

36. On public access of publications resulting from research funded by the RGC:

- (a) Upon acceptance of a paper for publication, the PC/PI should check whether the publisher already allows (i) full open access to the publisher's version, or (ii) 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;
- (b) if both (a) (i) and (ii) are not allowed, the PC/PI should request the publisher to allow the placement of either version (preferably the

publisher's version, but failing that the final accepted version) in the PC's/PI's university repository for restricted access immediately upon publication or after an embargo period of up to 12 months if required by the publisher; and

- (c) subject to the publisher's agreement on (a) or (b) above, the PC/PI 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.

37. For projects approved in 2016/17 and onwards, the PC/PI should also include in the project completion reports URL links to the university's repositories or the publishers' websites so that the public can have ready access to the manuscripts or journal articles (though the public may be required to subscribe at the publishers' websites). The PC/PI is also encouraged to include in their project completion reports the data repositories where research data of their projects can be accessed and shared.

38. To enhance the monitoring of performance of funded projects, starting from reports due for submission in January 2018 or after, the RGC will collect statistics of research outputs by category (e.g. patents, journal publications, conference papers, etc.) through the completion report of projects/conferences funded under RGC funding schemes. The output statistics will be uploaded onto the RGC website for public information.

39. With a view to further promoting open access and obtaining a more in-depth understanding of the local open access landscape, the RGC will collect open-access-related information of peer-reviewed journal publications arising directly from the projects for which completion reports are due for submission in February 2022 or after.

### ***Unsatisfactory, Barely Satisfactory and Overdue Reports***

40. Timely submission of reports is important and reflects on the diligence and ability of the PC/PI in managing a project. If reports remain overdue by the submission deadline, the RGC will consider terminating the projects and rating them as "Unsatisfactory" for record. All records of RGC funded projects rated "Unsatisfactory" or "Barely Satisfactory", regardless of whether they are for overdue or other reasons, may be taken into account when a PC/PI's new funding application is considered. The overall grading of the PC/PI's funding application submitted to the new funding exercises may be downgraded. For cases concerning non-submission and overdue submission of completion or progress reports, the PC/PI may be debarred from applying for grants administered by the RGC for two years or until the submission of the outstanding report. Normally, the "Unsatisfactory" and "Barely satisfactory" records would be disregarded by the Panels three years after passing the judgement.

41. The university should freeze the project account if any progress report of an on-going project is overdue. In this regard, university should undertake thorough and timely checking on the submission of reports to the RGC, take immediate action to freeze the accounts of projects which have overdue progress reports and notify the UGC Secretariat of the action taken.

### ***On-site Inspection***

42. On-site inspection will be conducted on completed projects selected by random sampling. Selected project teams will be required to present their achievements in a symposium held at a designated university, attended by a RGC Visit Panel and interested academics and students from all UGC-funded universities. The RGC Visit Panel will also conduct laboratory tours, if appropriate, for projects of the university holding the symposium. Universities will hold the symposium on rotational basis.

### ***Acknowledgement***

43. Upon completion of the project, one copy each of any refereed publications together with a list of other publications resulting from the project should be submitted together with the completion report to the RGC for record and assessment purposes. While the RGC does not claim copyright or other intellectual property right of the output produced, a suitable acknowledgment of the RGC funding should be included in any equipment/facilities purchased and any publication/publicity arising from the work done on a research project funded in whole or in part by the RGC/UGC.

44. For the RGC/UGC funded equipment/facilities, the PC/PI should acknowledge the RGC/UGC by placing a badge/plaque on the equipment/facilities in a prominent location. As the funded equipment/facilities vary in size, the PC/PI and their universities have the flexibility to determine the size of the badge/plaque. The following wording should be adopted for acknowledgement:

“Funded by the Research Grants Council” or “Funded by RGC”

45. Photo of such acknowledgements should be provided in the completion/concluding reports.

46. Format of acknowledgement of any publication/publicity arising from the work done on a research project is at Annexes B to J.

- End -

**Research Funding Schemes Administered by the RGC**

**(A) Collaborative Research**

- (1) Areas of Excellence Scheme\*
- (2) Collaborative Research Fund
- (3) Research Impact Fund
- (4) Theme-based Research Scheme\*

**(B) Individual Research**

- (5) Early Career Scheme
- (6) General Research Fund
- (7) Strategic Public Policy Research Funding Scheme (taken over by the Central Policy Unit since 2013/14 but the RGC continues to oversee the implementation of projects approved on or before 2012/13)
- (8) Postgraduate Students Conference/Seminar Grants

**(C) Fellowship**

- (9) Fulbright - RGC Hong Kong Senior Research Scholar/Research Scholar Award Programmes
- (10) Humanities and Social Sciences Prestigious Fellowship Scheme
- (11) RGC Postdoctoral Fellowship Scheme
- (12) RGC Research Fellow Scheme and RGC Senior Research Fellow Scheme

**(D) Joint Research**

- (13) European Union (EU) – Hong Kong Research and Innovation Cooperation Co-funding Mechanism by the RGC<sup>#</sup>
- (14) Germany/Hong Kong Joint Research Scheme
- (15) National Natural Science Foundation of China (NSFC)/RGC Joint Research Scheme
- (16) *PROCORE* - France/Hong Kong Joint Research Scheme
- (17) The French National Research Agency (ANR)/RGC Joint Research Scheme

All the above grants/funding schemes are funded by the REF **except** the following:

- 1. Areas of Excellence Scheme
- 2. RGC Postdoctoral Fellowship Scheme
- 3. RGC Research Fellow Scheme and RGC Senior Research Fellow Scheme
- 4. Strategic Public Policy Research Funding Scheme

\* Separate guidelines are issued for the Areas of Excellence Scheme and Theme-based Research Scheme.

# The scheme was formerly known as “*European Commission (EC)/RGC Collaboration Scheme*” and is renamed as “*EU – Hong Kong Research and Innovation Cooperation Co-funding Mechanism by the RGC*” starting from the 2018/19 exercise.

**Specific Guidelines Applicable to  
Early Career Scheme (ECS)/General Research Fund (GRF)**

**(A) Disbursement Arrangement**

1. The first instalment will be made after announcement of funding results, usually in July of the year of approval.
2. For ECS, the grant for educational activities, if any, will be fully released together with the one-off or first instalment of the project fund.

**(B) Accounting Arrangement**

3. All references to “Co-I” in Part III – Accounting Arrangements” are not applicable to ECS.

***Approved Scope***

***Provision of Research Experience for Undergraduate Students (for GRF only)***

4. This is an earmarked sum for providing an undergraduate student helper with a monthly allowance of up to \$2,500 for a maximum of ten months on a matching basis (i.e. the RGC and the university will each contribute \$1,250 per month). Monitoring of the undergraduate students’ participation in the research projects is the joint responsibility of the PIs and the universities. The results of the undergraduate students’ participation in the research projects must be included in the progress reports and completion reports of the projects.

***Clinical Research Fellowship Scheme (CRFS) (for GRF only)***

5. The CRFS is tied to the annual GRF funding exercise and its award is conditional on the GRF proposal being approved. Each fellowship is pitched at the sum of the annual salary and annual cash allowance of the applicant or \$1,200,000 starting from 2009/10, whichever is the less (the RGC and host university will each be responsible for contributing 50% of the fellowship annually) for a maximum of three consecutive years. The duration of the award will be the approved duration of the GRF research project. The fellowship grant can be used to support the maintenance costs of a fellow or to meet the salary costs of the replacement academic staff that have to be employed by the host university to take over the fellow’s duties for the period of the fellowship. If the fellow is a clinician from the Hospital Authority (HA) and he chooses to remain on the payroll of HA, the host university may alternatively use the grant to hire a clinician replacement to relieve the fellow for the sole purpose of taking up the approved research work. Nonetheless, the fellow must have a full-time appointment with

the university and report to the university only throughout the fellowship. In all circumstances, the fellowship fund cannot be used to defray any research expenses which should instead be covered by the GRF grant awarded to the relevant research proposal.

6. The annual matching grant of the RGC (i.e. 50% of each fellowship) is normally released in September each year as part of the GRF allocation. The host university is responsible for the creation of a fellowship account for the management of the necessary funds and is required to report on the disbursements and the account balance. For accounting purposes, the university is required to submit a separate statement of balance to the RGC to account for the expenses in respect of the fellowship award. Such statement should be attached to the mid-term report/annual progress report for the relevant GRF project for inspection by the RGC.

7. The fellowship award is non-transferable. When a fellow departs from his or her host university or no longer becomes eligible for the award, the fellowship must be terminated immediately and the remaining funds in the fellowship account will be returned to the RGC and the university on an equal basis.

#### *Grant for Educational Activities (for ECS only)*

8. The grant is earmarked for educational activities, which can be in any form that will promote teaching-research integration including the employment of undergraduate student helpers in the research project. This amount is not transferable and should not be used to meet other items of expenses of the approved project. Any unspent balance must be returned to the UGC Secretariat together with a statement of expenditure within six months of the project termination/completion date.

9. Monitoring of the educational activities is the joint responsibility of the PIs and the universities. The progress of the educational activities such as the students' participation in the research projects, their performance, etc. must be included in the progress and completion reports of the projects.

#### ***Start Date of Newly Approved Projects***

10. The official start date for all the newly approved projects will be 1 January of the following year, unless the PI advises an earlier date.

11. Any deferral beyond the official start date will require special prior approval from the RGC. If the deferral is approved, normally no temporary waiver of eligibility requirements of the PC/PI (such as long-term leave) will be allowed thereafter. Under no circumstances will a project be allowed to be deferred beyond 12 months of the announcement of the funding results. If the project does not commence within 12 months of the announcement of the funding

results, the RGC will withdraw the funding support and the university should immediately return the grant to the RGC.

### **(C) Monitoring Arrangement**

#### ***Changes to Approved Projects***

##### ***Extension of Project Completion Date***

12. For project extension beyond 12 months, the maximum allowable further extension is another six months, making the total extension 18 months. Where further extensions in this regard are granted by the RGC, such periods will be counted towards the period allowed for preparation and submission of completion reports.

13. RGC's approval for project extension will not be given to projects awarded with longer-term grants except for cases with very sound justification.

##### ***Change of PI and Co-I***

14. Change of PI and Co-I is not applicable to ECS.

#### ***Submission of Progress Reports***

15. The reporting period and the date of submission of the report to the UGC Secretariat are given in the table below:

*For 2014/15 and before, 2015/16 and 2016/17 funding exercises*

<b>Project Duration*</b>	<b>Report Type</b>	<b>Funding Exercise</b>	<b>Report End Date</b>	<b>Report Due Date</b>
36-month projects	Mid-term progress report	2014/15 and before	The immediate <u>31 March</u> after the completion of the first 12-month of the project	Three months after the report end date, i.e. <u>30 June</u>
		2015/16 and 2016/17	15 months after the project start date	Three months after the report end date
Projects other than the above	Annual progress report	2014/15 and before	The immediate <u>31 December</u> on or after the completion of every 12-month of the project	Three months after the report end date, i.e. <u>31 March</u>



<b>Project Duration*</b>	<b>Report Type</b>	<b>Funding Exercise</b>	<b>Report End Date</b>	<b>Report Due Date</b>
		2015/16 and 2016/17	Every 12-month after the project start date	Three months after the report end date

\* As originally approved by the RGC at announcement of funding results. Subsequent project duration changes approved by the university and the RGC will not change the report submission schedule.

*For 2017/18 and after funding exercises*

<b>Project Duration*</b>	<b>Report Type</b>	<b>Report End Date</b>	<b>Report Due Date</b>
12 months or less	No progress report is required	-	-
13-23 months	Mid-term progress report	Ten months after project start date	Two months after the report end date
24-35 months	Mid-term progress report	Three months before the mid-point of the project duration <sup>#</sup>	Three months after the report end date
36 months	Mid-term progress report	15 months after the project start date	Three months after the report end date
37 months or longer	Annual progress report	Every 12-month after the project start date	Three months after the report end date

\* As originally approved by the RGC at announcement of funding results. Subsequent project duration changes approved by the university and the RGC will not change the report submission schedule.

<sup>#</sup> rounded down to the nearest whole month

### ***Submission of Completion Reports (for ECS only)***

16. If the PI has not supervised any research student (MPhil/PhD) within the project duration, the university will be required to give an explanation in the completion report as to why supervision of students was missing.

### ***Acknowledgement***

17. The format of acknowledgment of RGC funding in any publication/publicity arising from the research project is:

“The work described in this paper was fully/substantially/partially supported by a grant from the Research Grants Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, China (Project No. [University code] [Project No.], e.g. CityU 11400115)”.

**Specific Guidelines Applicable to  
Humanities and Social Sciences Prestigious Fellowship Scheme (HSSPFS)**

**(A) Disbursement Arrangement**

1. One-off payment will be made after announcement of funding results, usually in July of the year of approval.

**(B) Accounting Arrangement**

2. All references to “Co-I” in Part III – Accounting Arrangements” are not applicable to HSSPFS.

***Approved Scope***

3. HSSPFS only provides resources for the employment of relief teachers to relieve all or part of the awardees’ teaching and administrative duties; and the costs of travel, subsistence and dissemination of outputs.

***Start Date of Newly Approved Projects***

4. The official start date for all the newly approved projects will be 1 January of the following year, unless the PI advises an earlier date. Any deferral beyond the official start date will require special prior approval from the RGC.
5. If the award holder is also successful in securing teaching relief for an activity of different scope in GRF in the same funding cycle, he/she can begin the fellowship after the expiration of teaching relief grants in GRF. The award holder is required to inform the RGC of the commencement date of the fellowship before 31 December of the same year.
6. The fellowship should run continuously for a maximum period of 12 months. Any extension or interruption or break of the 12-month period will require prior approval from the RGC.

**(C) Monitoring Arrangement**

***Changes to Approved Projects***

***Change of PI and Co-I***

7. Change of PI and Co-I is not applicable to HSSPFS.

### *Revision of Work Plan/Dissemination Plan*

8. The award holder should use the proforma at **Appendix C** if it is necessary to submit a revised work plan/dissemination plan for consideration by the Selection Committee of the HSSPFS.

### *Transfer of Fellowship Award to Another University*

9. An undertaking must be made by the receiving university to confirm that it will manage the grant and make arrangements to release the applicant from the duties as stated in the original application form. Likewise, an undertaking must be made by the award holder to confirm that he/she will commit the percentage of time to the Fellowship as stated in the original application form and that he/she will continue to serve in the receiving university for at least one year upon the completion of the Fellowship.

### *Extension of Fellowship Completion Date*

10. Normally, the RGC will only approve application for extension up to six months where sound justification is provided. In exceptional circumstances where further extensions are given by the RGC, such periods will be counted towards the period allowed for preparation and submission of completion reports.

### *Submission of Progress Reports*

11. No progress report is required.

### *Acknowledgement*

12. The format of acknowledgment of RGC funding in any publication/publicity arising from the research project is:

“The work described in this paper was fully/substantially/partially supported by a grant from the Research Grants Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, China (Project No. [University code] [Project No.], e.g. CityU 11400115)”.

**Specific Guidelines Applicable to  
Strategic Public Policy Research Funding Schemes (SPPR)**

**(A) Accounting Arrangement**

***Approved Scope***

**On-costs**

1. In addition to the project grant awarded, a 15% of the project grant had been allocated to the university's management as on-costs. Universities should use the on-costs for covering indirect costs arising from SPPR projects.

***On Termination/Completion of Projects***

2. Universities are required to return the balance of the grant together with the Statement of Accounts to the RGC within three months of termination/completion and the concluding report of the terminated project should also be submitted within three months of termination. On the portion of on-costs, pro-rata amount should be returned to the UGC Secretariat with the unspent balance of the project grant.

**(B) Monitoring Arrangement**

***Changes to Approved Projects***

***Extension of Project Completion Date***

3. The RGC will only approve application for extension in exceptional circumstances where sound justification can be advanced. As a matter of policy, the RGC normally does not approve an aggregate extension of more than six months for a project.

***Change of PI***

4. The PI plays a very important role in steering the course of a SPPR project and, for this reason, any request for change of PI of SPPR project will normally not be considered.

***Submission of Progress Reports***

5. PIs are required to submit annual progress reports or mid-term progress reports on all on-going projects through their universities to the RGC for

monitoring. The reporting period and the date of submission of the report to the UGC Secretariat are given in the table below:

<b>Project Duration</b>	<b>Report Type</b>	<b>Report End Date</b>	<b>Report Due Date</b>
Three-year projects	Mid-term progress report	The immediate <u>30 September</u> after the completion of the first 12-month of the project	Two months after the report end date, i.e. <u>30 November</u>
Projects other than the above	Annual progress report	The immediate <u>30 June</u> on or after the completion of every 12-month of the project	Two months after the report end date, i.e. <u>31 August</u>

*Note: Subsequent project duration changes approved by the university and the RGC do not change the report submission schedule.*

### ***Submission of Completion Reports***

6. Completion reports should be submitted to the RGC within nine months for SPPR projects after the approved completion date of the projects. The completion reports will be forwarded to the Central Policy Unit (CPU) for retention. CPU may circulate the reports to relevant bureaux/departments/statutory bodies of the Government for reference.

### ***Acknowledgement***

7. The format of acknowledgment of funding in any publication/publicity arising from the research project is:

“The work described in this paper was fully/substantially/partially supported by a grant from the Central Policy Unit of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and the Research Grants Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, China (Project No. [University Code] [Serial Number]-SPPR-[Year], e.g. CityU 1001-SPPR-12).

**Specific Guidelines Applicable to Collaborative Research Fund (CRF)**

**(A) Disbursement Arrangement**

1. Funding approved under the CRF Equipment Grant is released to the coordinating universities by two instalments (50% before the start of the project and 50% by 11 months after the first instalment). Funding approved under the CRF Group Research Grant is released according to the disbursement arrangements in paragraph 16 under Part II of these guidelines.

**(B) Accounting Arrangement**

***On approval of new projects***

2. Application for revision in objectives/work programme of newly funded projects should be made via the university.

3. Once a CRF project is approved, satisfactory arrangements should be worked out among the universities concerned for the ownership and management of the funded equipment/facilities and for meeting recurrent costs. Once installed, the equipment should be made available primarily for joint use by staff for the designated research purposes. In addition, to make full use of the equipment, universities concerned should devise an appropriate arrangement for sharing the use of the equipment with other universities, and in introducing an inter-charging scheme for that purpose. Monitoring Committees may be established by these universities if they consider necessary.

***Start Date of Newly Approved Projects***

4. All projects must be commenced by 30 June of the following year the latest and the RGC should be notified of the commencement date and any subsequent change.

**(C) Monitoring Arrangement**

***Changes to Approved Projects***

***Change of PC***

5. The PC plays a very important role in steering the course of a project in CRF and, for this reason, any request for change of PC will normally not be considered. The university should provide sound justification by completing the proforma at **Appendix B** to the RGC for approval.

### *Extension of project completion date*

6. The RGC will only approve application for extension of CRF projects in exceptional circumstances where sound justification is provided. As a matter of policy, the RGC normally does not approve an aggregate extension of more than six months for a project save in very exceptional circumstances. The PCs are required to submit up-to-date progress reports (Form CRF 7G) (ending date of progress reports should not be more than three months prior to submission of request for extension) together with their request for extension to the RGC for consideration. Normally, a request must be submitted at least six months before project completion.

### ***Submission of Progress and Completion/Concluding Reports***

7. The RGC places heavy emphasis on the level of synergy built up among the collaborating research teams and the volume of outputs produced through collaborative efforts. To give a proper context for the RGC to assess the progress/outcome, details of the following aspects must be properly accounted for and fully documented in the mid-term/annual progress and completion/concluding reports:

- (a) the division of responsibilities among participating universities;
- (b) the system through which UGC grants as well as other funds are channeled to the individual collaborative works of participating universities;
- (c) training and involvement of research students; and
- (d) publications jointly produced by collaborating researchers

8. The RGC holds a CRF Symposium every year to monitor the progress of the on-going Group Research Projects. Each project team of the Group Research Projects has to report their progress at the Symposium, where the progress of the project will be assessed, in accordance with the arrangements promulgated by the UGC Secretariat. The coordinating universities of the funded projects are requested to contribute to the organization of the Symposium by providing venue and general support.

9. PCs are required to submit annual progress reports or mid-term progress reports (Form CRF 7E for equipment projects and Form CRF 7G for group research projects) on all on-going projects through their universities to the RGC for monitoring. The reporting period and the date of submission of the report to the UGC Secretariat are given in the table below:

*For projects funded in 2016/17 and before*

<b>Project Duration</b>	<b>Report Type</b>	<b>Funding Exercise</b>	<b>Report End Date</b>	<b>Report Due Date</b>
36 months	Mid-term progress report	2013/14 and before	The immediate <u>30 September</u> after the completion of the first 12-month of the project	Two months after the report end date, i.e. <u>30 November</u>
		2014/15 to 2016/17	The immediate <u>31 August</u> after the completion of the first 12-month of the project	Two months after the report end date, i.e. <u>31 October</u>
Duration other than the above	Annual progress report	2016/17 and before	The immediate <u>30 June</u> on or after the completion of every 12-month of the project	Two months after the report end date, i.e. <u>31 August</u>

*For projects funded since 2017/18*

<b>Project Duration</b>	<b>Report Type</b>	<b>Report End Date</b>	<b>Report Due Date</b>
36 months or less	Mid-term progress report	The immediate <u>31 August</u> after the completion of the first 12-month of the project	Two months after the report end date, i.e. <u>31 October</u>
37 months or longer	Annual progress report	The immediate <u>30 June</u> on or after the completion of every 12-month of the project	Two months after the report end date, i.e. <u>31 August</u>

10. Two hardcopies and one softcopy for each mid-term/annual progress/completion/concluding report are required for submission to the RGC. For on-going projects that are to be presented in the annual CRF Symposium, the UGC Secretariat will separately inform the universities of the number of additional copies of mid-term/annual progress reports required to be submitted nearer the time.

11. For projects funded in 2016/17 onwards, PCs are also required to provide a video clip on the research project and achievements to publicize the project's research achievements within three months upon satisfactory rating of the completion report. The video should be bilingual (e.g. English narration with



Chinese subtitles or vice-versa) and should last for about three minutes and in a format supported by YouTube. The RGC may upload the video clips onto its YouTube Channel and PCs are also encouraged to upload the video clips onto their universities' own websites or video channels.

### ***Acknowledgement***

12. The following format of acknowledgment should be used:

“The work described in this paper (or the equipment/facility) was fully/substantially/partially supported by a grant from the Research Grants Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, China (Project No. [University code] [Project No.], e.g. CityU C1001-14G)”.

**Specific Guidelines Applicable to Research Impact Fund (RIF)**

**(A) Disbursement Arrangement**

1. Funding approved under the RIF is released to the coordinating universities in a single instalment for the 2018/19 exercise. For exercises from 2019/20 onwards, funding approved will be released by two instalments (50% before the start of the project and 50% subject to satisfactory progress of previous work reported in the progress report).
2. To safeguard the use of public money, the research teams in the 2018/19 exercise are only allowed to spend over 70% of the Research Grants Council (RGC) funding within the first 24 months with the approval of the RIF Committee and subject to submission of annual financial statements to the RGC for monitoring purpose.

**(B) Accounting Arrangement**

***On approval of new projects***

3. Application for revision in objectives/work programme of newly funded projects should be made via the university.
4. Once an RIF project is approved, satisfactory arrangements should be worked out among the universities concerned for the ownership and management of the funded equipment/facilities and for meeting recurrent costs. Once installed, the equipment should be made available primarily for joint use by staff for the designated research purposes. In addition, to make full use of the equipment, universities concerned should devise an appropriate arrangement for sharing the use of the equipment with other universities, and in introducing an inter-charging scheme for that purpose. Monitoring Committees may be established by these universities if they consider necessary.

***Start Date of Newly Approved Projects***

5. Projects approved in 2018/19 exercise must be commenced by 30 June 2019 the latest. Likewise, projects approved in subsequent exercises must be commenced before the end (i.e. 30 June) of the academic years. The RGC should be notified of the commencement date and any subsequent change.

## **(C) Monitoring Arrangement**

### ***Changes to Approved Projects***

#### ***Change of Project Coordinator (PC)***

6. The PC plays a very important role in steering the course of a project in RIF and, for this reason, any request for change of PC will normally not be considered. In these cases, the university should provide sound justification by completing the proforma at **Appendix B** to the RGC for approval.

#### ***Extension of project completion date***

7. The RGC will only approve application for extension of RIF projects in exceptional circumstances where sound justification is provided. As a matter of policy, the RGC normally does not approve an aggregate extension of more than six months for a project save in very exceptional circumstances. The PCs are required to submit up-to-date progress reports (Form RIF 7) (ending date of progress reports should not be more than three months prior to submission of request for extension) together with their request for extension to the RGC for consideration. Normally, a request must be submitted at least six months before project completion.

### ***Submission of Progress and Completion Reports***

8. The RGC places heavy emphasis on the level of synergy built up among the research team and the stakeholders and the impact produced through collaborative efforts. To give a proper context for the RGC to assess the progress, details of the following aspects must be properly accounted for and fully documented in the mid-term/annual progress and completion reports:

- (a) the division of responsibilities among PC, Co-Principal Investigator and Organisational partners;
- (b) the system through which RGC grants as well as matching funds by the university and/or partners are channeled to the project;
- (c) training and involvement of research students;
- (d) publications produced; and
- (e) the impact achieved as compared against the Pathways to Impact statement.

9. The RGC will hold an annual RIF Symposium to monitor the progress of the on-going projects. Each project team should report their progress at the Symposium where the progress of the project will be assessed. The coordinating universities of the funded projects are requested to contribute to the organization of the Symposium by providing venue and general support in accordance with the arrangements promulgated by the University Grants Committee (UGC) Secretariat.

10. PCs are required to submit annual progress reports or mid-term progress reports (Form RIF 7) on all on-going projects through their universities to the RGC for monitoring. The reporting period and the date of submission of the report to the UGC Secretariat are given in the table below:

<b>Project Duration</b>	<b>Report Type</b>	<b>Report End Date</b>	<b>Report Due Date</b>
36 months	Mid-term progress report	The immediate <u>31 August</u> after the completion of the first 12-month of the project	Two months after the report end date, i.e. <u>31 October</u>
37 months or longer	Annual progress report	The immediate <u>30 June</u> on or after the completion of every 12-month of the project	Two months after the report end date, i.e. <u>31 August</u>

11. Two hardcopies and one softcopy for each mid-term/annual progress/completion report are required for submission to the RGC. For on-going projects that are to be presented in the annual RIF Symposium, the UGC Secretariat will separately inform the universities of the number of additional copies of mid-term/annual progress reports required to be submitted nearer the time.

12. PCs are also required to provide a video clip on the research project and achievements to publicize the project's research achievements within three months upon satisfactory rating of the completion report. The video should be bilingual (e.g. English narration with Chinese subtitles or vice-versa) and should last for about three minutes and in a format supported by YouTube. The RGC may upload the video clips onto its YouTube Channel and PCs are also encouraged to upload the video clips onto their universities' own websites or video channels.

### ***Acknowledgement***

13. The format of acknowledgment of RGC funding in any publication/publicity arising from the research project is:

“The work described in this paper was supported by a grant from the Research Grants Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, China (Project No. [University code] [Project No.], e.g. CityU R1234-18).”

14. For the RGC funded equipment/facilities, the following wording should be adopted for acknowledgement:

“Funded by the Research Grants Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, China.”

**Specific Guidelines Applicable to Joint Research Schemes (JRSs)**

**(A) Accounting Arrangement**

***Approved Scope***

1. The project period of both sides should have the same start and end dates. Any adjustment to the start date requires prior approval from the RGC and the partner agency.
2. Funding approved under the JRSs can only be used by the Hong Kong PIs unless otherwise specified in the call circular and approved by the RGC.
3. For the ANR/RGC JRS, the budget item for attending the project review workshop in France, if any, and any earmarked items are not transferrable. It should only be used to meet the expenses of the specified purposes.
4. For the EU-HK Research and Innovation Co-funding Mechanism by the RGC\*, the project duration should normally be not more than five years and should not be longer than that of the concerned Horizon 2020 project. The project end date should not be beyond the project duration of the concerned Horizon 2020 project. Any adjustment to the start date requires prior approval from the RGC.

***Fellowship***

5. The fellowship is granted based on the length of stay approved by the RGC. It includes a one-off non-accountable grant for the passage and all necessary maintenance cost of the awardees.
6. Universities are required to arrange for the return of the pro-rata amount of the fellowship to the RGC in case the awardee concerned shortens or terminates the approved stay. The Statement of Accounts, which is submitted upon completion/termination of the fellowship, should cover the entire duration of the fellowship.

***Travel/Conference Grant***

7. The travel grant is to meet only the air passage, accommodation and subsistence costs directly related to the proposed exchanges between the two collaborating grant applicants in Hong Kong and the partner region. Expenditure on equipment, consumables, other project-related expenses and insurances are not covered. The conference grant is to cover travel, accommodation and subsistence costs of guest speakers from the partner region to Hong Kong, and the direct organising costs, e.g. reservation of meeting venue, production of

---

\* The scheme was renamed from “EC/RGC Collaboration Scheme” in June 2018.

conference/workshop materials, etc. Expenditure on meals is not covered by the grant. The travel/conference grants awarded can only be used in the approved funding year which normally runs from 1 January to 31 December.

8. For the conference grant under the NSFC/RGC JRS, the RGC funding provides support for a two or three-day conference to be held in Hong Kong. The conference/workshop should take place between 1 July of the funding year and 30 June in the following year inclusive.

9. Save in very exceptional circumstances (such as prolonged illness of the PI) and with proper justification stated in the “Travel Plan” of the application form as well as prior approval of the RGC, the Hong Kong PIs cannot delegate the trip to his Co-Is nor his project team members.

10. For two-year grants, a Statement of Account should be submitted to the RGC within six months upon expiry of the respective funding period. The unspent balance of the first-year grants cannot be carried over to the second year and should be returned with a Statement of Account of the first year.

#### *Exchange (Mobility) Grant*

11. The exchange (mobility) grant under the EU-HK Research and Innovation Co-funding Mechanism by the RGC supports the passage and subsistence costs for Hong Kong applicants and research postgraduate students to visit collaborators in Europe, and supplementary funding for research expenditure.

#### *Start Date of Newly Approved Projects*

12. The start dates specific to the JRS concerned are set out below:

<b>Scheme</b>	<b>Start Date</b>
NSFC/RGC JRS	1 January of the following year
ANR/RGC JRS, EU-HK Research and Innovation Co-funding Mechanism by the RGC	Within six months of the approval

### **(B) Monitoring Arrangement**

#### *Changes to Approved Projects*

13. All change requests such as revision of project objectives/work programmes, change of PIs/Co-Is require parallel submission of formal requests to both the RGC and the partner agency. The change requests should be submitted to the RGC for prior approval via the Hong Kong PIs' universities by

completing the proforma at **Appendix B** and **Appendix D** respectively as appropriate.

14. For the EU-HK Research and Innovation Co-funding Mechanism by the RGC, the change requests should be submitted to the RGC for prior approval.

#### *Project Grant*

15. For extension of project not exceeding six months in aggregate, an application must first be submitted by the partner PI to the partner agency. Subject to approval of the partner agency, the Hong Kong PI could submit the request for extension to his/her university for consideration. From prudent project management angle, the university is expected to exercise its judgement to ensure that only fully justifiable cases are approved, particularly during the first half of the project life. The RGC must be notified of the university's approval prior to the original completion date of the project.

16. For extension exceeding six months in aggregate, the PI must apply with detailed and sound justification through the university to the RGC and the partner agency in parallel at least six months before the approved project completion date. Requests for further extension (i.e. after approval(s) have been given for a total of 12 months) will not be considered except under extraordinary circumstances (e.g. serious illness of PI). The Hong Kong PI is required to submit up-to-date progress report (ending date of report should not be more than three months prior to submission of request for extension) together with a copy of the latest progress report submitted to the partner agency by his/her partner PI for consideration. Granting of request is subject to agreement of both the RGC and the partner agency. As at the date of extension application, if the PI has recently submitted progress report ending within three months, the requirement for an up-to-date progress report is waived.

17. For the EU-HK Research and Innovation Co-funding Mechanism by the RGC, the authority for extension of a period of six months and less is with the university. The Hong Kong PI should apply to his/her university direct and the RGC must be notified of the extension approved by university before the original completion date of the project. For extension beyond six months, prior approval from the RGC is required. The PI is required to submit up-to-date progress report together with the request for project extension to the RGC. The arrangements regarding up-to-date progress report in paragraph 17 also apply.

#### *Travel/Conference Grant*

18. Any major changes to the approved conference grant (such as change of event date, change of speaker, etc.) require prior approval of the RGC. The awardee should file the application via the university for RGC's approval in good time and well in advance of the effective date of the proposed changes. If a request for change is not approved or the event cannot be organized, the entire



grant/unspent balance should be returned together with a Statement of Accounts to the RGC within six months of the date of termination. Extension of funding period and postponement of completion date will not be allowed.

### ***Submission of Progress Reports***

19. Submission schedules specific to the JRS concerned are set out below:

<b>Project Duration*</b>	<b>Report Type</b>	<b>Report End Date</b>	<b>Report Due Date</b>
36-month to 48-month projects	Mid-term progress report	18 or 24 months after the project start date  [Note: <u>NSFC/RGC JRS</u> The immediate <u>31 December</u> on or after the completion of the first 24-month of the project.  For project which starts after 1 January, the report end date should be the immediate 31 December after the completion of the first 12-month of the project.]	Two months after the report end date
Projects other than the above (except fellowship)	Annual progress report	<u>Germany/HK JRS,</u> <u>PROCORE-France/HK JRS</u>  31 December of the respective funding period  <u>EU-HK Research and Innovation Co-funding Mechanism by the RGC</u>  Every 12-month after the project start date	<u>Germany/HK JRS,</u> <u>PROCORE-France/HK JRS</u>  As stipulated in result announcement letter  <u>EU-HK Research and Innovation Co-funding Mechanism by the RGC</u>  Two months after the report end date

\* As originally approved by the RGC at announcement of funding results. Subsequent project duration changes approved by the university and the RGC will not change the report submission schedule.

20. For the NSFC/RGC JRS and the ANR/RGC JRS, the progress report should be submitted together with a copy of the latest progress report submitted to the NSFC/ANR by the partner Mainland/French PI.

21. For the ANR/RGC JRS, project review workshops may be organised for the Hong Kong and French PIs to present their mid-term and/or final reports. The RGC will notify the project teams concerned in advance if such workshop would be organized.

22. For the conference grant under the NSFC/RGC JRS, the RGC and the NSFC may send representatives to attend funded conferences as observers. Selected conferences will be separately notified of the date and logistic requirements in advance.

### ***Submission of Completion Reports***

#### ***Project Grant***

23. Hong Kong PIs should submit their completion reports, together with a copy of the completion reports submitted to the partner agencies by the partner PIs.

24. For the Fulbright-RGC Hong Kong Senior Research/Research Scholar Award Program, the fellowship recipients are required to submit a report on the fellowship to the Hong Kong-America Centre, which administers the programme on behalf of the RGC, for record within three months after completion/termination of the fellowship.

25. For conference/workshop grants under NSFC/RGC JRS and *PROCORE*-France/HK JRS, the Hong Kong PIs should submit a document enclosing the conference/workshop programme, a list of local and Mainland/French participants, and a breakdown of expenditure to the RGC through the university within six months of the conclusion of the event.

26. All reports (including progress/completion/concluding reports) must be signed and submitted in the report forms as prescribed by the RGC (both hardcopy and softcopy) via the Hong Kong PIs' universities.

### ***Acknowledgement***

27. The following format of acknowledgment should be used (except for Fulbright-RGC Hong Kong Senior Research Scholar/Research Scholar Award Program, conference grants of NSFC/RGC JRS and *PROCORE*-France/HK JRS):

“This work described in this paper (or the equipment/facility) was fully/substantially/partially supported by a grant from the \_\_\_\_ (a) \_\_\_\_ sponsored by the Research Grants Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, China and \_\_\_\_ (b) \_\_\_\_ (Project No. \_\_\_\_ (c) \_\_\_\_).”

(a)	(b)	(c)
NSFC/RGC Joint Research Scheme	National Natural Science Foundation of China	e.g. N_CUHK413/18
ESRC/RGC Joint Research Scheme	Economic & Social Research Council of the UK	Project No. assigned by the ESRC
ANR/RCC Joint Research Scheme	French National Research Agency	e.g. A-CUHK413/12
Germany/Hong Kong Joint Research Scheme	German Academic Exchange Service	e.g. G-HKU702/15
EC/RGC Collaboration Scheme	European Commission	e.g. E-PolyU501/16
EU-HK Research and Innovation Co-funding Mechanism by the RGC	European Union	

28. For Fulbright-RGC Hong Kong Senior Research Scholar/Research Scholar Award Program, the following format of acknowledgment should be used:

“The work described in this paper was fully/substantially/partially supported by a grant from the Fulbright-RGC Hong Kong Senior Research Scholar/Research Scholar Award Program sponsored by the Research Grants Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, China in collaboration with the Consulate General of the United States in Hong Kong”.

29. For the *PROCORE*-France/HK JRS, the following format of acknowledgment should be used:

“The work/conference/workshop was supported by a grant from the Joint Research Scheme sponsored by the Research Grants Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, China and the Consulate General of France in Hong Kong (Reference No. F-[University's abbreviation][University code][serial number of 2 digits]/[year]”.

30. For the conference grants under NSFC/RGC JRS, the following format of acknowledgment should be used:

“This conference was supported by a grant from the Joint Research Scheme sponsored by the Research Grants Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, China and the National Natural Science

Foundation of China (Reference No. N-[University's abbreviation][University code][serial number of 2 digits]/[year]”.

**Specific Guidelines Applicable to Postgraduate Students  
Conference/Seminar Grants (PSCSG)**

**(A) Disbursement Arrangement**

1. One-off payment of grant will be made two months prior to the commencement of the event, subject to acceptance by the guest speaker(s) has been confirmed or as soon as possible after the grant has approved, whichever is earlier.

**(B) Accounting Arrangement**

2. The PSCSG will provide funding support up to a maximum of \$50,000 per application to cover the actual cost of the following items to be incurred by non-local guest speaker(s) invited for local inter-university conference/seminars:

- (a) return air passage (up to business class) by the most direct route; and
- (b) hotel accommodation and subsistence allowance (tax and service charge inclusive) at the rate of \$1,800 per night of stay (subject to a ceiling of not more than seven nights of stay or \$12,600, whichever is lower). The period of provision of hotel accommodation and subsistence allowance will depend on the number of nights of stay actually required by the guest speaker to attend the supported event.

**(C) Monitoring Arrangement**

***Changes to Approved Projects***

3. Any major changes to the approved grant (such as change of event date, change of speaker, etc.) require prior approval of the RGC. The awardee should file the application via the university for RGC's approval in good time and well in advance of the effective date of the proposed changes. If a request for change is not approved or the event cannot be organized, the entire grant/unspent balance should be returned together with a Statement of Accounts to the RGC within three months of the date of termination.

***Submission of Evaluation Report***

4. The awardee should submit an evaluation report (in the prescribed form) to the RGC via the university, covering the activities, benefits gained/expected, the number of attendees (postgraduate students) together with a Statement of Accounts, refund of any unspent balance and some photographs taken, within three months after the event.

### ***Acknowledgement***

5. The following format of acknowledgment should be used:

“The conference/seminar was supported by the Postgraduate Students Conference/Seminar Grant of the Research Grants Council, Hong Kong.”

**Specific Guidelines Applicable to**  
**RGC Postdoctoral Fellowship Scheme (PDFS)**

**(A) General**

***Roles of Universities***

***Designated Bank Account***

1. Universities may open a separate interest-bearing bank account solely for depositing receipts and making payments in relation to new RGC research fellowship schemes, including the PDFS, RGC Research Fellow Scheme (RFS) and RGC Senior Research Fellow Scheme (SRFS). All interest income generated in the said bank account should be kept in the account and returned to the UGC / RGC as appropriate on an annual basis together with supporting document such as bank statement before end of January of each year (i.e. interest received from January to December should be returned in January of the following year). A separate ledger designated for the sole purpose of keeping and transacting all monies of the stipends / grants concerned should be kept. Bank reconciliation should be prepared promptly and regularly, at least once a month, of the balance as shown in the ledger. Universities should also draw up proper instructions and guidelines regarding the conduct of business through the said bank account.

2. In the case that a separate bank account is not opened for the purpose, universities should ensure that:

- (a) all the fellowship stipends / grants would **not** be put in any investment instrument other than risk-free interest-bearing bank accounts with a licensed bank registered under the Banking Ordinance (Cap. 155); and
- (b) if the fellowship stipends / grants are placed together with other funds of the institution, the interest income for the fellowship stipends / grants shall be apportioned equitably from all ACTUAL monthly bank interest income generated from total bank deposits, from the date of receipt of the fellowship stipends / grants up to the date of returning the unspent balance to the Government, in accordance with the following formula:

Average positive ledger balance (i.e. the simple average of the opening and closing balances) of all relevant fellowship stipends / grants for the month, adjusted for disallowed expenses, unrecorded income, if any, and accrued interest (Notes 1 & 2)	X	Total actual monthly interest income generated from total bank deposits for the month included in the institution's funds
Average bank balance (extracted from bank statements / bank passbooks) for the month of institution's funds placed in bank deposits (Note 2)		

*Important Notes:*

- (1) *Negative interest is **not** allowed to be charged on any negative fellowship stipends / grants balances.*
- (2) *As the amount of unpresented cheques would have been transferred to the current account, therefore the effect of the unpresented cheques is contra with the current account. In other words, a proportionate share of the average bank balance of the institution's fund placed in the working capital (cash and current accounts) for the month is not provided for in the denominator. It is based on the assumption that all fellowship stipends / grants balances are placed in bank deposits (fixed deposits and savings accounts only).*

**(B) Disbursement Arrangement**

3. There are three annual stipends to be released during the 36-month fellowship period. The first annual stipend, after the announcement of award results and confirmation of the University's Undertaking, will be disbursed to the supporting university by June of the year of result announcement. For awardees receiving conditional offer of the fellowship, disbursement of the first annual stipend will be put on hold, and will only be proceeded subject to successful completion of the awardee's PhD degree and provision of proof of the degree conferral.

4. Subject to confirmation by the supporting university on the awardee's satisfactory performance during the fellowship period, disbursement of the second and third annual stipends will be made in April of the following two years, and adjusted according to the Composite Consumer Price Index (CCPI) announced by the HKSAR Government.



## **(C) Accounting Arrangement**

### ***Approved Scope***

#### ***Conference and Research-related Travel Allowance***

5. The conference and research-related travel allowance (“travel allowance”) included in the annual stipend is an earmarked item which should only be used to meet the expenses of the designated purpose, i.e. to attend recognised international academic conferences, and it is accounted for separately. The eligibility and disbursement of the allowance by the university to the awardee are subject to the prevailing practice and policy of the university. Paper presentation in an academic conference is not an eligibility criterion required by the RGC. The travel allowance, disbursed on an annual basis, can be carried forward within the fellowship period. Any unspent balance of the travel allowance disbursed for the fellowship period should be returned to the UGC Secretariat together with the Statement of Accounts within six months of termination / completion of the fellowship.

#### ***Start Date of the Fellowship***

6. The supporting university is requested to inform the UGC Secretariat the commencement date of the awardee’s fellowship\* together with confirmation of the University’s Undertaking. A copy (both via email and by post) of the awardee’s signed appointment letter as Postdoctoral Fellow (PdF) should also be provided to the UGC Secretariat within the first month of the awardee’s fellowship period for record purpose.

*\* to start earliest on 1 May and latest by 31 December in the year of result announcement, which can be a date for the awardee to start with an initial PdF appointment at the supporting university, or a date so decided by the supporting university if the awardee is already a serving PdF at the supporting university (in this case, the start date of the fellowship will not be the same as that of the PdF appointment).*

#### ***On Termination / Completion of the Fellowship***

7. Upon termination / completion of the fellowship, the supporting university is required to return any unspent balance of the fellowship stipend together with a Statement of Accounts to the UGC Secretariat within six months of termination / completion of the fellowship. The awardee shall submit a concluding report / completion report through the supporting university to the UGC Secretariat not later than six months from the termination / completion of fellowship.

## **(D) Monitoring Arrangement**

### ***Changes to the Fellowship***

#### ***Change of PdF appointment***

8. If an awardee resigns from his / her full-time PdF appointment and accepts a full-time appointment at another post (for instance, as Assistant Professor) in the supporting university before the end of the fellowship period, the fellowship shall prematurely terminate as it is only designated for PdF appointment. The supporting university shall return the unspent balance of the fellowship stipend to the UGC Secretariat within six months of termination of the fellowship. The awardee shall submit a concluding report through the supporting university to the UGC Secretariat not later than six months from the termination of fellowship.

9. If an awardee's employment at the supporting university is terminated of his / her own accord (i.e. resignation) or by the supporting university before the end of the fellowship period, the fellowship shall prematurely terminate, as the fellowship cannot be transferred between persons. The supporting university shall return the unspent balance of the fellowship stipend to the UGC Secretariat within six months of termination of the fellowship. The awardee shall submit a concluding report through the supporting university to the UGC Secretariat not later than six months from the termination of fellowship.

10. Request for transferring the fellowship from the supporting university to another UGC-funded university during the fellowship period will only be considered if the supporting university consents to the transfer, reaches a mutual consensus with the receiving university, and an undertaking has been made by the receiving university to confirm that it will manage the fellowship based on the same research project(s) / activities. For such transfer request, the supporting university should submit the case to the UGC Secretariat for consideration. Subject to approval, the fellowship will then be allowed to transfer with the awardee to the receiving university with a new PdF appointment covering the remainder of the fellowship period. Cases seeking covering approval for transfer will not be considered. The above conditions also apply to requests for transfer prior to commencement of the fellowship. However, the fellowship cannot be transferred if an awardee changes his / her PdF appointment from the supporting UGC-funded university to a local self-financing degree-awarding institution.

11. Should an awardee request for a change of supporting university prior to commencement of fellowship while consent from the original supporting university for the change is not available, the request will only be further processed if the awardee has not yet entered into a PdF appointment contract with the original supporting university and he / she has secured agreement from another UGC-funded university to be his / her new supporting university. For such scenario, the eligibility of the awardee concerned would be subject to critical review on the basis of assessment submitted by the new supporting university, and on the

condition that regardless of the review outcome, (i) the new supporting university would have one less nomination quota in the following PDFS exercise, and (ii) the awardee would not be eligible for nomination in any future PDFS exercise. The case will be reviewed by the Selection Panel Chair concerned, who will advise whether the awardee's eligibility for the fellowship would be maintained and the request for commencing the fellowship at the new supporting university would be permitted. The advice by the Selection Panel Chair will be final.

#### *Extension of the Fellowship Completion Date*

12. Request for extension of the fellowship period will be considered on a case-by-case basis to cater for exceptional circumstances, for instance, if an awardee is accorded overseas scholarship or offer as visiting scholar / researcher in overseas during the fellowship period, or on leave for a continuous or cumulative period exceeding 183 days (on prolonged leave) within the fellowship period. The supporting university should submit the request for extension with supporting documents to the UGC Secretariat for consideration and approval. Following the approval for extension, the disbursement of fellowship stipend will be suspended until the awardee resumes the fellowship after the overseas tour / prolonged leave. Cases seeking covering approval for extension will not be considered.

#### *Submission of Progress Reports*

13. An awardee will be required to submit annual progress reports on all on-going research project(s) / activities through the supporting university to the UGC Secretariat for monitoring. Reporting period of each annual progress report should end at 30 June, with the first one ending at the immediate 30 June after the completion of the first 12 months of the fellowship. Annual progress reports should reach the UGC Secretariat within three months from the end of the reporting period (i.e. 30 September). An awardee's eligibility for the fellowship may be reviewed during the fellowship period with reference to the annual progress report(s).

#### *Submission of Completion Report*

14. Upon completion of the 36-month fellowship period, an awardee should submit a completion report through the supporting university to the UGC Secretariat not later than six months from the end of the fellowship.

#### *Acknowledgement*

15. The following format of acknowledgment should be used:

“The work described in this paper was fully / substantially / partially supported by a fellowship award from the Research Grants Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, China (Project No.

[University code] PDFS [Year]-[Serial No.], e.g. CityU PDFS2021-1S05)".

**Specific Guidelines Applicable to**  
**RGC Research Fellow Scheme (RFS) and**  
**RGC Senior Research Fellow Scheme (SRFS)**

**(A) General**

***Roles of Universities***

***Designated Bank Account***

1. Universities may open a separate interest-bearing bank account solely for depositing receipts and making payments in relation to new RGC research fellowship schemes, including the RGC Postdoctoral Fellowship Scheme (PDFS), RFS and SRFS. All interest income generated in the said bank account should be kept in the account and returned to the UGC / RGC as appropriate on an annual basis together with supporting document such as bank statement before end of January of each year (i.e. interest received from January to December should be returned in January of the following year). A separate ledger designated for the sole purpose of keeping and transacting all monies of the stipends / grants concerned should be kept. Bank reconciliation should be prepared promptly and regularly, at least once a month, of the balance as shown in the ledger. Universities should also draw up proper instructions and guidelines regarding the conduct of business through the said bank account.

2. In the case that a separate bank account is not opened for the purpose, universities should ensure that:

- (a) all the fellowship stipends / grants would **not** be put in any investment instrument other than risk-free interest-bearing bank accounts with a licensed bank registered under the Banking Ordinance (Cap. 155); and
- (b) if the fellowship stipends / grants are placed together with other funds of the institution, the interest income for the fellowship stipends / grants shall be apportioned equitably from all ACTUAL monthly bank interest income generated from total bank deposits, from the date of receipt of the fellowship stipends / grants up to the date of returning the unspent balance to the Government, in accordance with the following formula:

Average positive ledger balance (i.e. the simple average of the opening and closing balances) of all relevant fellowship stipends / grants for the month, adjusted for disallowed expenses, unrecorded income, if any, and accrued interest (*Notes 1 & 2*)

X

Total actual monthly interest income generated from total bank deposits for the month included in the institution's funds

---

Average bank balance (extracted from bank statements / bank passbooks) for the month of institution's funds placed in bank deposits (*Note 2*)

*Important Notes:*

- (1) *Negative interest is **not** allowed to be charged on any negative fellowship stipends / grants balances.*
- (2) *As the amount of unpresented cheques would have been transferred to the current account, therefore the effect of the unpresented cheques is contra with the current account. In other words, a proportionate share of the average bank balance of the institution's fund placed in the working capital (cash and current accounts) for the month is not provided for in the denominator. It is based on the assumption that all fellowship stipends / grants balances are placed in bank deposits (fixed deposits and savings accounts only).*

**(B) Disbursement Arrangement**

3. The fellowship grant will be allocated by two instalments. The first instalment (60%), after the announcement of award results and confirmation of the University's Undertaking, will be disbursed to the supporting university usually by September of the year of approval. The second instalment (40%) will be issued subject to satisfactory assessment of the second annual progress report submitted by the awardee.

**(C) Accounting Arrangement**

***Approved Scope***

4. The fellowship grant can be used to cover salary costs for relief teachers, and support for research project including staff, equipment, travel, subsistence and dissemination costs, but not including "on-costs". Supporting universities are required to make their own provision for "on-costs".

5. The expenditure for the items should be incurred within the following respective scopes:

(A) One-line Vote

*(Virement between approved budget items under one-line vote within the same project does not require RGC's approval. Any unspent balance should be returned to the RGC together with the Statement of Accounts within six months of the project termination/completion date.)*

- (a) Research Support Staff\*
- (b) Equipment\*
- (c) Relief Teacher\*
- (d) Outsourcing Expenses of Research Work Outside Hong Kong\*
- (e) General Expenses
- (f) Conference\*
- (g) Travel/Subsistence (for non-conference research-related trip(s))  
The cost for non-conference research-related trips required (including air passage, hotel accommodation and subsistence) during the fellowship period is part of the one-line vote for the project on which the fellowship is conferred and need not be accounted for separately.
- (h) Expenses for Dissemination of Research Deliverables

(B) Earmarked Items

*(All earmarked items are not transferable. They should only be used to meet the expenses of the respective specified purposes. Any unspent balance should be returned to the RGC together with the Statement of Accounts within six months of the project termination/completion date.)*

- (a) High-performance Computing Services\*
- (b) Research-related Software License / Dataset  
The supporting university should not use the fellowship grant to purchase standard software licenses / dataset.

*[\* Reference should be made to the relevant part of the DAMA where clarification is needed.]*

### ***Start Date of the Fellowship***

6. An awardee shall start the research project (and teaching relief / research leave if applicable), on which the award is conferred, on 1 January of the following year, unless the awardee advises an earlier date to commence with prior approval from the RGC. Any deferral beyond the official start date will require special prior approval from the RGC. If the deferral is approved, normally no temporary waiver of eligibility requirements of the awardee (such as prolonged leave) will be allowed thereafter. Under no circumstances will a project be allowed to be deferred beyond 12 months of the announcement of the award results. If the project on which the award is conferred does not commence within 12 months of the announcement of the award results, the RGC will withdraw the funding support and the university should immediately return the grant to the UGC Secretariat.

### ***On Termination / Completion of the Fellowship***

7. Upon completion of the fellowship, the supporting university is required to return any unspent balance of the fellowship grant together with the Statement of Accounts to the UGC Secretariat within six months of completion of the fellowship.

8. In the case that the assessment of annual progress report(s) submitted by the awardee is unsatisfactory, the fellowship may be terminated before the end of the fellowship period. For all cases of termination, the supporting university concerned shall return the unspent balance of the fellowship grant together with the Statement of Accounts to the UGC Secretariat within six months from the termination of fellowship. The awardee shall submit a concluding report through the supporting university concerned to the UGC Secretariat not later than six months from the termination of fellowship.

### **(D) Monitoring Arrangement**

#### ***Changes to the Fellowship***

##### ***Change of PI, Co-I and Co-PI***

9. Change of PI, Co-I and Co-PI are not applicable to RFS / SRFS.

##### ***Change of Academic Appointment***

10. If an awardee resigns from his / her academic appointment or it is terminated by the supporting university concerned before the end of the fellowship period, the fellowship shall terminate as it is only designated for related academic appointment and cannot be transferred between persons. The supporting university concerned shall return the unspent balance of the fellowship grant to the UGC Secretariat within six months from the termination of fellowship. The



awardee shall submit a concluding report through the supporting university concerned to the UGC Secretariat not later than six months from the termination of fellowship.

#### *Transfer of Fellowship Award to Another University*

11. If an awardee changes his / her appointment from the supporting university to another UGC-funded university, normally the fellowship cannot be transferred. Nevertheless, provided that the current university has reached a mutual consensus with the receiving university, and an undertaking has been made by the receiving university to confirm that it will manage the fellowship based on the same research project, the current university should report the change in appointment status of the awardee and submit the request for transfer to the UGC Secretariat for prior approval. Subject to approval, the fellowship will then be allowed to transfer with the awardee to the receiving university. However, the fellowship cannot be transferred if an awardee changes his / her appointment from the supporting UGC-funded university to a self-financing local degree-awarding institution.

#### *Extension of Project Completion Date*

12. RGC's approval is required for extension beyond six months. For project extension beyond 12 months, the maximum allowable further extension is another six months, making the total extension of 18 months. Where further extensions in this regard are granted by the RGC, such periods will be counted towards the period allowed for preparation and submission of completion reports. No additional fellowship grant will be provided for such extension.

#### *Submission of Progress Reports*

13. An awardee will be required to submit annual progress reports on the on-going research project through the supporting university to the UGC Secretariat for monitoring. The reporting period should end every 12 months after the start of the fellowship. Annual progress reports should reach the UGC Secretariat within three months from the end of the reporting period. An awardee's eligibility for the second instalment of the fellowship will be reviewed with reference to the annual progress report(s).

#### *Submission of Completion Report*

14. Upon completion of the 60-month fellowship period, an awardee should submit a completion report through the supporting university to the UGC Secretariat not later than 12 months from the end of the fellowship.

## ***Acknowledgement***

15. The following format of acknowledgment should be used:

“The work described in this paper was fully / substantially / partially supported by a fellowship award from the Research Grants Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, China (Project No. [University code] RFS / SRFS [Year]-[Serial No.], e.g. CityU RFS2021-1S05)”.

**Statement of Accounts for RGC-funded/administered Projects**

University:  
 Scheme:  
 Project Number:  
 Name of PI/PC:  
 Project Title:  
 First Instalment Paid:  
 Second Instalment Paid:

<b><u>Source of Funding</u></b>	<b><u>RGC</u></b> ( <b>\$</b> )	<b><u>University^</u></b> ( <b>\$</b> )	<b><u>Others</u></b> ( <b>\$</b> )	<b><u>Total</u></b> ( <b>\$</b> )	<b><u>Remarks</u></b>
Amount of Funding Received	XXX,XXX	XXX,XXX	XXX,XXX	XXX,XXX	(f1)
‘Grant for Educational Activities’ (only if applicable)	XXX,XXX			XXX,XXX	(f2)
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>XXX,XXX</b>	<b>XXX,XXX</b>	<b>XXX,XXX</b>	<b>XXX,XXX</b>	<b>(F) = (f1) + (f2)</b>
<b><i>Less Expenditure</i></b>					
<i>One-line Vote Items</i>					
(a) Staff (SRA/RA/Postdoc/ RPg/Others) (Excluding undergraduate students)	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(e1)
(b) Equipment	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(e2)
(c) Outsourcing	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(e3)
(d) General Expenses	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(e4)
(e) Conference	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(e5)
(f) Expenses on Educational Activities (only if applicable)	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(e6)

*Earmarked Items\**

(g) Relief Teacher	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(e7)
(h) Research Experience for Undergraduate Students (for GRF only)**	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(e8)
(i) High-performance Computing Services	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(e9)
(j) Research-related Software Licence/Dataset, etc.)	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(e10)
<b>Amount of Funding Used</b>	<b>(XXX,XXX)</b>	<b>(XXX,XXX)</b>	<b>(XXX,XXX)</b>	<b>(XXX,XXX)</b>	<b>(E) = total of (e1) to (e10)</b>
<b>Unspent Balance</b>	<b>XXX,XXX (ub)</b>	<b>XXX,XXX</b>	<b>XXX,XXX</b>	<b>XXX,XXX</b>	<b>(UB) = (F) – (E)</b>
<b>Unspent balance to be returned to the RGC</b>	<b>XXX,XXX</b>				<b>(ub)</b>

^ Including matching funding if applicable

\* The earmarked amount should be used for the specified items. It is not transferable and should not be used to meet other items of expenses of the supported project.

\*\* This is the amount provided by the RGC. The university is required to provide the same amount on a matching basis.

**Statement of Accounts for Humanities and Social Sciences**  
**Prestigious Fellowship Scheme (HSPFS) awards**

University:  
 Project Number:  
 Name of Awardee:  
 Project Title:

<b><u>Source of Funding</u></b>	<b><u>RGC</u></b> <b><u>(\$)</u></b>	<b><u>University/</u></b> <b><u>Others</u></b> <b><u>(\$)</u></b>	<b><u>Total</u></b> <b><u>(\$)</u></b>	<b><u>Remarks</u></b>
Amount of Funding Received	XXX,XXX	XXX,XXX	XXX,XXX	(F)
<b><u>Less Expenditure</u></b>				
<b>One-line Vote Items</b>				
(a) Other Staff	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(e1)
(b) Travel	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(e2)
(c) Subsistence	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(e3)
(d) Dissemination of Outputs	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(e4)
<b>Earmarked Item</b>				
(e) Relief Teacher	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(e5)
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>(XXX,XXX)</b>	<b>(XXX,XXX)</b>	<b>(XXX,XXX)</b>	<b>(E) = total of (e1) to (e5)</b>
<b>Unspent Balance</b>	<b>XXX,XXX</b> <b>(ub)</b>	<b>XXX,XXX</b>	<b>XXX,XXX</b>	<b>(UB) = (F) – (E)</b>
<b>Unspent Balance to be returned to the RGC</b>	<b>XXX,XXX</b>			<b>(ub)</b>

**Statement of Accounts for RGC Postdoctoral Fellowship Scheme (PDFS)**

University:

RGC Reference Number:

Name of Awardee:

Project Title(s) (if applicable):

<b><u>Source of Funding</u></b>	<b><u>RGC</u> (\$)</b>	<b><u>University/ Others</u> (\$)</b>	<b><u>Total</u> (\$)</b>	<b><u>Remarks</u></b>
<b>Amount of Funding Received</b>	XXX,XXX	XXX,XXX	XXX,XXX	(F)
<b><u>Less Expenditure</u></b>				
<b>One-line Vote Items</b>				
(a) Basic Salary for PdF Appointment	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(e1)
(b) XXX	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(e2, if applicable)
(c) XXX	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(e3, if applicable)
(d) XXX	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(e4, if applicable)
<b>Earmarked Item</b>				
(e) Conference and Research-related Travel Allowance	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(e5)
<b>Amount of Funding Used</b>	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(E) = total of (e1) to (e5)
<b>Unspent Balance</b>	XXX,XXX (ub)	XXX,XXX	XXX,XXX	(UB) = (F) – (E)
<b>Unspent Balance to be returned to the RGC</b>	XXX,XXX			(ub)

**Statement of Accounts for RGC Research Fellow Scheme (RFS)**  
**and RGC Senior Research Fellow Scheme (SRFS)**

University:  
 RGC Reference Number:  
 Name of Awardee:  
 Project Title:  
 First Instalment Paid:  
 Second Instalment Paid:

<b><u>Source of Funding</u></b>	<b><u>RGC</u></b> (\$)	<b><u>University</u></b> (\$)	<b><u>Others</u></b> (\$)	<b><u>Total</u></b> (\$)	<b><u>Remarks</u></b>
<b>Amount of Funding Received</b>	XXX,XXX	XXX,XXX	XXX,XXX	XXX,XXX	(F)
<b><u>Less Expenditure</u></b>					
<b>One-line Vote Items</b>					
(a) Staff (SRA/RA/Postdoc/ RPg/Others) (Excluding undergraduate students)	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(e1)
(b) Equipment	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(e2)
(c) Relief Teacher	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(e3)
(d) Outsourcing	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(e4)
(e) General Expenses	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(e5)
(f) Conference	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(e6)
(g) Travel/Subsistence (non-conference research-related trip(s))	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(e7)
(h) Expenses for Dissemination of	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(e8)

Research  
Deliverables

**Earmarked Items\***

(i) High-performance Computing Services	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(e9)
(j) Research-related Software Licence/Dataset, etc.)	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(e10)
<b>Amount of Funding Used</b>	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	(XXX,XXX)	<b>(E) = total of (e1) to (e10)</b>
<b>Unspent Balance</b>	<b>XXX,XXX</b> (ub)	<b>XXX,XXX</b>	<b>XXX,XXX</b>	<b>XXX,XXX</b>	<b>(UB) = (F) – (E)</b>
<b>Unspent Balance to be returned to the RGC</b>	<b>XXX,XXX</b>				<b>(ub)</b>

\* The earmarked amount should be used for the specified items. It is not transferable and should not be used to meet other items of expenses of the supported project.



**Request for Change of Project Coordinator/Principal Investigator**

**Scheme:**

**Project Number:**

**Project Title:**

To be completed by the Project Coordinator (PC)/Principal Investigator (PI) concerned  
*(Please use additional sheet if necessary)*

Part 1 – State of progress of the Project

Part 2 – Reasons for Change of PC/PI

Part 3 – Name of existing Co-Principal Investigator (Co-PI)/Co-Investigator (Co-I)/nominated new PC/PI to replace the PC/PI

Name:

Post Title:

University:

Part 4 – Past experience of the existing Co-PI/Co-I/nominated new PC/PI in the research area at issue

**Signature of the PC/PI:**

**Name of PC/PI (in BLOCK letters):**

**Date:**

## Part 5 – Declaration by the nominated PC/PI concerned

I am willing to take up the role of Project Coordinator/Principal Investigator of the project (Ref.: ) and assume full responsibility for completion of the project. I will be held responsible and be accountable for the management and completion of the project. The final assessment on the project, be it “Satisfactory” or “Unsatisfactory”, will apply to me.

**Signature of the nominated PC/PI:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Name of nominated PC/PI (in**  
**BLOCK letters):** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Part 6 – University’s Endorsement

I confirm that the above request for change of PC/PI is supported by the university, and the nominated PC/PI meets all the RGC eligibility requirements as the PC/PI of RGC-funded projects.

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Name (in BLOCK letters):** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Designation:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Humanities and Social Sciences Prestigious Fellowship Scheme**  
**Application for Revision in Work Plan/Dissemination Plan**  
**of Newly Awarded Fellowship**

Project Number:

Project Title:

Name of Award Holder:

---

(A) Original Work Plan/Dissemination Plan (please list in point form as appropriate)

(B) Revised Work Plan/Dissemination Plan (please highlight the parts where revision is made)

(C) Reason(s) for Revision(s) of Work Plan/Dissemination Plan

Remarks: Requests outside the above scope should be separately submitted to the RGC for consideration.

**Joint Research Schemes**  
**Application for Revision of Funded Project**

**Project Number:**

**Project Title:**

**HK Principal Investigator (PI)/**

**University:**

**Project Start Date:**

**Project Completion Date:**

**Budget Breakdown**

<b>Direct Cost</b>	<b>Original Budget (HK\$)</b>	<b>Revised Budget (HK\$)</b>
Supporting Staff		
Equipment		
Outsourcing Expenses of Research Work outside Hong Kong		
General Expenses		
Conference(s)		
Relief Teacher*		
High-performance Computing Services*		
Software License/Dataset*		
Project Review Workshop*		
Total		

*\*Earmarked items*

**Justification:**

--

**Revision on Objectives/Work Programme<sup>^</sup>** *(if applicable)*

(A) Original Objectives/Work Programme *(please list in point form as appropriate)*

(B) Revised Objectives/Work Programme (please *highlight* the parts where revision is made)

(C) Reason(s) for Revision(s) of Objective(s)/Work Programme

^Remarks: Requests outside the above scope should be separately submitted to the RGC for consideration.

**Signature of the HKPI:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Name of HKPI (in BLOCK letters) :** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_