

## RESEARCH GRANTS COUNCIL

### COMPETITIVE RESEARCH FUNDING SCHEMES FOR THE LOCAL SELF-FINANCING DEGREE SECTOR 2019/20

#### FACULTY DEVELOPMENT SCHEME (FDS)

#### Guidance Notes (FDS2) for Completing the Application Form FDS1

*All applicants should read this set of Guidance Notes (FDS2) carefully before completing and submitting your research proposal. The Research Grants Council (RGC) may stop further processing your application if your application is found not in compliance with any of the requirements as set out in this set of Guidance Notes (FDS2).*

#### GENERAL

1. Please read the Sixth Call for Proposals for details of the Faculty Development Scheme (FDS), and also make reference to the “Guidelines on Disbursement, Accounting and Monitoring Arrangement for the Competitive Research Funding Schemes for the Local Self-financing Degree Sector” (SF-DAMA) from the RGC website.
2. In this Sixth Call for Proposals, applicants must be eligible academic staff from the following fourteen local self-financing degree-awarding institutions:

<u>Code</u>	<u>Institution</u>
11	Caritas Institute of Higher Education
12	Centennial College
13	Chu Hai College of Higher Education
14	The Hang Seng University of Hong Kong
15	Hong Kong Shue Yan University
16	The Open University of Hong Kong
17	Tung Wah College
21	HKCT Institute of Higher Education
22	Hong Kong Nang Yan College of Higher Education
23	School of Continuing Education, Hong Kong Baptist University
24	School of Professional Education and Executive Development, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University
25	Technological and Higher Education Institute of Hong Kong
31	Gratia Christian College
41	Yew Chung College of Early Childhood Education

3. These notes are intended to be read by the applicants / related staff of institutions specified in Paragraph 2 above before completion and submission of the FDS applications.
4. The Application Form is in three parts, Part I: Summary of the Research Proposal; Part II: Details of the Research Proposal; and Part III: Institutional Endorsement and Declaration of Research Ethics / Safety Approval.
5. For applications which have genuine special needs to be completed in a language other than English, the applicant(s) / institution(s) are required to provide an English version on the Abstract and Research Details (Impact and Objectives, Background of Research, Research Plan and Methodology).
6. In order to ensure consistency and fairness, applicants must complete the applications in the following **standard RGC format**. **Failure to comply with the following format may lead to disqualification of their applications.**

Font: Times New Roman

Font Size: 12 point

Margin: 2.5cm all round

Spacing: Single-line spacing

PDF version: compatible with Adobe Acrobat Readers 5 and should be a text-searchable pdf

7. **All sections should be completed.** Where information sought is not applicable or not provided under a particular section, insert "N/A".
8. Before submission, a project reference number should be assigned by the institution for each of the proposals for identification purposes. The format of the reference number is: UGC / Scheme + Institution Code / Subject Panel + Serial No. / Year, e.g. UGC / FDS11 / B01 / 19. The codes for the five subject panels are:
 

B – Business Studies	M – Biology and Medicine
E – Engineering	P – Physical Sciences
H – Humanities and Social Sciences	
9. The project reference number should be used and quoted in all future correspondence. While an application could be made to a particular panel, the RGC shall have the discretion to decide on the panel responsible for the final assessment of each application.

10. The **deadline for submission of application is 1 March 2019 (Friday) 5:00 pm**. **Four hard copies (including the original version) and one soft copy of each proposal are required** to be forwarded to the UGC Secretariat through the institution. The soft copy of the proposal should be saved in one CD / DVD / USB memory stick as far as possible, with size **up to 5MB for each proposal**, with the file name identical with the project title. The content of the soft and hard copies must be **identical**. The application will not be processed if such discrepancies are spotted.
11. In view of substantial amount of data involved, institutions are required to submit the applications together with a summary of critical information (in Excel table) on all the proposals for the funding scheme. The completed critical data file should be forwarded to the Secretariat on or before the deadline for submission of applications.
12. To help reduce the cost of processing and save paper, applicants are urged to keep the length of proposals and attachments to the minimum and use double-sided printing / photocopying when making copies. It is important that applicants should comply with the page limits specified in various sections of the Application Form. **Applications will be disqualified if the proposals are found to have exceeded the allowable page limits in various sections or have abused the purpose of the “Supporting Documents” in Part II Section 11 of the Application Form** (only letters of collaboration and supporting documents for the purpose of research ethics / safety approval are allowed to be attached). Applicants should not make use of Section 11 to supplement the contents of other sections.
13. It is the obligation of Principal Investigators (PIs) to ensure that their respective applications contain sufficient and consistent information for evaluation. **Incomplete submission** (such as those lacking substantial data / information for evaluation) **or inconsistent / inaccurate information would lead to the disqualification of an application.**
14. Applicants are not allowed to mention anything not related to the research proposal per se in the Application Form (such as describing the funding rules) with a view to **communicating to the reviewers** that the latter should give a certain rating if they intend to support the projects. **Should such act be discovered, the applications concerned will be disqualified and the applicants will be subject to disciplinary action.**
15. The RGC is fully committed to the principle of honesty, integrity and fair play in the conduct of its business. To uphold public trust and protect public interest, it is important for all applicants to note and observe the

“RGC Code of Conduct” and “Extracts from the Prevention of Bribery Ordinance” at **Annex C**. Applicants are prohibited to **communicate with the RGC Members and Assessment Panel Members on the applications** submitted with a view to influencing the latter in assessing their applications. **Should such act be discovered, the applications concerned will be disqualified and the applicants will be subject to disciplinary action.**

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

### **INFORMATION UPDATE**

17. A brief update of the proposal, if any, should be submitted to the RGC on or before 28 June 2019, indicating any significant changes, e.g. changes in the eligibility of the PIs, investigator(s)’s CVs, research funding secured, grant records, etc. It should be emphasized that such update should be confined to the above-said changes, and applicants should not use the opportunity to revise their proposals substantially.
18. If an update is provided for ethics / safety approval for an application, the PI or the institution should submit the relevant updated data to the RGC on or before 28 June 2019. Submission of letters on ethics / safety approval is however not required at this stage, but such letters, if necessary, may need to be provided upon RGC’s request.
19. If an update is provided for approval for access to Government / official / private data and records for an application, the PI or the institution should submit the relevant updated data to the RGC on or before 28 June 2019. Evidence of approval should also be submitted at this stage.
20. If an update is provided on any related research work that is being / has been conducted in relation to the proposal, the PI and / or Co-Investigator(s) (Co-I(s)) should submit the relevant updated data to the RGC on or before 28 June 2019.
21. Other than the specific situations set out, no information update / revision to an application is allowed after submission deadline.

## **ENQUIRIES**

22. Enquiries about the contents of these Guidance Notes and other related matters about the FDS funding exercise should be directed to the Research Coordinators (RCs) or responsible personnel of the institutions who, if in doubt, should consult the UGC Secretariat for clarification. Also, correspondence regarding FDS matters including enquiries, appeals and complaints should be made through the RCs or responsible personnel of the institutions.
23. The guidelines on handling the information and personal data contained in FDS applications are at **Annex A** of this set of Guidance Notes. Applicants requiring additional information about internal deadlines, application procedures or assistance in completing the Application Form may contact the RCs or responsible personnel of their own institutions.
24. For any situations not covered in this set of Guidance Notes, applicants may make reference to the prevailing practice of other RGC funding schemes and if in doubt, consult the RCs or related personnel of the institutions.

## **APPLICATION FORM**

The ensuing paragraphs set out step-by-step guidelines on completing the application form FDS1 where the item numbers correspond to the item numbers on the form.

### **PART I SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH PROPOSAL**

#### **1. Particulars of the Principal Investigator (PI)**

- (a) To ensure record accuracy and to facilitate identification of the PI and Co-I, their names on their Hong Kong Identity Cards / Passports (where applicable) should be used and entered in the standard RGC format:

	<b>Surname (in capital letters)</b>	<b>Other Name<sup>*</sup></b>
e.g.	CHAN	Peter Tai-wai
e.g.	ZHONG	Yaping
e.g.	ROBINSON	Philip

\* First / given name, then Chinese name in English syllables (hyphenated) / middle name, if any; initials should be avoided.

- (b) The applicant, who will be the PI of the proposal, must be a full-time academic staff employed by an eligible self-financing degree-awarding institutions specified in Paragraph 2 under Section “General” above and fulfill ALL of the following requirements:
- (i) spends at least 80% of time on locally-accredited local degree or higher degree work; and
- (ii) has at least a one-year renewable contract with the institution at the time of funding award being made.

Institutions are responsible for interpreting whether an applicant has fulfilled the eligibility requirements announced in the Call for Proposals. The applicant should clarify his / her status with the institution concerned. **Once the application is submitted, change of PI during the processing period will not be allowed. The PI is responsible to report immediately via RC of the institution to the UGC Secretariat any changes in his / her eligibility status.**

- (c) In defining the years of service, the total number of years of full-time employment of the PI as an academic staff in degree-awarding institutions (including UGC-funded universities or local / overseas degree-awarding institutions) will be counted. All academic staff, including junior academics (i.e. less than 4 years of service) are

encouraged to apply under this scheme.

## 2. **Information on PI and Co-Investigator (Co-I)**

- (a) Please refer to 1(a) and (b) for the particulars and eligibility of the PI. There is no eligibility requirements for the Co-Is. The Co-Is can be any personnel working in the same or different local self-financing degree-awarding institutions, or the UGC-funded institutions, or public / private local or overseas institutions / organizations. There is no limit in the number of application submitted in the capacity Co-I. Each application should be submitted with only one applicant nominated as the PI and no applicant should submit more than one application in this capacity. Other joint applicants, if any, will be regarded as Co-I. Each Co-I should have a clear, distinct and material role. Excessive number of Co-Is should be avoided. Save in very exceptional circumstances, the RGC will not entertain requests for the addition of Co-Is to a project after the funding award.

Please provide and indicate, in particular:

- the Open Researcher and Contributor ID identifier (ORCID iD) of the PI and each Co-I;
- the average number of hours per week to be spent by the PI and each Co-I on the proposed project; and
- whether the PI and / or Co-I(s) is / are RGC Committee / Panel Member(s) as at the deadline of the application.

The PI and all local Co-I(s) are required to provide an ORCID iD to facilitate identification of researchers. Oversea Co-I(s) are encouraged to provide one. ORCID iD can be registered for free at <https://orcid.org>.

- (b) Please summarize the qualification of the PI and each Co-I(s) who will be involved in the project. The CV(s) to be attached should include the following information, as appropriate:
- (i)-(vii) Name, academic qualifications (with dates and name of awarding universities), previous academic positions held (with dates) & present academic position(s) (with date(s)), previous relevant research work, publication records including the five most representative publications in the recent five years and five representative publications beyond the recent five years (10 at maximum) and others including research-related prizes and awards, brief description of experience in consultancies, service as a referee in evaluating other grant applications, patents, PhD theses supervised, etc.

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

Each CV should be limited to two A4 pages according to the standard RGC format.

- (c) Please give details of plan of collaboration. In proposals involving more than one investigator, the role and specific task(s) of each individual (including the PI and Co-Is) in the proposed research should be described clearly. If the research involves collaboration with other research team(s) or institution(s), letters of collaboration should be attached to Part II Section 11 in the Application Form.

PIs are required to confirm that the Co-I(s) listed in the proposal have explicitly agreed to serve in the project team and a copy of the proposal has been provided to each of the Co-Is. PIs are required to provide documentary proof on the collaboration upon the request of the RGC / Secretariat.

### 3. Particulars of the Project

- (a) The project title should be informative, but short and concise.
- (b) All applicants must indicate with caution the nature of the application being submitted:

Nature	Definition
New	The application on a research topic which the PI and / or Co-I(s) applies / apply for RGC funds for the first time.
Re-submission	The application on research topic which the PI and / or Co-I(s) has / have previously applied for RGC funds but not supported.
Continuation	The application continuing the work previously funded by the RGC.

The applicant is required to quote the previous RGC reference number if the application is a re-submission / continuation.



- (c)(i) For all proposals, the primary and secondary fields of research and codes should be stated clearly. Please refer to **Annex B** of this set of Guidance Notes for the details. The primary field area / code should be selected from among the list of field areas / codes as prescribed under the relevant subject area of the Assessment Panel to which the proposal is submitted. For example, if a proposal's primary field area / code is "Nursing (1222)", it should come under the subject area of Medicine, Dentistry & Health (M2) under the Biology and Medicine (M) Panel. A maximum of two fields are accepted. To facilitate the appointment of the right experts to evaluate the proposals, a PI should select a specific primary field area as far as possible. If a PI selects a non-specific primary field area, i.e. Others, for his / her proposal, he / she must select a specific secondary field area close to the field area of the proposal.

To indicate the inter-disciplinary nature of a proposal, a PI is allowed to select the secondary field area / code which is different from that of the primary field area / code. Inter-disciplinary proposals may be evaluated jointly by experts in different fields. The RGC reserves the authority to decide whether an application is inter-disciplinary or not.

- (ii) Please give a maximum of five keywords to characterize the work of the proposal.
- (iii) Projects to be funded from the FDS should last for no more than three years. For proposals of equal quality, preference will be given to proposals with higher impact, larger scope and longer duration over those with incremental advances and shorter duration.
- (d) A short abstract of a maximum of one A4 page comprehensible to a non-specialist should be provided. This should be informative and indicative of the nature of the research to be conducted. If a proposal is funded, the "Abstract of Research" (Abstract) will be posted on the RGC website for public's information. The applicant will be approached for a Chinese version of the Abstract for public access shortly after the announcement of the funding results, or an English version if the original Abstract is presented in Chinese.
- (e) For those applying for provision of studentship, please refer to Enclosure I for Provision of Research Experience for Undergraduate Students.

## **PART II DETAILS OF THE RESEARCH PROPOSAL**

### **RESEARCH DETAILS**

This is the major portion of the proposal. It should be presented clearly and concisely as well as be detailed enough to indicate the significance and merits of the proposed research and to permit a meaningful evaluation of the worthiness of the project. **The RGC will not further process the application if insufficient / incomplete information is provided in the Application Form.**

#### **1. Impact and Objectives**

- (a) Identify the key issues and problems being addressed. The key issues and the elements of the problem should be described and those elements which are critical to the solution of the problem should be clearly identified. State the possible outcome of the research project, its relevance, significance and value, such as contribution to academic, educational, scientific / professional development or potential for practical application. On proposals concerning Creative Arts, applicants should ensure that proposals submitted to the RGC should contain research elements which contribute to academic attainments. Applicants should approach other funding authorities such as the Hong Kong Arts Development Council if their proposals have no research elements.
- (b) The objectives of the project must be presented in point form and with reasons for undertaking the project.

Attention: Section 1 (a) and (b) in the Application Form should be limited to two A4 pages in standard RGC format.

#### **2. Background of Research, Research Plan and Methodology**

- (a) State whether work has been / is being carried out by the applicant and / or others on a related subject. Outline previous and alternative approaches to the problem and their deficiencies, list key references to relevant research by the applicant and others. For continuation of previous projects, the progress made and results achieved during the previous years should be clearly summarized. The summary should be sufficiently detailed to allow an evaluation of the worthiness of the project for continuation of support. For new projects, the reasons for investigation and the relevant findings should be clearly demonstrated.
- (b) A complete description of the research plan and the selected approach to the problem solution and a Gantt chart showing the research activities

should be given. Where appropriate, experiments, tests and required facilities should be described. The relevant scientific principles and techniques on which the problem solution depends should also be presented. Outline uniqueness and justification of the proposed approach with its plan of investigation, giving citation from literature where applicable. All Biology & Medicine proposals should include appropriate sample size and power estimates. For proposals applying funding for clinical trial, a protocol should be submitted in a separate pdf file as an addendum. The page limit for Section (2) (a)-(b) is eight A4 pages in standard RGC format.

- (c) A maximum of two additional A4 non-text pages for diagrams, photos, charts and tables, etc., if any, is allowed.
- (d) The page limit for Section 1(a)-(b) and 2(a)-(c) in the Application Form does not include references. All references of publications cited in Sections 1 and 2 in the Application Form should be provided in full and include all authors according to international standards. A maximum of three A4 pages is allowed.

### 3. **Re-submission of a Proposal Previously NOT Supported**

- (a) The PI should provide details in case the proposal is a re-submission (submitted to the UGC / RGC before) or is largely similar to a proposal that has been submitted to the UGC / RGC or other funding bodies. It is the responsibility of the PI to declare clearly and honestly whether his / her proposal is a re-submission. The PI should re-visit the main concerns / suggestions previously expressed by external reviewers if an earlier / similar version of the proposal has been assessed before. The RGC reserves the right to discount the rating of an application for its failure to acknowledge the fact that it is a re-submission of a previous application.
- (b)&(c) This section allows the PI to respond to those comments, and explain whether and what changes have been incorporated in the latest proposal. Some external reviewers' comments may be more agreeable / disagreeable than others. However, if a rebuttal is offered, it should be scholarly and preferably measured. Under the existing policy, re-submitted proposals will be treated as fresh applications in peer-review and handled in an identical manner to other new applications. Although subject panels will take into account the PIs' responses to the reviewers' comments, the panels are not obliged to invite the same group of external reviewers for assessment of the new application.

## **PROJECT FUNDING**

### **4. Cost and Justification**

The RGC may not process the application if the proposed budget does not comply with the requirements as set out below. The RGC also reserves the right to impose penalty on any institution which fails to screen out non-compliant applications.

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

#### 4.1 *Threshold Limits and Upper Limits for Applications*

The lower threshold limits for applications are HK\$150,000 for projects in the fields of Biology & Medicine, Engineering and Physical Sciences, and HK\$100,000 for projects in the fields of Business Studies and Humanities & Social Sciences.

There is no upper limit of the approved amount but the level should be comparable with the average approved amount of a General Research Fund Project in the UGC sector. The applicants / institutions would appreciate that given the considerable competition for the limited funds available, justification for individual research projects costing over HK\$1 million will need to be particularly well argued and supported.

#### 4.2 *Permissible Items*

A detailed budget for the project throughout the project period should be given. PIs and Co-Is are not regarded as supporting staff and their salaries must not be paid from RGC's project fund. Academic staff remunerated by the UGC-funded universities in Hong Kong or academic staff of the self-financing degree-awarding institutions eligible for submission of applications under the RGC funding schemes for the local self-financing degree sector must not be paid with honorarium or other form of payments.

The grant provided by the RGC should only be used to cover project expenditure which would not otherwise be separately

incurred. Please refer to the funding policy stipulated in the SF-DAMA.

The estimated costs should not include any regular operational costs, such as the normal salaries of teaching staff who spend a portion of their time on research, cost of utilities, stationery, etc. They should include only expenditure directly related to the proposed project. Examples of these are: salaries of Research Assistants (RAs) specifically employed for this project; salary of relief teacher; purchase of equipment necessary for the investigation but not available in the institution(s), dissemination of research result, etc.

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

Research grants awarded in this scheme should be used in undertaking research work in Hong Kong by the PIs and their teams in order to train and groom research talents in Hong Kong. For subcontracting services and / or research work to be conducted outside Hong Kong, the PIs are required to provide adequate justifications in the proposal or required to submit a request to the RGC for approval if it is not included in the approved proposal.

**Detailed justification and / or quotations** should be provided where applicable. Otherwise, the RGC will not consider the request.

Please refer the following items at Application Form Part II Section 4.

(a) Estimated Cost and Resource Implications

(A) One-line Vote Items

(i) Supporting Staff Costs

Please state the number, rank and cost of supporting staff involved. The RGC normally supports research support staff at the RA level. The grant assumes an indicative rate which is currently at HK\$275,000 per annum for RA and HK\$441,000 per annum for Senior Research Assistant (SRA). These indicative rates are only meant for reference. The indicative rates will be reviewed before the RGC decides the supporting level for the applications. The total staff costs supported will then depend on the indicative rates or the rates proposed by the applicants concerned, whichever is lower. In the case of applications

for funding for Post-doctoral Fellows, the CV of the post-doc in one A4 page should be attached if available.]

(ii) Equipment Expenses

RGC fund must not be used to purchase personal electronic devices such as cell phones, tablet computers, MP3 players, personal digital assistants (PDAs) and digital cameras / video recorders except with sound justification as approved by the RGC. In addition, the RGC **will not provide funding for the purchase or use of standard equipment** such as desktop PCs, servers, laptop computers, printers, scanners and standard software / software licence / dataset known to be available, or reasonably expected to be provided in the institutions concerned. Institutions may be required by the RGC to confirm the availability of institutional resources prior to their acceptance of an award. This is what the RGC means by “institutional commitment”.

For justification for equipment purchase, the following points should be addressed:

- Is the equipment essential to the project?
- Has the department / institution already provided such equipment?
- Is there similar equipment elsewhere in other institutions and what is the possibility of sharing?
- Provide information in supporting the estimated cost of equipment (e.g. quotes from suppliers). Items costing over HK\$200,000 and without supporting quotations will NOT be considered. Up to two A4 pages can be attached, if necessary.

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

- Has the institution already been provided with similar equipment? If yes, please explain the need for the purchase.
- Is there similar equipment elsewhere in other institutions? If yes, please provide the following information regarding such equipment in other institutions as far as possible-
  - brand / model details and the year of purchase of the equipment
  - the number of hours of its utilization and percentage of utilization (say per month / year as appropriate);
  - the estimated number of hours (say per month / year as appropriate) available for use by other institutions per year;
  - whether and how it can perform more / less functions and capabilities than the equipment under application;
  - whether there is a practice of shared use of the equipment with

- other institutions currently and in the past two years; and
  - any other reasons that preclude the shared use of the equipment with other institutions.
- Level of use: please provide the estimated numbers of staff members and / or students expected to use the equipment under application and the estimated number of hours per annum of utilization.
- Will the equipment be available for use by institutions other than the collaborating institutions under the application? If yes, please state the extent of shared use by other institutions such as the number of hours available for sharing per week.
- Whether staff training will be provided for the use and / or manning of the equipment.

(iii) Outsourcing Expenses of Research Work Outside Hong Kong

Research grants awarded by the RGC should primarily be used in undertaking research work in Hong Kong by the PIs and their teams in order to train and groom research talents in Hong Kong. It will be legitimate for the PIs to sub-contract out a small part of the research work (regardless of geographic locations) only if:

- the proposed activity is a necessary and justified part of the research and is outlined in the proposal for approval;
- the 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 sub-contracted out, for instance, data collection work, should not be the main intellectual focus of the research project;
- the persons / organizations providing the sub-contracting services should be at arm's length with the PIs or their serving institutions (for instance, employees, friends, relatives, subsidiary companies etc. should be avoided) and the procurement should be done in accordance with the RGC's, ICAC's and / or institutional procedures and guidelines, whichever is more stringent; and
- the PIs or their team members should be involved in monitoring the sub-contracting services or the supervision of the subcontracting services.

For subcontracting services or research work to be conducted outside Hong Kong, the PIs have to justify in their proposals to the Panels for approval. The corresponding RGC Panels will evaluate the merits and justification of the case according to the conditions specified above. For services / work over \$200,000, price quotations must be provided,

otherwise, the item concerned will NOT be considered.

Applicants should provide detailed justification of sample sizes and costs for surveys conducted outside Hong Kong.

(iv) General Expenses

The “General Expenses” item is a catch-all category for costs which cannot be included in any of the other items. Outsourcing services other than those specified in (iii) above should be included under such item. **Items on services / purchase over HK\$200,000 and without supporting quotations will not be considered.**

Applicants should provide detailed justification of sample sizes and costs for surveys conducted in Hong Kong.

(v) Conference Expenses

The RGC encourages researchers to present their work internationally and to exchange information with others in their particular research areas. A provision of up to HK\$20,000 per year, irrespective of the number of investigators involved in the project, is normally allowed for each funded project. The grant can support economy class roundtrip air passage by the most direct route, hotel accommodation, and subsistence allowance. The RGC’s, ICAC’s and the institutional procurement procedures and guidelines, whichever is more stringent, should be followed. The expenses / allowances should not exceed the limit set by the institution. Should there be any expenses exceeded the set limit, the institutions are required to bear the differences.

(vi) Expenses for Dissemination of the Deliverables of Research

The RGC encourages researchers to publish their work in different journals / publications. For displaying / demonstrating the outputs by other means, please justify the values and appropriateness of the output.

(B) Earmarked Items

(vii) Costs for Employment of Relief Teacher

Applicants may apply for funding support for the employment of relief teachers. Please state the rank of the relief teacher, the months and costs involved. The RGC agrees in principle to provide, in cases where there is genuine need, funding for relief teachers so as to enable the PI to allocate sufficient time for research. Relief teachers engaged for this purpose are meant to relieve the PIs of their day-to-day teaching loads and administrative burden related to teaching work. Nevertheless, the RGC is of the view that it is the primary responsibility of the institutions to put their resources in areas where they would be best used. Hence,



such funding will be provided only exceptionally and upon detailed and sound justification.

It is not necessary to find a relief teacher with equivalent salary, status and experience as the PI concerned. The relief teacher is also not supposed to take up non-teaching related duties, such as purely administrative work, of the PI. The applicants and the institutions should decide on the salaries for the replacement with reference to the level and amount of workload expected and justify them on the Application Form.

Please also state the applicant's current average teaching load (total number of courses to be taught per academic year). The institution concerned is requested to confirm that the PI's declared teaching load has been verified correct.

A PI can only use the grants for teaching relief, including those from on-going & new projects, to cover a maximum of 50% of his / her teaching load.

- (viii) Provision of Research Experience for Undergraduate Students  
For applying for provision of research experience for undergraduate students, please see the Explanatory Notes at Enclosure I.
- (ix) High-performance Computing Services Expenses  
A provision of up to HK\$100,000 will be allowed for the subscription of high-performance computing services for each funded project. Price quotation should be provided. **Requests without quotations may not be considered.**
- (x) Research-related Software License / Dataset  
For requests for purchase / subscription of database(s) under general expenses, price quotations should be provided. **Requests without quotations may not be considered.** The institution should not use the RGC funds to purchase standard software licenses / dataset.
- (E) Auditing Expenses

According to the SF-DAMA, upon completion / termination of a funded project, the institution is required to submit an Auditors' Report and return the unspent balance, if any. Auditing expense is an allowable item to be included in the budget. The indicative reference rates for auditing expense are as follows:

Size of Grants	Ceiling for Audit Fee
below \$1M	\$7,000
\$1M to less than \$10M	\$15,000
\$10M or above	\$20,000

(G) On-costs

The on-costs related to research projects funded by the RGC will be disbursed to the institutions for their disposal. Applicants are required to include the project costs as well as the on-costs at a rate of 15% of the project costs on the Application Forms.

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

Please confirm whether any grant for employment of relief teacher from any on-going project(s) under UGC / RGC funding schemes is / are currently held by the PI. If yes, please provide the project information accordingly.

**5. Existing Facilities and Major Equipment Available for This Research Project**

Please elaborate the existing facilities and equipment available for this research project.

**6. Funds Secured or To Be Secured**

Please provide other research funds already secured for this proposal. Other sources of funds include private donations, awards or grants from other organizations, contract research funds from commercial enterprises, or special allocations made by the institution (including seed funding), etc. It should be noted that the amount secured from other sources should be stated in Part II Section 4(a)(C)(xii) of the Application form, and it will be deducted from the total cost of the project.

The RGC has the sole discretion in deciding the final funding. Even if the proposal is fully funded as requested, **the RGC funds must not be spent on non-permissible items unless approval is obtained from the RGC.**

## **DECLARATION OF RELATED PROPOSALS**

### **7. Grant Record of Investigator(s)**

It is the responsibility of the PI and Co-I(s) to ensure that no duplicate funding from all sources including the RGC will be sought / has been sought for the same / substantially similar research project. The PI should ensure that the Co-I(s) understand(s) the requirements and has declared all related research work. **If the PI and / or Co-I(s) fails to disclose any related research work that is being / has been conducted in relation to the proposal in this section, the PI and / or Co-I(s) will be subject to disciplinary action. The application may be disqualified and the PI and / or Co-I(s) may be debarred from applying future UGC / RGC grants.**

- (a) For the PI, please provide details on each of the research projects undertaken and proposals submitted by the PI (in the capacity as PI / Project Coordinator (PC) / Co-PI / Co-I / Project holder<sup>^</sup> / Team leader<sup>^</sup>) including:
- (i) completed projects funded from all sources (irrespective of whether from UGC / RGC) in the past five years;
  - (ii) on-going projects funded from all sources (irrespective of whether from UGC / RGC); and
  - (iii) proposals pending funding approval from all sources (irrespective of whether from UGC / RGC).
- (b) For each Co-I, please also provide details on each of the research projects undertaken and proposals submitted by the Co-I (in the capacity as PI / PC / Project holder / Team leader) including:
- (i) on-going projects funded from all sources (irrespective of whether from UGC / RGC); and
  - (ii) proposals pending funding approval from all sources (irrespective of whether from UGC / RGC).
- (c) Both PI and the Co-I(s) are required to declare any related research work (irrespective of whether from UGC / RGC and not limited to the past five years) that is being / has been conducted in relation to the proposal, including but not limited to data collection, preliminary research,

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<sup>^</sup> Project holder / Team leader refers to projects under the Institutional Development Scheme (IDS) from 2014/15 to 2018/19 exercises and the IDS Research Infrastructure Grant from 2019/20 exercise.

working papers, publications (such as journal papers, conference papers and books, etc.), presentations, media interviews and other submitted proposals, etc. For the related research work, please provide:

- (i) the details (such as the title of the projects and / or papers / publications, or a brief description of the preliminary research work, etc.) whether or not such work was part of a funded project; and
- (ii) clarifications that distinguish that related research work from the work requested to be funded through this proposal.

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

**Please note that the information listed on the CV at Part I Section 2(b) will not be regarded as fulfilling the declaration requirements in this Section. PI and Co-I(s) are responsible to report immediately via RCs of the institutions to the UGC Secretariat any updates on grants records, including declaration of related research work.**

## **ANCILLARY INFORMATION**

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

#### **(a) Research Ethics / Safety Approval**

It is the responsibility of the institution and the PI to ensure that the research proposal is carefully reviewed for its compliance with applicable laws, health and safety guidelines and ethical standards. Ethics clearance should be sought for research involving living animals and / or human subjects including social sciences research involving human subjects (e.g. potential physical / psychological harms,

discomfort / stress to human participants that a research project might generate, subjects' privacy, etc.). The primary responsibility of seeking the relevant approval and ethics clearance rests with the PI. The PI's institution is required to complete and sign at Part III of the Application Form to confirm whether the relevant ethics / safety approval is required and if required, the relevant approval has been given / is being sought.

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

It is the responsibility of the institution and the PI to ensure that approval has been sought for access to Government / official / private data and records if the related data / records are critical to the research proposal. The primary responsibility of seeking the relevant approval rests with the PI. The PI's institution is required to complete and sign at Part III of the Application Form to confirm the relevant approval, if necessary, has been given / is being sought.

For both (a) and (b) above, the institution and the PI will ensure that such approval will be obtained and provided to the RGC by 28 June 2019. The institution and the PI understand that if such approval is not obtained by deadline, the RGC will regard the FDS application as a withdrawn case and will stop further processing it.

**If the institution / PI declared that no approval was required but the RGC / Panel eventually considered otherwise, the related application may be disqualified.**

9. Release of Completion Report, Data Archive Possibilities, and Public Access of Publications Resulting from Research Funded by the RGC

Release of Completion Report

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

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

Public Access to Publications Resulting from Research Funded by the RGC

- (i) Upon acceptance of a paper for publication, the PI should check whether the publisher already allows (a) full open access to the publisher's version, or (b) the author's depositing a copy of the paper (either the publisher's version or the final accepted manuscript after peer-review) in the institutional repository for open access;
- (ii) if both (i)(a) and (b) above are not allowed, the PI should request the publisher to allow him / her to place either version in his / her institutional repository for restricted access immediately upon publication or after an embargo period of up to twelve months if required by the publisher; and
- (iii) subject to the publisher's agreement on (i) or (ii) above, the PI should deposit a copy of the publication in his / her institutional repository as early as possible but no later than six months after publication or the embargo period, if any.

**10. Technology Transfer Plan (Optional)**

To take forward the Director of Audit's recommendation that a closer link with the Innovation and Technology Fund (ITF) should be enhanced, applicants are invited to submit an optional technology transfer plan at the application stage. Any funded projects with technology transfer plans submitted will be passed to the Innovation and Technology Commission, who will keep in view these projects for possible ITF support in the future. The technology transfer plan will not be assessed by the RGC for the purpose of funding allocation. The technology transfer plan should include information such as:

- Activities to be undertaken to:
  - disseminate the R&D deliverables;
  - realise the application of the R&D deliverables in the public sector, i.e. the R&D deliverables being used in government departments, public bodies, trade associations, charitable organisations, etc.; and / or
  - market the R&D deliverables in the commercial world, e.g. target markets and customers.
- Potential industry partners for technology transfer / manufacturing. If possible, please provide information in relation to the future positioning of the product / technology in the market.

- Associated / complementary technology development projects which may synergise with this project for technology transfer. In this case, please give some brief information of such project(s).
- Future plans to apply for ITF to support the applied research component of the proposed project.

**11. Letters of Collaboration and Supporting Documents**

Only letters of collaboration and supporting documents (e.g. ethics / safety approval letters) are allowed. Applicants should not make use of this section to supplement the contents of other sections. **Applications will be disqualified if the proposals are found to have abused the purpose of this section.**

**PART III INSTITUTIONAL ENDORSEMENT AND DECLARATION OF RESEARCH ETHICS / SAFETY APPROVAL**

**[To be completed by the appropriate authority of the PI's institution]**

**INSTITUTIONAL ENDORSEMENT**

**1. Eligibility Requirement for FDS**

The institution should confirm that:

- (a) the application has been evaluated and endorsed by the institution for submission to the RGC;
- (b) the PI fully meets the eligibility requirement for the FDS as stated at Part I Section 1(b) of the Application Form and is not debarred from applying for any UGC / RGC grants;
- (c) the PI's statement in Part I Section 1(c) of the Application Form is genuine and true;
- (d) the PI's declared teaching load stated in Part II Section 4(a)(B)(vii) of the Application Form has been verified correct (only for the case where the applicant is seeking funding support for relief teacher);
- (e) the salary for the relief teacher proposed by the PI does not exceed the salary of the PI;
- (f) the applicant will have the average number of hours per week as declared in Part I Section 2(a) of the Application Form to supervise the proposed project without prejudice to his / her existing commitment in other research work, teaching and administrative duties;
- (g) the PI will abide by the in-house guidelines of the institution, as well as the relevant guidelines as set out by the RGC and the ICAC, whichever is more stringent, regarding procurement of facilities / equipment / services and for recruitment of supporting staff;
- (h) the institution will inform the RGC as soon as the PI ceases to be eligible to apply, receive or hold an FDS grant, and will withdraw the application; or recommend to the RGC for approval of a suitable new PI, if applicable, to take over the funded project once it is funded and commenced. As a matter of policy, change of PI will normally not be approved within the first six months of an approved project and during the process of the application. However, change of PI from the 7th month may be considered by the RGC under the circumstances as



stipulated in the SF-DAMA;

- (i) the institution understands that the FDS grant, if given, will be withdrawn if the project does not start within one year of the announcement of funding result. The institution 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 and;
- (j) the institution understands that if the project is approved, the institution may need to provide additional funding to ensure that this project can be successfully completed. The institution will also provide necessary infrastructural and overheads supports such as normal academic equipment, consumables, postage, fax, stationery, reference books, overseas telephone charges, etc. to the approved projects where appropriate.

## **INSTITUTIONAL COMMITMENTS**

### **2. Support to PI**

The institution is required to verify and confirm whether the research project under the FDS application is in line with the role of the institution, and that adequate supervision, research facilities and training provisions will be in place to meet the need of RA(s) / Post-doctoral Fellow / Research Postgraduate Students / Undergraduate Student Helpers so employed under the research grant if the application is supported by the RGC. Nevertheless, it should also be made clear that the primary duty of the PI of the RGC grant is to complete the project according to plan.

For Part III Section 2(c)-(h) in the Application Form, please refer to Part II Section 4(b)-(e) above.

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

#### **(a) Research Ethics / Safety Approval**

The institution should ensure that the approval of the appropriate authority(ies) will be obtained and provided to the RGC by 28 June 2019 in respect of projects involving safety hazards or the use of living animal / human subjects, including those in social sciences research (e.g. potential physical / psychological harm, discomfort / stress to human subjects in a research project, subjects' privacy, etc.). It

should be noted that all applications must be vetted by the institutions to ascertain if ethics and / or safety approval is required. If affirmative, the institutions must give approval or exemption according to their internal ethics / safety guidelines or obtain relevant ethics / safety approval from appropriate authority. **If such approval is not obtained by deadline (28 June 2019), the RGC will regard the application as a withdrawn case and will stop further processing it.**

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

The institution should ensure that the approval of the appropriate authority(ies) will be obtained and provided to the RGC by 28 June 2019 in respect of access to data / records that are critical to the proposed research. **If such approval is not obtained by deadline (28 June 2019), the RGC will regard the application as a withdrawn case and will stop further processing it.**

For (a) and (b), **if the institution / PI declared that no approval was required but the RGC Committee / Panel eventually considered otherwise, the application concerned may be disqualified.**

Part III of the Application Form should be completed, signed and submitted by the appropriate authority of the institution.

UGC Secretariat  
November 2018

**Annex A****Handling of Information and Personal Data  
Contained in RGC Research Funding Application****Purpose of Collection of Information and Personal Data**

1. Information and personal data contained in your research grant application are collected for the following purposes:
  - (a) determination of your eligibility to apply for a competitive grant from the Research Grants Council (RGC);
  - (b) assessment of the merits of the research proposal which you have submitted for funding support;
  - (c) assisting the RGC panel in identifying external reviewers to assess your research proposal;
  - (d) compilation of periodic reports and statistical returns for analysis and research by the RGC / UGC in relation to the use of public funds;
  - (e) sharing of data with other government department / research funding agencies for the avoidance of duplicate funding; and
  - (f) for successful projects, such data will be used for project monitoring, promotion, publicity and may also be published on the RGC website.

**Handling of Your Information and Personal Data**

2. Your research proposal including your personal data (e.g. CVs) will be handled with care by the RGC. Staff of the UGC Secretariat, members of the RGC and RGC panels, local and non-local reviewers, and other parties who may be involved in the processes described in Paragraph 1 above will be allowed access to the data on a need-to-know basis but they will be placed under a duty of confidentiality to the RGC. Information so collected by the RGC will not be used for any other purposes. If you want to exclude any individuals from access to your research proposal, you should inform the RGC separately when you submit your research proposal. The RGC does not accept research proposals that are classified “confidential” by the Principal Investigators. It also reserves the right to stop processing or reject any applications if the applicants’ requests render it impossible for the applications to be adequately peer-reviewed.

3. When the RGC obtains external assessments on your research proposal, external reviewers will be made aware of the existence of a Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance in Hong Kong, and be forewarned that all written comments about the applicant and research proposal are liable to be released to the applicant concerned upon request. External reviewers will also be advised of the RGC policy on providing feedback to grant applicants described in paragraph 4 below.

4. Applicants should note the following:

- (a) all proposals will have undergone a very rigorous peer-review process which involves external assessments and the relevant RGC panels / committees which are made up of experts from the local and international academic / professional community;
- (b) grants are allocated on a competitive basis and each year is a different exercise (the success rate is based on the general quality of the proposals as assessed by the relevant RGC panels / committees, and the availability of funds, in that particular year);
- (c) the RGC is gradually raising the quality threshold, meaning that only the top and the best quality proposals will be “funded”; and
- (d) comments from all external reviewers on each proposal (except for conference grants / travel grants / fellowship applications) will be provided anonymously to the applicants concerned through their institutions.

#### Physical Retention of Applications

5. Applications that are funded by the RGC will be retained at the UGC Secretariat for periodic review of progress and final assessment of the research investigation and outcome, with the assistance of external reviewers where appropriate.

#### Right of Access to Personal Data

6. Notwithstanding the arrangement described above, nothing in this note will affect your legal right to request access to personal data held by the RGC about you or your research proposal and to update or correct such data. Nevertheless, the RGC reserves the right to charge a reasonable fee for the processing of any such request(s) in accordance with the prevailing Government regulations.

#### Further Information

7. All requests for access to your personal data or correction of your

personal data or for information regarding policies and practices and kinds of personal data held by the RGC should be made in writing, by post or by fax, addressed as follows:

Assistant Secretary General (Research) 3  
University Grants Committee Secretariat  
7/F Shui On Centre  
6-8 Harbour Road  
Wanchai  
Hong Kong

Fax: 2845 1183

\* \* \* \* \*

**Annex B(1)**

List of Research Field Areas and Code  
for Biology & Medicine Research Proposals

Biological Sciences  
(Subject Area : M1)

<u>Field Area</u>	<u>Code</u>
Behaviour and Psychology	1101
Biochemistry	1102
Cell Biology	1103
Developmental Biology	1104
Ecology	1105
Environmental Research	1106
Food Science	1107
Gene Regulation	1108
Genomic Biology	1109
Growth & Development	1110
Marine Biology	1111
Microbiology	1112
Molecular Biology	1113
Morphology and Anatomy	1114
Physiology	1115
Signal Transduction	1116
Structural Biology	1117
Traditional Chinese Medicine (basic)	1119
Ageing	1120
Biodiversity and Systematics	1121
Bioinformatics, Systems and Synthetic Biology	1122
Biological Imaging	1123
Brain Pain Learning and Memory	1124
Comparative Endocrinology	1125
Comparative Immunology	1126
Fish Biology	1127
Genetics	1128

Neuroscience	1129
Plant Sciences / Plant Biology	1130
Stem Cell Biology	1131
Virology	1132
Others – relating to Biological Sciences (please specify : )	1199

Medicine, Dentistry & Health  
(Subject Area : M2)

<u>Field Area</u>	<u>Code</u>
Allergy / Immunology	1201
Anaesthesia	1202
Blood / Hematology	1203
Cancer	1204
Cardiovascular Research	1205
Clinical Trials	1206
Connective Tissues	1207
Dentistry	1208
Diabetes / Metabolism	1209
Endocrinology	1210
Epidemiology	1211
Gastroenterology / Hepatobiliary	1212
Genetic Disease	1213
Geriatrics / Gerontology	1214
Health Services	1215
Hearing	1216
Imaging	1217
Infection / Parasitology	1218
Neonatology	1219
Nephrology / Urology	1220
Nursing	1222
Nutrition	1223
Orthopaedics / Traumatology	1224
Paediatrics	1225
Pathology	1226

Pharmacology / Toxicology	1227
Population Health	1228
Psychosocial & Behavioural Research	1229
Reproduction	1231
Respiration	1232
Rheumatology	1233
Surgical Research	1234
Transplantation	1235
Vision	1236
Chinese Medicine (clinical)	1237
Proteomics	1238
Regenerative Medicine	1239
Molecular Diagnostics	1240
Biomedical Engineering	1241
Biomaterials	1242
Clinical Microbiology	1243
Clinical Virology	1244
Disease Model Development	1245
Drug Discovery and Delivery	1246
Drug Pharmacokinetics and Pharmacodynamics	1247
Genomic Medicine	1248
Genomics	1249
Human Genetics / Clinical Genetics	1250
Neurobiology and Neuromedicine	1251
Personalized Medicine	1252
Rehabilitative and Physical Medicine	1254
Stem Cell Therapy	1256
Others – relating to Medicine, Dentistry & Health (please specify : )	1299



**Annex B(2)**

List of Research Field Areas and Code  
for Engineering Research Proposals

Civil Engineering, Surveying, Building & Construction  
(Subject Area : E1)

<u>Field Area</u>	<u>Code</u>
Building & Construction	2101
Environmental	2102
Geotechnical	2103
Structure	2104
Surveying	2105
Water	2106
Transportation	2107
Urban Development	2108
Others – relating to Civil Engineering, Surveying, Building & Construction (please specify : )	2199

Computing Science & Information Technology  
(Subject Area : E2)

<u>Field Area</u>	<u>Code</u>
Artificial Intelligence and Machine learning	2213
Computer Science Fundamentals	2202
Computing Hardware	2203
Database and data science	2214
Network	2205
Software	2206
Speech & Language	2207
Vision	2208
Bioinformatics	2209
Visualization & Graphics	2210
Information Analytics	2211
Data Mining	2212
Others – relating to Computing Science & Information Technology (please specify : )	2299

Electrical & Electronic Engineering  
(Subject Area : E3)

<u>Field Area</u>	<u>Code</u>
Communication	2301
Electronics	2302
Photonics	2303
Signal & Image Processing	2305
Bioelectronics	2306
Power Electronics	2307
Power System	2308
Microwave and Terahertz Engineering	2309
Others – relating to Electrical & Electronic Engineering (please specify : )	2399

Mechanical, Production & Industrial Engineering  
(Subject Area : E4)

<u>Field Area</u>	<u>Code</u>
Design	2401
Engineering Management	2402
Fluid	2403
Marine Engineering	2404
Materials	2405
Mechanics & Dynamics	2406
Operations Research	2407
Production & Manufacturing	2408
Robotics & Automation	2409
Textile	2410
Thermal	2411
Biomechanics	2412
Fuel Engineering	2413
Others – relating to Mechanical, Production & Industrial Engineering (please specify : )	2499

**Annex B(3)**

List of Research Field Areas and Code  
for Physical Sciences Research Proposals

Chemical Engineering

(Subject Area : P1)

<u>Field Area</u>	<u>Code</u>
Chemical Engineering	3101
Biophysics	3102
Energy	3103
Environmental Sciences	3104
Biochemical Engineering	3105
Food Science and Technology	3106
Others – relating to Chemical Engineering (please specify : )	3199

Physical Sciences

(Subject Area : P2)

<u>Field Area</u>	<u>Code</u>
Chemical Sciences	3201
Earth Sciences	3202
Materials Sciences	3204
Physics	3205
Planetary Sciences	3206
Physical Geography	3207
Scattering Methods	3208
Nanomaterials	3209
Nanocomposites	3210
Mass Spectrometry	3211
Environmental Studies and Science	3212
Others – relating to Physical Sciences (please specify : )	3299

Mathematics

(Subject Area : P3)

Field AreaCode

Applied Mathematics

3301

Pure Mathematics

3302

Probability &amp; Statistics

3303

Mathematical Finance and Insurance

3304

Others – relating to Mathematics

3399

(please specify :

)



Humanities and Arts

(Subject Area : H3)

<u>Field Area</u>	<u>Code</u>
Media and Communication	4151
Literature	4204
Creative Arts: Dance	4207
Creative Arts: Dramatic Arts	4208
Creative Arts: Music	4209
Creative Arts: Visual Arts (including Drawing, Painting, Sculpture, Film and Photography)	4210
Creative Arts: Writing	4211
Film, Visual and Media Studies	4221
History	4213
History of Arts	4214
Musciology / Music History	4215
Translation Studies	4216
Cultural Studies / Cultural Policy	4222
Philosophy	4218
Religious Studies	4219
Sexuality and Gender Studies	4220
Journalism and Media	4407
Contemporary Art	4420
Area Studies (including Japanese Studies, China Studies, European Studies)	4421
Chinese History (including Socio-economic, Military, Legal Social and Cultural History)	4422
Classical Chinese, Chinese Thought and Paleography	4423
Hong Kong Studies	4424
Others – relating to Humanities and Arts (please specify : )	4299

Education

(Subject Area : H4)

<u>Field Area</u>	<u>Code</u>
Education: Policy & Administration	4301
Education: Research on Teaching & Learning	4302
Education: Language and Literature	4303
Education: Theory and Applications	4304
Others – relating to Education (please specify : )	4399

Professional & Vocational Studies

(Subject Area : H5)

<u>Field Area</u>	<u>Code</u>
Nursing	4408
Public Health	4409
Social Work	4410
Social Services / Management	4411
Visual Design (including advertising, graphic, visual communication, digital media)	4414
Product Design (including fashion, industrial, product)	4415
Environmental Design (including interior design , space design)	4416
Others – relating to Professional & Vocational Studies (please specify : )	4499

**Annex B(5)**

List of Research Field Areas and Code  
for Business Studies Research Proposals

Business Studies  
(Subject Area : B)

<u>Field Area</u>	<u>Code</u>
Accounting	5101
Economics	5102
Finance	5103
Information System Management	5104
Management	5105
Marketing	5106
Operational Research	5107
Operations Management	5108
International Business	5109
Tourism and Hotel Management	5110
Econometrics and Business Statistical Methods	5111
Risk and insurance management	5112
Others – relating to Business Studies (please specify : )	5199



**Annex C****Research Grants Council****Code of Conduct****I. Preamble**

1. The Research Grants Council (the Council) is fully committed to the principle of honesty, integrity and fair play in the conduct of its business. The Council, operating through subject panels and committees, invites, receives and approves applications for research grants and fellowships. To uphold public trust and protect public interest, it is important for all Council / Panel / Committee members to handle the Council's business in a just and impartial manner so that the Council's reputation will not be tarnished by dishonesty, impropriety or corruption. To this end, this Code of Conduct sets out the standard of behaviour expected of the (i) Council / Panel / Committee members in handling the Council's business (the members), (ii) reviewers in conducting peer-review for the Council (the reviewers); and (iii) applicants who apply for the Council funds (the applicants).

**II. General Standards**

2. A Council / Panel / Committee member and a reviewer shall :
- (a) ensure that his / her conduct would not bring the Council into disrepute;
  - (b) avoid at any time or in any respect doing anything which may compromise or impair his / her integrity, impartiality, objectivity or ability to perform Council duties. For instance, he / she should not contact the applicants directly for clarification / additional information relating to their applications or disclose information relating to the assessment; and
  - (c) adhere to the spirit and the letter of any rules or orders made for the Council's practices and procedures in relation to the business of the Council.
3. An applicant shall :
- (a) ensure that his / her conduct would not bring the Council into disrepute;
  - (b) restrain from communicating with the members and reviewers on the

application submitted with a view to influencing the members and / or reviewer in assessing the application; and

- (c) observe the prevailing guidelines and procedures relating to application for and implementation of RGC grants issued by the Council.

### **III. Specific Standards**

4. The following specific standards of this Section shall apply in addition to the General Standards detailed above:

#### **(A) Offer and Acceptance of Bribes or Advantages**

##### ***(1) Provisions of the Prevention of Bribery Ordinance (Cap 201)***

Members and reviewers are governed by Section 9 of the Prevention of Bribery Ordinance (Cap 201) (POBO) (and other provisions where appropriate). A member or reviewer commits an offence under POBO if he / she, without the Council's permission, solicits or accepts any advantage in connection with the Council's business. Members and reviewers shall not misuse their official capacity as such to gain benefit for themselves or others, or render favour to any person / organization. On the other hand, applicants should not offer gifts and advantages or intimidate the members and reviewers with a view to influencing the assessment of application for RGC grants. Attachment I provides the full text of Section 9 of the POBO and the legal definition of an advantage.

##### ***(2) Acceptance of Advantages***

- (a) Gift / souvenir presented to a member or reviewer in his / her capacity as such

A gift / souvenir presented to a member or reviewer in his / her capacity as such should be regarded as a gift / souvenir to the Council (e.g. a gift / souvenir presented by an applicant to a member or reviewer invited in his / her capacity as such or representing the Council to officiate at a ceremony). A member or reviewer shall report to the Secretariat for the disposal of gifts / souvenirs received in the above circumstances.

- (b) Advantage offered to a member or reviewer in his / her private capacity
- (i) Where a member or reviewer is offered an advantage in his / her private capacity, he / she may accept it if –
- the acceptance will not affect the performance of his / her duties as a member or reviewer; and
  - he / she will not feel obliged to do something in return in connection with Council business for the offeror.
- (ii) If a member or reviewer feels that he / she would be obliged to reciprocate an advantage by returning to the offeror a favour connected with any Council business, he / she should decline the offer.
- (iii) When a member or reviewer is in doubt as to whether he / she should accept an offer of advantage, it is advisable for him / her to apply the “sunshine test” (*In the sunshine test, the person concerned should ask himself / herself if he / she would be happy to openly discuss with the general public what he / she is doing. If he / she feels uncomfortable about that, what he / she is doing is probably conflicting with the ethical standard generally accepted.*) and consult the Council Chairman or the Secretariat.

### **(3) Acceptance of Entertainment**

A member or reviewer should not accept entertainment from persons / organizations who / which have an interest in any matters under consideration by the Council or with whom/which he / she has official dealings, in order to avoid embarrassment or give the perception of the loss of objectivity when considering or giving his / her views on matters concerning these persons / organizations.

## **(B) Conflict of Interest**

### **(1) Definition**

A conflict of interest situation arises when the private interest of a member or reviewer competes or conflicts with the interest of the Council. “Private interest” includes both the financial and other interests of members or reviewers and those of their connections,

including family members, relatives, friends, clubs and societies to which they belong, as well as people to whom they owe a favour or are obligated in any way.

## **(2) *Managing Conflict of Interest***

- (a) The reporting of conflict of interest should be two-tiered. Full declaration according to standard format should be made on first appointment, re-appointment or significant change of circumstances. Members should update or complete and return the “Register of Interests” to the Secretariat on an annual basis. At the second tier, it will be incumbent upon the member to declare interest whenever he / she sees a reason to, on a case by case basis (e.g. when particular issues are to be addressed).
- (b) Members or reviewers should avoid any conflict of interest situation (i.e. situation where their private interest conflicts with the interest of the Council) or the perception of such conflicts. They should not use their official position or any information made available to them in the course of their duties to benefit themselves, their relations or any other persons with whom they have personal or social ties. They should avoid putting themselves in a position that may lead to an actual or perceived conflict of interest. Failure to avoid, declare, disclose or report such conflict in particular with the applicants or comment on proposals from applicants with affiliation without permission may give rise to criticisms of favouritism, abuse of authority or even allegations of corruption. In this connection, members or reviewers should declare upfront any conflict of interest situation to the Secretariat where appropriate.
- (c) When a conflict of interest is declared and in case there is a meeting to be convened to discuss the matter, the respective Chairman shall decide on whether the member may speak or vote on the matter, remain in the meeting as an observer or withdraw from the meeting altogether. The Secretariat can provide advice according to general government practices and regulations.
- (d) Applicants should be mindful to disclose, declare or report in their application forms their relationship as well as any conflict of interest or potential conflict of interest with nominated external reviewers and declare upfront any conflict

of interest situation to the Secretariat.

### **(3) *Members' / Reviewers' Assessment of Applications***

- (a) Members or reviewers are appointed in their personal capacity and should in no way represent their own or any institutions. It is important that the assessment given is independent and impartial.
- (b) Members should not assess applications in which they are in any way associated, such as applications from (i) themselves / colleagues in their departments / institutions or (ii) institution that they have served within two years or (iii) institutions that they have been invited for pre-review. Similarly, reviewers should not assess applications in which they are in any way associated, such as (i) applications from themselves / colleagues in the same institution or (ii) applications that have been pre-reviewed by the concerned reviewers before submission to the Council. In case of doubt, members or reviewers should declare upfront the full circumstances to the Secretariat who will seek agreement from the appropriate authority in deciding whether the applications in question should be re-assigned to other members or reviewers.
- (c) Member who is from the same institution of the applicant may participate in the panel discussions when they are invited to do so and should not take part in the decision-making on the applications concerned.

### **(4) *Members Applying for RGC Grants***

Under the existing mode of operation of the Council, members may apply for Council funding in their own personal capacity. In order to prevent the public perception of the members using their capacity to obtain financial gains from the Council, the concerned member will be requested to be excused from the discussion when his / her application is considered. Members are reminded to strictly adhere to the guidelines on managing possible conflict of interest in applying for the funds.

### **(C) *Observe Confidentiality and Use of Confidential and Privileged Information***

- (1) A member or reviewer shall not take advantage of, or let any person or organization benefit from, the confidential or privileged

information obtained in his / her capacity as a member or reviewer. All meeting papers, including the worksheets, have to be returned to the Secretariat for disposal at the end of the meeting. Soft copies in System and downloadable files such as PDF should only be used during meeting and should not be taken away in any way. A member or reviewer shall not divulge any confidential or privileged information of the Council to any party or contact the applicants directly unless he / she is authorized to do so. Communications, including documentary information and deliberations at meetings and discussions, concerning business of the Council, which will come into the member's or reviewer's knowledge / possession as a result of his / her service for and appointment with the Council, must be held in confidence.

- (2) An applicant should not contact the members or the reviewers to discuss issues relating to the proposals submitted. Likewise, a member / reviewer should not contact the investigators directly for clarification / additional information relating to their applications or disclose information relating to the assessment. This should be handled by the UGC Secretariat.

**(D) Breach of Ordinance and Laws**

Members, reviewers and applicants should avoid any unethical action which may be illegal especially when it is in breach of the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance or other relevant laws of Hong Kong.

**(E) Allocation of Funds**

Members shall ensure that all the funds are allocated in a prudent and responsible manner to safeguard public interest. They should only approve fund applications which fall within the objective of the fund, and meet the eligibility and assessment criteria. Members shall particularly ensure that an open, fair and competitive mechanism is adopted for the assessment of fund applications and selection of applicants.

**Extracts from the Prevention of Bribery Ordinance  
(Cap 201, Laws of Hong Kong)**

**A. Section 9 - Corrupt transaction with agents**

- (1) Any agent who, without lawful authority or reasonable excuse, solicits or accepts any advantage as an inducement to or reward for or otherwise on account of his:
  - (a) doing or forbearing to do, or having done or forborne to do, any act in relation to his principal's affairs or business; or
  - (b) showing or forbearing to show, or having shown or forborne to show, favour or disfavour to any person in relation to his principal's affairs or business, shall be guilty of an offence.
  
- (2) Any person who, without lawful authority or reasonable excuse, offers any advantage to any agent as an inducement to or reward for or otherwise on account of the agent's:
  - (a) doing or forbearing to do, or having done or forborne to do, any act in relation to his principal's affairs or business; or
  - (b) showing or forbearing to show, or having shown or forborne to show, favour or disfavour to any person in relation to his principal's affairs or business, shall be guilty of an offence.
  
- (3) Any agent who, with intent to deceive his principal, uses any receipt, account or other document:
  - (a) in respect of which the principal is interested; and
  - (b) which contains any statement which is false or erroneous or defective in any material particular; and
  - (c) which to his knowledge is intended to mislead the principal, shall be guilty of an offence.
  
- (4) If an agent solicits or accepts an advantage with the permission of his principal, being permission which complies with subsection (5), neither he nor the person who offered the advantage shall be guilty of an offence under subsection (1) or (2).
  
- (5) For the purposes of subsection (4) permission shall:
  - (a) be given before the advantage is offered, solicited or accepted; or

- (b) in any case where an advantage has been offered or accepted without prior permission, be applied for and given as soon as reasonably possible after such offer or acceptance, and for such permission to be effective for the purposes of subsection (4), the principal shall, before giving such permission, have regard to the circumstances in which it is sought.

## **B. Definition of an Advantage (Section 2)**

“**Advantage**” means :

- (1) any gift, loan, fee, reward or commission consisting of money or of any valuable security or of other property or interest in property of any description;
- (2) any office, employment or contract;
- (3) any payment, release, discharge or liquidation of any loan, obligation or other liability, whether in whole or in part;
- (4) any other service, or favour (other than entertainment), including protection from any penalty or disability incurred or apprehended or from any action or proceedings of a disciplinary, civil or criminal nature, whether or not already instituted;
- (5) the exercise or forbearance from the exercise of any right or any power or duty; and
- (6) any offer, undertaking or promise, whether conditional or unconditional, of any advantage within the meaning of any of the preceding paragraphs (a), (b), (c), (d) and (e);

but does not include an election donation within the meaning of the Elections (Corrupt and Illegal Conduct) Ordinance (Cap 554), particulars of which are included in an election return in accordance with that Ordinance.

## **C. Definition of Entertainment (Section 2)**

The provision of food or drink, for consumption on the occasion when it is provided, and of any other entertainment connected with, or provided at the same time as, such provisions.