RGC Ref No.

RESEARCH GRANTS COUNCIL

Early Career Scheme
Application Form for 2027/28 (ECS1)
(Please submit your application through RGC Electronic System)

Please ensure you read the Scheme Overview and Guidance Notes (Guidance Notes) carefully before completing this form. Section 2 of the Guidance Notes mirrors the application form structure, so will provide you with step-by-step advice on completion.

To safeguard the interests of the researcher and the university, the awardee university bears the primary responsibility for prevention, detection and investigation of research misconduct, including but not limited to misuse of funds, data falsification, plagiarism and double-dipping. The university should vet the grant applications using anti-plagiarism software before submitting them to the RGC.

PART I: SUMMARY OF THE APPLICATION

1. Particulars of the Project

(a) Name and Academic Affiliation of Principal Investigator (PI):

Name with Title	Post	Unit / Department and University	ORCID iD	Current Member of UGC / RGC Panel / Committee (as at application deadline)? (Yes or No)	Name of UGC/RGC Panel / Committee

(b) The applicant is within

☐ first year (entering into employment between 31 October 2025 to 16 April 2027)
☐ second year (entering into employment between 31 October 2024 to 30 October 2025)
☐ third year (entering into employment between 31 October 2023 to 30 October 2024)

of his / her full time academic job as an Assistant Professor or career equivalent involving teaching and research duties and the applicant is in substantiation track / tenure track position at the time of submission of the proposal and has not been granted ECS grants or awards.

The applicant confirms that he / she had not been funded under previous Early Career Scheme exercises.

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(c) Number of hours per week to be spent by the PI in the proposal:

(d) Title of Project:

(e) Project Duration: ____ Months*
* for project with duration exceeding 36 months, please explain in Part II (4) why the proposed research cannot be completed within the normal span of 36 months.

(f) Total Amount Requested: $

(g) Nature of Application:

New ☐ Re-submission ☐ Continuation ☐

(h) (i) If this is a resubmission or largely similar to a proposal that has been submitted to but not supported by the UGC / RGC or another funding agency, or a continuation application, please give details here:

Reference No(s). [for UGC / RGC projects only]:
Name of funding agency(ies) and the funding programme(s):
Project title(s):
Date (month / year) of application:
Outcome:

(ii) If this application is the same as or similar to the one(s) submitted under any UGC / RGC funding schemes but not supported previously, please provide a summary of all the previous submissions, the main concerns / suggestions of the reviewers and the revisions made to each of the previous submissions. Please make sure that sufficient revisions and improvement based on the comments provided by the assessment panels have been made. **Maximum of 500 words**

2. Research Areas and Project Team

(a)

Primary Field: _____ & Code ____

Secondary Field: _____ & Code ____

(b) Project Keywords (maximum of 5):

(c) Project Abstract (comprehensible to a non-specialist)

(d) (i) CV and Publication List for PI

(d) (ii) Plan for Collaboration

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PART II: DETAILS OF THE RESEARCH PROPOSAL

3. Project Objectives

4. Research Project Statement

5. Pathways to Impact Statement

6. References

7. Output Dissemination Plan

Target timing of dissemination (quarter / year)	Output type (Journal / Conference / Other)	Name of target journal, conference or other dissemination means

8. Declaration of Time Commitments, Grant Record and Related Research Work of Principal Investigator

(A) Declaration of time commitments[1]:

(i) Number of on-going individual research projects[2] currently held by the PI in any capacity (e.g. PI, Co-I, Collaborator, etc.):

(ii) Number of on-going collaborative research projects[3] currently held by the PI in any capacity (e.g. PC, Co-PI, Co-I, Collaborator, etc.):

If the number declared in (i) exceeds three **or** the number declared in (ii) exceeds two, please provide the following information:

(iii) Overall amount of time spent on research by the PI in percentage terms:

(iv) Justifications on how the PI would be able to take up this additional research project if funded while maintaining the research quality:

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1 Research projects funded from all sources (irrespective of whether from UGC/RGC) should be included, except those funded under the joint research schemes and the fellowship schemes administered by the RGC. Projects for which completion reports have yet to be submitted by the application deadline of the current ECS exercise should also be counted.

2 Examples include research projects funded under the General Research Fund (GRF), Early Career Scheme (ECS), etc. Individual research projects funded from sources other than UGC / RGC should also be included. For details, please refer to the Guidance Notes (ECS2).

3 Examples include research projects funded under the Areas of Excellence Scheme (AoE), Theme-based Research Scheme (TRS), Collaborative Research Fund (CRF) and Research Impact Fund (RIF). Collaborative research projects funded from sources other than UGC / RGC should also be included. For details, please refer to the Guidance Notes (ECS2).

(B) Please complete the table below in the order of the following:

(i) completed research work funded from all sources (irrespective of whether from UGC / RGC) in the past five years;
(ii) on-going research work funded from all sources (irrespective of whether from UGC / RGC);
(iii) proposals pending funding approval (irrespective of whether submitted to UGC / RGC); and
(iv) any other work related to this research project outside the 5 year period covered above and irrespective of whether it was / is funded by the UGC or the RGC. Please state what distinguishes this project from that work.

Project / proposal reference number (if any)	Project Title	Project objectives	Capacity (PI / PC / Co-I / Co-PI)	Status (completed / on-going / pending)	Start date	End date	Funding Source and Amount ($)	No of hours per week spent (for on-going projects)*	Related to current project? Y/N#

* Please provide the most updated information.

If the declared work is related to the current project, please state what distinguishes this project from that work.

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PART III: PROJECT FUNDING and RESOURCES

9. Cost and Justification

(a) Estimated cost and resource implications:

	Year 1 ($)	Year 2 ($)	Year 3 ($)	Year 4 ($)	Year 5 ($)	Total ($)

(A) One-line Vote Items

(i) Supporting Staff Costs

Types

- Senior Research Assistant / Research Assistant / Post-doctoral Fellows / Research Postgraduate Students
- Others

Monthly salary x Nos. x Months $

Justification:

(ii) Equipment Expenses $

Justification:

Quotation Provided: Yes ☐ No ☐

(iii) Outsourcing Expenses of Research Work Outside Hong Kong $

Justification:

Quotation Provided: Yes ☐ No ☐

(iv) General Expenses $

Justification :

Quotation Provided: Yes ☐ No ☐

(v) Conference Expenses $

Justification :

Sub-total for (A) (One-line Vote Items): $

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(B) Earmarked Items

(vi) Costs for Employment of Relief Teacher

Rank of relief teacher:
No. of courses to be relieved: $
Per course rate of relief teacher:
Period to be relieved: _____ months

Justification:

PI's Current Average Teaching Load: Total _____ courses per academic year [UGC-funded programmes only]

(vii) High-performance Computing Services Expenses $

(vii)(a) Justification: including explanation on how the item(s) is/are related to the research activities and essential to deliver the research results, and description on how the budget is arithmetically determined, etc.

(vii)(b) Enhanced Earmarked Funding to meet exceptionally high demand for HPCS [For proposal requesting for funding exceeding $100,000 in (viii)]

☐ By clicking this box, I declare that there are exceptional research needs to apply for the enhanced earmarked funding for HPCS. I also understand that I am obliged to provide further justifications to support this request.

Further justification: including, but not limited to, explanations on whether alternative means to obtain the research results have been explored, whether more than one quotation has been obtained (if the services required are not exclusively provided by a single service provider), alternatives to lower the required HPCS cost and how could the enhanced earmarked fund be gainfully deployed for the research activities, etc.

(viii) Research-related Software Licence / Dataset $
[please itemize and provide quotations for each item]

Justification :

Sub-total for (B) (Earmarked Items): $

(ix) **Total cost of the project (A) + (B)** $

(C) Deduction Items

Less:

(x) Other research funds secured from other sources $

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Sub-total for (C) (Deduction Items): $

(xi) **Amount requested in this application: (A) + (B) – (C)** $

(D) Academic Research related to Public Policy Developments

(xii) Percentage of the total cost of the proposal related to public policy developments ((A) + (B)) %

(b) Declaration on the equipment procurement

☐ (i) No procurement of equipment is required
OR
☐ (ii) I declare that the equipment indicated in Section 9(a)(A)(ii) above is not available in the university
OR
☐ (iii) I declare that all or some of the equipment (please provide details in the following text box) indicated in Section 9(a)(A)(ii) above is available in the university but cannot be used by this project for the following reasons (a maximum of 500 words)

(c) Declaration on employment of relief teacher

☐ (i) No relief teacher is required
OR
☐ (ii) I declare that I currently do not hold any grant for employment of relief teacher of any on-going project under UGC / RGC funding schemes
OR
☐ (iii) I declare that I hold grant for employment of relief teacher of the following on-going project(s) under UGC / RGC funding schemes (excluding Humanities and Social Sciences Prestigious Fellowship Scheme (HSSPFS))
Project No.:
Project Title:
Project Commencement Date:
Project Completion Date:

(d) Declaration on high-performance computing services

☐ (i) No procurement of high-performance computing services is required
OR
☐ (ii) I declare that the high-performance computing services indicated in Section 9(a)(B)(vii) above is not available in the university
OR
☐ (iii) I declare that all or some of the high-performance computing services (please provide details in the following text box) indicated in Section 9(a)(B)(vii) above is

available in the university but cannot be used by this project in view of the following reasons (a maximum of 500 words)

Reasons : (a maximum of 500 words)

(e) Declaration on the research-related software licence / dataset

☐ (i) No procurement of research-related software licence / dataset is required

OR

☐ (ii) I declare that the research-related software licence / dataset indicated in Section 9(a)(B)(viii) above is not available in the university

OR

☐ (iii) I declare that all or some of the research-related software licence / dataset (please provide details in the following text box) indicated in Section 9(a)(B)(viii) above is available in the university but cannot be used by this project for the following reasons (a maximum of 500 words)

10. Existing Facilities and Major Equipment available for this Research Project

(a maximum of 400 words)

11. Funds Secured or to be Secured

(a) Other research funds already secured for this research proposal:

[This amount will be deducted from the total cost of the project in Part III Section 9 above.]

Source	Amount ($)

(b) Other research funds to be or are being sought for this research proposal:

[If funds under this item are secured, the amount of the ECS to be awarded may be reduced.]

Source	Amount ($)

PART IV: ETHICS AND OTHER APPROVALS

12. Research Ethics / Safety Approval

(i) I confirm that the research proposal ☐ involves / ☐ does not involve human subjects.

(ii) I confirm that the research proposal ☐ involves / ☐ does not involve the study of artefacts.

(iii) Please tick '√ ' in the appropriate boxes to confirm if approval for the respective ethics and / or safety issues is required and has been / is being obtained from the PI's university. PIs are encouraged to seek necessary approval (except for human research ethics (clinical)) before application deadlines.

	Approval not required	Approval being sought	Approval obtained
(1) Animal research ethics	☐	☐	☐
(2) Biological safety	☐	☐	☐
(3) Ionizing radiation safety	☐	☐	☐
(4) Non-ionizing radiation safety	☐	☐	☐
(5) Chemical safety	☐	☐	☐
(6) Human research ethics (non-clinical)	☐	☐	☐
(7) Artefacts research ethics	☐	☐	☐

	Approval not required	Approval being sought	Approval obtained	Approval will be sought if funded
(8) Human research ethics (clinical)	☐	☐	☐	☐

(iv) if approval is required by **other authorities**, please indicate below the names of the authorities and the prospects of obtaining such approval. If not applicable, please put down "N.A.".

13. Access to Government / Official / Private Data and Records

(i) Is access to Government or official or private data and records critical to the research proposal?

☐ No

☐ Yes

If approval is required, please indicate below the names of the agency(ies) of obtaining such approval.

(ii) Please tick '√ ' in the appropriate boxes to confirm if approval for access to the related data / records has been / is being obtained from the relevant agency(ies). If approval has been obtained, please provide evidence.

List of agency(ies)	Approval not required	Approval being sought	Approval obtained
	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐

14. Project Data

(i) Is the proposed project likely to generate data set(s) of retention value?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, please describe the nature, quantity and potential use of the data set(s) in future.

(ii) Are you willing to make the data set(s) available to others for reference twelve months after the publication of research results or the completion of this proposed project?

Yes ☐ No ☐

I understand that the RGC will release the completion report to the public and only considers data archiving requests after the completion of the RGC-funded project. The RGC has full discretion in funding the archiving requests. Data sets archived with RGC funds will require users to acknowledge the originator and the RGC. The originator will also be provided with copies of all publications derived from the use of the data.

I undertake to include in the project completion report the URL links to the university's repository or the publishers' websites so that the public could have quick and easy access to the manuscripts or journal articles. I will also consider to include in the research completion report the data repository where research data of the project could be accessed and shared, where appropriate.

I undertake that upon acceptance of a paper for publication,

(i) I will check whether the publisher already allows (A) full open access to the publisher's version, or (B) my depositing a copy of the paper (either the publisher's version or the final accepted manuscript after peer-review) in the university's repository for open access;

(ii) if both (i) (A) and (B) are not allowed, I will request the publisher to allow me to place either version in my university's repository for restricted access immediately upon publication or after an embargo period of up to twelve months if required by the publisher;

and

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

15. Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

(i) Were AI models / systems / tools used when preparing the proposal?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, please specify which AI models / systems / tools were used; and provide the details of usage including but not limited to the purpose and the extent of such usage:
(a maximum of 300 words)

(ii) Will AI models / systems / tools be used when conducting the research if funded?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, please describe in details how and to what extent the AI models / systems / tools will be used:
(a maximum of 300 words)

☐ I confirm the use of AI models / systems / tools mentioned above complies / will comply with my university's relevant institutional policies.

☐ I accept full responsibility for the scholarly and scientific integrity, accuracy, originality and intellectual content of all AI-generated content in the proposal and the research if funded.

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16. Data Collection and Management

Will this proposed research involve collection of personal data? This question may refer to any information relating to identifiable individuals, including demographic, health, behavioural, educational, occupational, or digital records.

Yes ☐ No ☐

Will this proposed research involve collection of data set(s) outside Hong Kong? This question includes use of any research data collected, accessed, transferred, linked, or obtained from individuals, organisations, systems, or sources outside Hong Kong.

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes for either check box above, please describe in this section how data generated, accessed or reused through the proposed research will be collected, managed, stored, shared and ultimately disposed of, where appropriate. The proposed approach should be proportionate to the scale, nature and rigor of the research as well as sensitivity of the data concerned. It should demonstrate good research practice and comply with all relevant ethical, legal, regulatory and institutional requirements. Please provide the description with respect to the following four aspects[4] (**maximum 400 words in total**) -

(i) Data Collection and Consent
(ii) Data Management and Security
(iii) Data Sharing and Access
(iv) Legal and Regulatory Compliance

[4] More details of each aspect are provided in the Guidance Notes (ECS2).

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PART V: ADDITIONAL ATTACHMENTS

Appendix 1: Education Plan

Upload

Appendix 2: Technology Transfer Plan (Optional)

Upload

Appendix 3: Letters of Collaboration

Upload

Appendix 4: Other Supporting Documents (e.g. ethics and safety approval letters)

Upload

PART VI: UNDERTAKING OF THE PI

By submitting the application, I undertake that the research activity(ies) / expenditure(s) of the project if funded will be carefully monitored for its / their compliance with applicable laws, health and safety guidelines and ethical standards, including but not limited to the Law of the People's Republic of China on Safeguarding National Security in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

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PART VII: UNIVERSITY'S ENDORSEMENT, COMMITMENTS AND CONFIRMATION

(To be completed by the appropriate authority of the university. The university should confirm that it has evaluated and given support to the application before submission to the RGC.)

UNIVERSITY'S ENDORSEMENT

(Please tick '√' as appropriate in the boxes)

1. Staff Eligibility Requirement for ECS

I confirm that:

(a) the application has been evaluated and endorsed by the university for submission to the RGC;

(b) the PI meets fully the stipulated staff eligibility requirement and is not debarred from applying for ECS grant;

[where the PI is newly appointed, the university has formally entered into a contract of service with him / her on or before the submission deadline of this funding exercise and the contract requires him / her to report duty on or before 16 April 2027.]

☐ the PI is / will be primarily engaged in and spending at least 80% of time in degree or higher degree work at the university; **or**

☐ the PI is / will be seconded to work full-time or part-time at the following Innovation and Technology (I&T) clusters at the Hong Kong Science Park with effect from _____ (mm/yyyy)

☐ Health@InnoHK

☐ AIR@InnoHK; **or**

☐ the PI is / will be seconded to conduct research in a university or a research institute / body / agency in the Chinese Mainland / overseas jurisdiction with effect from _____ (mm/yyyy)

[Name of university / research institute / body / agency: _____
Region / Country: _____]

(c) the PI is / will be employed in substantiation track / tenure track position;

(d) the applicant's statement at Part I Section 1 (b) is true;

(e) the applicant's declared teaching load at Part III Section 9(a)(B)(vi) has been verified (only for the case where the applicant is seeking funding support for relief teacher);

(f) the applicant will have the number of hours per week as declared in Part I Section 1(c) to supervise the proposed project without prejudice to his / her existing commitment in other research work, teaching and administrative duties;

(g) the university will inform the RGC as soon as the PI ceases to be eligible to apply, receive or hold a ECS grant, and will withdraw the application / terminate the project if it is already funded and commenced;

(h) the university understands that the ECS grant, if given, will be withdrawn if the project does not start within one year of the funding award. The university should report to the RGC as soon as possible when a PI proceeds on no-pay leave / professional leave for a continuous or cumulative period exceeding 183 days within the project period;

(i) **[for PI requesting Employment of Relief Teacher at Part III Section 9(a)(B)(vi) only]**

☐ the PI does not currently hold any grant for employment of relief teacher of any on-going project under UGC / RGC funding schemes

☐ the PI holds the grant for employment of relief teacher of the on-going project(s) at Part III Section 9(c) (excluding HSSPFS) and I shall ensure the PI to submit the corresponding completion report(s) by 15 April 2027

UNIVERSITY'S COMMITMENTS AND CONFIRMATION

2. Support to PI and Students

I confirm that:

(a) ☐ the applicant will be permitted to be the primary supervisor of research student(s) (MPhil / PhD) during the project period.

(b) adequate supervision, research facilities and training provisions

☐ will

☐ will not

be in place to meet the need of RPg student(s) so employed under the research grant if this application is supported by the RGC.

☐ No RPg student will be trained in this proposed project

☐ Not applicable

(c) the research project under this ECS application

☐ is

☐ is not

in line with the role of the university.

(d) ☐ no outsourcing outside Hong Kong is required

☐ the PI's justification at Part III Section 9(a)(A)(iii) is reasonable and I support the PI's application for outsourcing the stated work outside Hong Kong

(e) ☐ no equipment is required

☐ the PI's declaration and reasons at Part III Section 9(b) are true and correct and I support the PI's request for this procurement of equipment

(f) ☐ no high-performance computing services is required

☐ the PI's declaration and reasons at Part III Section 9(d) are true and correct and I support the PI's request for this subscription of high-performance computing resources

(g) ☐ no research-related software licence / dataset is required

☐ the PI's declaration and reasons at Part III Section 9(e) are true and correct and I support the PI's request for this procurement of the research-related software licence / dataset

(h) ☐ this application does not include requests for purchasing normal academic equipment, computer, consumables, postage, fax, stationery, overseas telephone charges, and standard software licence / dataset known to be available or reasonably expected to be provided in the universities concerned.

(i) this application

☐ has

☐ has not

been scanned by anti-plagiarism software. (Please provide reasons for not scanning by anti-plagiarism software)

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3. Research Ethics / Safety Approval and Access to Government / Official / Private Data and Records / Use of AI / Data Collection and Management
(Please tick '√' as appropriate in the boxes)

(a) Research Ethics / Safety Approval

I have examined the research proposal and confirm that:

(i) ☐ the research proposal involves human subjects

and human research ethics (non-clinical)
- ☐ approval not required / exemption has been obtained.
- ☐ approval is being sought.
- ☐ exemption is being sought.
- ☐ approval has been obtained.

and human research ethics (clinical)
- ☐ approval not required.
- ☐ approval is being sought.
- ☐ approval has been obtained.
- ☐ approval will be sought if funded.

or

☐ the research proposal does not involve human subjects.

(ii) ☐ the research proposal involves the study of artefacts and

- ☐ approval not required
- ☐ approval is being sought.
- ☐ approval has been obtained.

or

☐ the research proposal does not involve the study of artefacts.

(iii) the approval of the appropriate authority(ies) is not required or has been / will be obtained in respect of the following :

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		Approval not required	Approval being sought	Approval obtained
(1)	Animal research ethics	☐	☐	☐
(2)	Biological safety	☐	☐	☐
(3)	Ionizing radiation safety	☐	☐	☐
(4)	Non-ionizing radiation safety	☐	☐	☐
(5)	Chemical safety	☐	☐	☐

(b) Access to Government / Official / Private Data and Records

I have examined the research proposal and confirm that

(i) the approval of the appropriate authority(ies) is / are:

☐ required

☐ not required

(ii) the approval of the appropriate agency(ies) has been / will be obtained in respect of the following :

List of agency(ies)	Approval not required	Approval being sought	Approval obtained
	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐

For (a) and (b) above, except human research ethics (clinical), where such approval is required but has not yet been obtained, the university will ensure that it will be obtained without delay. The university understands that if no confirmation of such approval is provided to the RGC by 15 April 2027, the RGC will regard this ECS application as being withdrawn and will stop further processing it.

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(c) Use of AI

I have examined the research proposal and confirm that

- ☐ AI models / systems / tools are used / will be used in this research. The use of AI is / will be in compliance with the relevant institutional policies of the university.

- ☐ AI models / systems / tools are not used / will not be used in this research.

(d) Data Collection and Management

I have examined the research proposal and confirm that

- ☐ The collection and management of research data of this proposal is / will be in compliance with the relevant institutional policies of the university.