

RESEARCH GRANTS COUNCIL

HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES **PRESTIGIOUS FELLOWSHIP SCHEME (HSSPFS) 2018/19**

Explanatory Notes (HSSPFS 2) for completing the Application Form

All applicants should read these Explanatory Notes carefully before completing and submitting your application electronically. The Research Grants Council (RGC) may cease processing your application if your application is found to be not in compliance with any of the requirements as set out in the Explanatory Notes.

GENERAL

Objectives of the scheme

The main objective of this scheme is to provide opportunities for outstanding investigators with a proven track record of research and publication under the disciplines of the Humanities and Social Sciences Panel to be granted with extended time-off and supporting funds for research work and writing.

Eligibility of applicants

Universities are invited to submit a maximum of five nominations under the disciplines of the Humanities and Social Sciences Panel. Eligible applicant should be an academic staff member of a University Grants Committee (UGC)-funded university with conditions of employment meeting ALL the following requirements:

- (i) having a full-time¹ appointment in the university proper²;
- (ii) being in Staff Grades from 'A' to 'I'³ as defined in the Common Data Collection Format (i.e. from 'Professor' to 'Assistant Lecturer', see Annex C);
- (iii) being primarily engaged in and spending at least 80% of time in degree or higher degree work at the university proper;
- (iv) salary being wholly funded⁴ by the university proper; and
- (v) being eligible at the time of funding award being offered in June 2018.

¹ Excluding part-time staff and staff holding honorary appointments.

² Excluding schools / arms of continuing education and professional training and other analogous outfits.

³ Excluding polytechnic staff grades.

⁴ Excluding staff members who are receiving income from paid appointments outside the university proper or who are supported by external research grants.

The following categories of staff members are subject to the following additional requirements besides meeting criteria (i) to (iv) above:

- (a) A newly appointed staff member should have formally entered into a contract of service with the university on or before the submission deadline of this funding exercise and that their appointments would take effect on or before 16 April 2018.
- (b) A staff member employed on a fixed term contract should be eligible at the time of funding award being made in June 2018.

An academic staff member who is engaged in non-degree programmes wholly funded from the General Funds of the university concerned may also be eligible. Visiting scholars are not eligible for being nominated under the HSSPFS.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, cases of exceptional circumstances may be considered by the RGC on a case-by-case basis. The university should seek the RGC's special approval for such cases before submitting the application. Awardees of HSSPFS cannot compete again in future exercises.

Application form

- (a) These notes are intended to be read by applicant / related staff of university before completion and submission of a HSSPFS application. Please note that item numbers under Parts I to III in these notes correspond to those in the application form.
- (b) The form is in three parts, Part I: Particulars of the Applicant; Part II: Details of the Research Proposal; and Part III: University's Endorsement.
- (c) For applications which have genuine special needs to be completed in a language other than English, applicant(s) / university(ies) are required to provide an English version for convenience of international reviewers and selection committee members.
- (d) In order to ensure consistency and fairness to all applicants, 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 points
Margin : 2.5 cm all round
Spacing : Single-line spacing

- (e) All sections of the relevant parts should be completed. Where information sought is not applicable or not provided under a particular section, insert “NA” or “Nil”.
- (f) Applications should be submitted through the Electronic System and a project reference will be automatically generated for each of the applications for identification purposes. The project reference number should be used and quoted in all future correspondences. Hard copies of each application may need to be prepared and forwarded to the UGC Secretariat by the concerned Universities in May 2018. Universities will be notified of the exact number of copies needed and the timing in April 2018.
- (g) 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 / word limits specified in various sections of the application form. Applications will be disqualified if the proposals are found to have exceeded the allowable page / word limits in various sections.
- (h) It is the obligation of the applicants 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.
- (i) Applicants should not 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.
- (j) Applicants are prohibited to communicate with RGC Council and selection committee 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.
- (k) Unless otherwise stated, all funding levels stated in the application form and these guidance notes are in Hong Kong Dollars.

INFORMATION UPDATE

- (l) A brief update of the proposal, if any, should be submitted to the UGC Secretariat on or before 15 April 2018, indicating any significant changes, e.g. changes in the eligibility of the applicants, alternative funding obtained,

declarations of similar / related proposals, grant records, progress of proposals (including preliminary proposals) pending funding approval, 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. The information update in hard copy should be appended to the respective application (number of copies required and timing will be confirmed separately) which should be submitted to the UGC Secretariat.

ENQUIRIES

- (a) Enquiries about the contents of these Explanatory Notes and other related matters about the HSSPFS should be directed to the Research Offices of the universities which, if in doubt, should consult the UGC Secretariat for clarification. Also, correspondence regarding HSSPFS matters including enquiries, appeals and complaints should be made through the Research Offices of the universities.

- (b) The guidelines on handling the information and personal data contained in HSSPFS applications are at Annex A. Applicants requiring additional information about internal deadlines, application procedures or assistance in completing the application form may contact the Research Offices of their own universities.

PART I PARTICULARS OF THE APPLICANT

[To be completed by the applicant]

- 1.–10. Applicants should provide their particulars to enable the reviewers and selection committee members to understand your academic background, track records and current responsibilities. A detailed curriculum vitae (a maximum of 10 A4 pages) should be uploaded under Section 11 of Part II.

PART II DETAILS OF THE RESEARCH PROPOSAL

[To be completed by the applicant]

RESEARCH DETAILS

HSSPFS is not only intended to provide time and supporting fund to develop a new research project, but also to build on a research programme that have already been well defined and developed. New project can either be a newly funded project or a new research proposal which does not require project costs but only applicant's time to do extensive research and writing.

1. Title of Proposed Research for the Fellowship

- (a) The title of proposed research for the Fellowship should be informative and concise. It should be limited to 80 words.
- (b) The primary field area / code should be selected from among the list of areas / codes as prescribed for Humanities and Social Sciences research proposals. For example, if a proposal's primary area / code is "Anthropology (4101)", it should come under the subject area of "Social and Behavioural Sciences (H2)". The schedules showing the field area descriptions and the corresponding codes are at Annex B.
- (c) Applicants must indicate the nature of the application being submitted. "New" refers to the application on research topic which the applicant applies for RGC funds for the first time. "Re-submission" refers to the application on research topic which the applicant has previously applied for RGC funds but not supported. "Continuation" refers to the application continuing the work previously funded by the RGC.

2. Impact and Objectives of the Research Project

- (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 or 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.

- (b) The objectives of the project must be presented in point form and reasons for undertaking the project.

Item 2 should be limited to 800 words.

3. Background of Research, Research Plan and Methodology

- (a) State whether work has been / is being carried out by you 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 you 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 should be given. Where appropriate, experiments, tests and required facilities should be described. The relevant scientific principles and techniques on which the problem solution depends should also be presented. Outline uniqueness and justification of the proposed approach with its plan of investigation, giving citation from literature where applicable.
- (c) A maximum of two additional A4 non-text pages for diagrams, photos, charts and tables etc, if any.
- (d) The page limit in Section 2 - 3 does not include references. All references should be provided in full and include all authors.

4. Work Plan

Please outline your timetable for the research project, your proposed duration of the Fellowship and indicate the work to be undertaken during the Fellowship.

Items 4(a) and (c) should be limited to 250 words.

5. Research Ethics / Safety Approval and Access to Government / Official / Private Data / Records and Restricted Area(s)

(a) Research Ethics / Safety Approval

It is the responsibility of the university and the applicant to ensure that the proposed research is carefully reviewed for its compliance with applicable

laws, health and safety guidelines and ethical standards. If the proposed research involves human subjects (e.g. potential physical or psychological harms, discomfort or stress to human participants that a research project might generate, subjects' privacy etc.) or living animals, ethics clearance should be sought. The primary responsibility of seeking the relevant approval and ethics clearance rests with the applicant. Supporting documents of the relevant approval and ethics clearance should be uploaded under Section 11 of Part II in pdf format. The university is also required to complete and sign Part III of this application form to confirm whether the research proposal involves human subjects and certify whether the relevant approval has been required / is being sought. For research involving clinical trials, applicants may obtain relevant ethics approval after the announcement of funding result and before the release of funding and project commencement.

(b) Access to Government / official / private data and records or restricted area(s)

It is the responsibility of the university and the applicant to ensure that approval has been sought for access to Government / official / private data / records and restricted area(s) if the related data / records and entry to the restricted area(s) are critical to the proposed research. The primary responsibility of seeking the relevant approval rests with the applicant. The university is required to complete and sign Part III of this application form to confirm the relevant approval, if necessary, has been given is being sought.

For both (a) and (b), applications should not be submitted unless the approval of the appropriate agency(ies) has / have been or is / are being sought. The RGC will regard the applications as being withdrawn if no confirmation of approval is provided to the RGC by 15 April 2018.

6. Outputs to be delivered at the end of the Fellowship

The outputs can be of any form but should be of scholarly work nature and not textbooks and straight forward translation. A wide range of research outputs that will lead to significant advances in knowledge, insights of interest or value to the research community is allowed. They can be publications or other outputs from research conducted prior to the start of the Fellowship. It is the responsibility of the applicants to justify the value and appropriateness of the outputs in the applications.

FUNDING REQUEST

7. Cost and justification

HSSPFS can be used to support a wide range of research activities provided that these activities will lead to significant research or other outputs by the end of the Fellowship. Awardees must ensure that financial support for their research work during the Fellowship is readily available or expected from other sources if the project requires project costs. Applicants should state

the amount requested and provide justification for all items. The applicants and the universities should decide on the salaries for the replacement with reference to the level and amount of workload expected and justify them on the application forms. Usually, the salaries for relief teachers taking up purely teaching duties should not exceed the salary of Staff Grade “G” (i.e. Lecturer (U)) of the universities concerned. A maximum amount of \$1 million per award (covering salary costs for relief teachers and staff, travel, subsistence and dissemination costs) for a period of up to 12 months may be granted.

One-line Vote Items

- (i) Supporting staff other than relief teacher
Please state the rank of the staff, the months and costs involved. Supporting staff are meant to relieve the applicant’s administrative workload which should not be research-related.
- (ii) Travel
Please state the number of trips required and the cost per trip during the Fellowship.
- (iii) Subsistence
Please state the amount of subsistence required during the Fellowship. The ceiling of \$900 per day should not be exceeded.
- (iv) Dissemination of outputs
Please state the costs required for dissemination of outputs delivered at the end of the Fellowship, including publication fee, equipment and materials required for dissemination of outputs.

Earmarked Item

- (v) Relief Teacher
Please state the rank of the relief teacher, the months and costs involved. Relief teachers are meant to relieve the applicants of their major teaching loads or / and administrative burden related to teaching work.

GRANT RECORD & RE-SUBMISSION

- 8. Grant Record of the Applicant
The applicant should provide a list of grants relevant to the work to be undertaken under the proposed Fellowship. The grants should be currently held or held in the recent five years as Principal Investigator.
- 9. Re-submission of a proposal not supported previously
 - (a) The applicant 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 other funding bodies. It is the responsibility of the applicant to declare clearly and honestly whether his / her proposal is a re-submission. The applicant should re-visit the main concerns / suggestions previously expressed by 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 applicant to respond to those comments, and explain whether and what changes have been incorporated in the latest proposal. Some external reviewers' comments may be more agreeable / disagreeable than others. However, if a rebuttal is offered, it should be scholarly and preferably measured. Under the existing policy, re-submitted proposals, will be treated as fresh applications in peer-review and handled in an identical manner to other new applications. Although the selection committee will take into account the applicant's responses to the reviewers' comments, the committee is not obliged to invite the same group of external reviewers for assessment of the new application.

ANCILLARY INFORMATION

10. Dissemination plan

Applicants should describe how the outputs of the proposed work will be shared. Outputs can be of any form but should be of scholarly nature and not textbooks and straightforward translation. For proposals concerning Creative Arts, applicants should ensure that the proposals should contain research elements which contribute to academic attainment. A wide range of research outputs that will lead to significant advances in knowledge, insights of interest or value to the research community is allowed. They can be publications or other outputs from research conducted prior to the start of the Fellowship. Applicants should justify the value and appropriateness of the outputs in their applications.

11. Education Plan, Curriculum Vitae and Supporting Documents

Education Plan

Applicants are required to provide the proposed educational activities relating to the proposed research.

Curriculum Vitae

Applicants are required to upload a CV of no more than 10 pages summarizing their qualifications.

Supporting Documents

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.

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

Release of completion report

Awardees of the Fellowship 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 awardees) to the public through the RGC website. Awardees 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.

Awardees are required to include in the project completion reports the URL links to the university's repositories or the publishers' websites so that the public could have quick and easy access to the manuscripts or journal articles. 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 of 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 university's repository for open access;
- (ii) If both (i)(A) and (B) are not allowed, the PI should request the publisher to allow him / her to place either version in his / her university's repository for restricted access immediately upon publication or after an embargo period of up to twelve months if required by the publisher; and
- (iii) Subject to the publisher's agreement on (i) or (ii) above, the PI should deposit a copy of the publication in his / her university's repository as early as possible but no later than six months after publication or the embargo period, if any.

13. Applicant's other undertaking
- (a) For applicants not intending to commit 100% of their time to the Fellowship, please state the teaching and administrative commitments (with estimated percentage) which will continue alongside with the Fellowship.
- (b) Awardees of the Fellowship are required to undertake their continual services in their respective universities for at least one year upon the completion of the Fellowship.

PART III UNIVERSITY'S ENDORSEMENT

[To be completed by the appropriate authority of the applicant's university]

1. Staff Eligibility Requirement
The university is required to verify that an applicant fully meets the criteria for the Fellowship.
2. Research Ethics / Safety Approval and Access to Government / Official / Private Data / Restricted Area(s)

Universities should confirm that the approval of the appropriate authority(ies) has / have been / is being sought in respect of the projects involving safety hazards or the use of living animal or human subjects (e.g. potential physical or psychological harm, discomfort or stress to human subjects in a research project, subjects' privacy, etc.). It should be noted that all applications must be vetted by the universities to ascertain if they involve human subjects. If they do, the universities must give approval / exemption according to their internal ethics guidelines by 15 April 2018 as is the case with other ethics / safety approval. If the university is unable to confirm by 15 April 2018 that the required approval has been obtained, the RGC will stop processing the application which will be regarded as to have been withdrawn.

The university should confirm that the approval of the appropriate authority(ies) has / have been or is / are being obtained in respect of access to data / records critical to the proposed research. If the university is unable to confirm by 15 April 2018 that the required approval has been obtained, the RGC will stop processing the application which will be regarded as to have been withdrawn.

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

3. University's Statement
Universities should indicate their level of support on the applications.

Evidence of significant and appropriate university's support for the applications will be an important criterion in assessing the applications. The university's support could include travel grants, conference grants, support for early stage development of the proposed research, funding of project costs / networking / communication activities, time-off, provision of additional mentoring or training or sabbatical leave *etc.*

4. University's Undertaking

Universities are required to confirm their commitment to manage the grants and to release the applicant if the application is successful.

UGC Secretariat
December 2017

Handling of Information and Personal Data
Contained in RGC Research Funding Application

Purpose of Collection of Information and Personal Data

1. Information and personal data contained in your research grant application are collected for the following purposes:
 - (a) determination of your eligibility, as a staff member of a UGC-funded university, to apply for a competitive grant from 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 selection committee 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 departments / research funding agencies for the avoidance of duplicate funding; and
 - (f) for successful projects, such data will be used for project monitoring, promotion, publicity and may also be published on 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 selection committees, 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 applicants. It also reserves the right to stop processing or reject any applications if the applicants’ requests render it impossible for the applications to be adequately peer-reviewed.

3. When 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 the electronic system.

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)1
Research Grants Council
7/F Shui On Centre
6-8 Harbour Road Wanchai
Hong Kong
Fax: 2845 1183

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List of Research Field Areas and Code
for Humanities and Social Sciences Research Proposals

Psychology and Linguistics
(Subject Area: H1)

<u>Field Area</u>	<u>Code</u>
Psychology	4104
Linguistics and Languages	4108
Psycholinguistics	4109
Cognitive Neuroscience of Language	4110
English Languages and Literature	4121
Chinese Languages and Literature	4122
Language Development, Second Language Acquisition, Audiology	4123
Sociolinguistics and Discourse Analysis	4124
Criminology	4125
Others – relating to Psychology and Linguistics (please specify:)	4196

Social and Behavioural Sciences
(Subject Area: H2)

<u>Field Area</u>	<u>Code</u>
Anthropology	4101
Public Administration & Political Science	4105
Sociology	4106
Architecture	4401
Law	4402
Nursing	4408
Public Health	4409
Social Work	4410
Social Services / Management	4411
Urban Studies and Planning	4412
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

Social and Behavioural Sciences (Cont'd)
(Subject Area: H2)

<u>Field Area</u>	<u>Code</u>
Archaeology	4417
Human Geography	4418
Social Policy	4419
Others – relating to Social and Behavioural Sciences (please specify:)	4195

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)

Field Area

Code

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

Staff Grades, Modes and Funding Sources

Academic Grades

Academic, Senior

- A. Professor
- B. Reader
- C. Senior Lecturer (U)
- D. Principal Lecturer (P)

Academic, Junior

- F. Senior Lecturer (P)
- G. Lecturer (U)
- H. Lecturer (P)
- I. Assistant Lecturer

Academic Supporting Staff

- J. Instructor
- K. Demonstrator / Tutor / Teacher Assistant
- L. Others, including language assistant, fieldwork supervisor etc.

Technical Research Staff (Staff who spend essentially all their time on research)

- M. Senior Technical Research Staff (“leaders”, usually Post Doctoral)
- N. Junior Technical Research Staff (“followers”, usually Graduate)

Non-Academic Grades

Non-academic, Senior

- O. Admin, Senior
- Q. Technical, Senior

Non-academic, Junior

- P. Admin, Junior (including secretarial, clerical)
- R. Technical, Junior
- S. Other, including “Mod 1”
