RESEARCH GRANTS COUNCIL

COMPETITIVE RESEARCH FUNDING SCHEMES FOR THE LOCAL SELF-FINANCING DEGREE SECTOR 2027/28

INTER-INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME (IIDS)

Scheme Overview and Guidance Notes (IIDS2) for Completing the Application Form (IIDS1)

Table of Contents

Preamble: How to use this document 2
SECTION 1 – SCHEME OVERVIEW 2
- **Scheme Purpose** 2
- **Eligibility** 3
- **Scheme Funding Thresholds** 4
- **Language and Format for Applications** 4
- **Generating a Project Reference Number for the Application** 5
- **Application Timetable** 5
- **Assessment** 6
- **Information Update** 6

SECTION 2 – COMPLETING THE APPLICATION FORM 8
- **PART I Summary of the Proposal** 8
- **PART II Details of the Proposal** 12
- **PART III Project Funding** 15
- **PART IV Grant Record and Related Research Work of Investigators** 17
- **PART V Research Ethics and Other Approvals** 19
- **PART VI Undertaking of the PI** 22
- **PART VII Institutional Endorsement, Commitments and Confirmation** 23

Handling of Information and Personal Data 27
List of Research Field Areas and Codes 30

Preamble: How to use this document

All applicants and their institutions should read this Scheme Overview and Guidance Notes (Guidance Notes) carefully before completing and submitting an application to the scheme. 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 Guidance Notes.

Applicants should also read the Call for Proposals for details of the Inter-Institutional Development Scheme (IIDS), and 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.

This Guidance Notes is in two parts: SECTION 1 summarises the key information about the scheme while SECTION 2 is structured to mirror the application form sections and provide section-by-section guidance on completion of the application documentation.

Enquiries about the contents of this Guidance Notes and other related matters about the IIDS funding exercise including appeals and complaints should be directed to the Research Coordinators (RCs) or responsible personnel of the institutions.

The guidelines on handling the information and personal data contained in applications submitted to the RGC are contained in **Annex A**. 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.

SECTION 1 – SCHEME OVERVIEW

Scheme Purpose

1. The IIDS aims to enhance academics' research capability in the local self-financing degree-awarding institutions and keep them abreast of new developments and challenging research topics in relevant fields. Application should be submitted by a Principal Investigator (PI) from an institution or with Co-Principal Investigators (Co-PIs) jointly from collaborating institutions to organise workshops or short courses, etc., for a duration ranging from several days to several weeks. The proposed activity should serve the purpose of enabling participants to conduct focused study and intensive scholarly exchange under the guidance of visiting scholars and experts. Participation must be open to other local self-financing degree-awarding institutions, and preferably to all institutions in Hong Kong.

Eligibility

2. Applicants must be eligible academic staff engaged by one of the following fifteen local self-financing degree-awarding institutions –

Code	Institution
11	Saint Francis University
12	Centennial College
13	Hong Kong Chu Hai College
14	The Hang Seng University of Hong Kong
15	Hong Kong Shue Yan University
16	Hong Kong Metropolitan University
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
51	UOW College Hong Kong

3. The PI and Co-PI(s) (if any) of the proposal must be full-time academic staff members employed by one of the eligible self-financing degree-awarding institutions and fulfil ALL of the following requirements –

(i) spend(s) at least 80% of time on locally-accredited local degree or higher degree work[1]; and

(ii) has / have at least a one-year renewable contract with the institution at the time of funding award being made.

4. 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 University Grants Committee (UGC) Secretariat any change in eligibility status of the PI and / or the Co-PI(s). For this purpose, the Co-PI(s) is / are also responsible to inform the PI of his / her change in eligibility status immediately.**

[1] A PI / Co-PI who is / will be seconded to conduct research in a university or a research institute / body / agency in the Chinese Mainland / overseas jurisdiction while retaining his / her full-time appointment and position with his / her parent institution and is still on the payroll of the parent institution is eligible to apply for IIDS.

5. 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. The IIDS encourages collaborations among institutions and there may be Co-PIs from collaborating self-financing degree-awarding institutions in the project. Other joint applicants, if any, will be regarded as Co-Investigators (Co-Is). There is no eligibility requirement 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 universities, or public / private local or overseas institutions / organisations. There is no limit in the number of applications that can be submitted in the capacity of Co-PI or Co-I. Each Co-PI and Co-I should have a clear, distinct and material role. Excessive number of Co-PIs and Co-Is should be avoided. Save in very exceptional circumstances, the RGC will not accommodate requests for the addition of Co-PI(s) and / or Co-I(s) to a project after the funding award.

Scheme Funding Thresholds

6. The funding covers direct costs involved in organising workshops or short courses and on-costs of 15% of the approved costs.

7. There is no funding threshold or upper limit for approved IIDS projects.

Language and Format for Applications

8. For applications which have genuine special needs to be completed in a language other than English, the applicants / institutions are required to provide an English version on the brief description of the project and project details (i.e. Project Objectives; Pathways to Impact Statement and Programme Outline of the Project). **Failure to comply with this requirement may result in the removal of the application from processing.**

9. 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

10. Applicants may refer to the document namely “Standard Template for Application Format” to check the compliance of their applications with the

above standard RGC format. The standard template for application format is available on RGC website at https://www.ugc.edu.hk/eng/rgc/funding_opport/iids/how_to_apply.html.

11. **All sections should be completed.** Where information sought is not applicable or not provided under a particular section, insert "N/A".

Generating a Project Reference Number for the Application

12. 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/IIDS11/B01/27. The codes for the five subject panels are –

B – Business Studies
E – Engineering
H – Humanities and Social Sciences
M – Biology and Medicine
P – Physical Sciences

13. 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.

Application Timetable

14. The **deadline for submission of applications is 1 March 2027 (Monday) 5:00pm. Two 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. Institutions are required to submit the soft copy of all applications in one USB memory stick as far as possible in a format specified by the Secretariat. The file size of each proposal is **up to 5MB**, with the file name identical to the project reference number. The content of the soft copy and hard copies must be **identical**. The application will not be processed if such discrepancies are spotted.

15. 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 critical information for each proposal in the Excel table should be identical to the hard copy. The completed critical data file should be forwarded to the Secretariat by email on or before **5 March 2027 (Friday) 5:00pm**.

16. 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 to 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 V(f) 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 Part V(f) to supplement the contents of other sections.

Assessment

17. The application will be assessed by Assessment Panel Members and external reviewers based on intellectual merit. It is important that applicants provide sufficiently detailed information for assessors to come to judgements which related to the relevance to research / education programmes ongoing or under active development, the size of interested participants, institutional support, etc.

18. Applicants are not allowed to mention anything not related to the 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.**

19. 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" available at the RGC website (*https://www.ugc.edu.hk/doc/eng/rgc/guidelines/code/code_of_conduct.pdf*). 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.**

Information Update

20. A brief update of the proposal, if any, should be submitted to the RGC on or before **18 June 2027**, indicating any essential changes, i.e. changes in the eligibility of the PI and Co-PIs, addition / removal of Co-PI(s) and Co-I(s), alternative funding obtained / being requested, declaration of related proposals / projects / research work, investigator(s)'s CV, grant records, etc. through the affiliated institution. It should be emphasised that such an update should be confined to the above said changes only. Applicants should not use the opportunity to revise their proposals substantially.

21. If an update is provided for ethics / safety approval for an application, or for access to Government / official / private data and records, the PI or the institution should submit the relevant updated data to the RGC on or before **18 June 2027**. Evidence of approval for access to Government / official / private data and records should also be submitted at this stage. Submission of letters on ethics / safety approval is only required upon RGC's request.

22. If an update is provided on any related research work that is being / has been conducted in relation to the proposal, the PI, Co-PI(s) and / or Co-I(s) should submit the relevant updated data to the RGC on or before **18 June 2027**.

23. Other than the specific situations set out, no information update / revision to an application is allowed after submission deadline.

SECTION 2 – COMPLETING THE APPLICATION FORM

It is the responsibility of the PIs to ensure that their applications contain sufficient and consistent information for evaluation. **Incomplete submissions** (such as those lacking substantial data / information for evaluation) **or inconsistent / inaccurate information would lead to the disqualification of an application**.

PART I SUMMARY OF THE PROPOSAL

1. Particulars of the PI

(a) To ensure accuracy and to facilitate identification of the PI, Co-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.

	Surname (in capital letters)	**Other Names***
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) If the PI is working concurrently on two or more on-going research projects in any capacity, please elaborate on how the PI would be able to take up the additional research work in this proposal while maintaining the research quality. Individual or collaborative research projects funded from all sources (irrespective of whether from UGC / RGC) should be included. PIs holding the capacity of PI, Project holder, Team leader, Project Coordinator (PC), Co-PI, Co-I or collaborator in projects should declare.

2. Information on PI, Co-PI and Co-I

(a) Please provide and indicate, in particular –

- the Open Researcher and Contributor ID Identifier (ORCID iD) of the PI and each Co-PI / Co-I; and
- whether the PI and / or any of the Co-PI(s) / Co-I(s) is / are RGC Committee / Panel Member(s) as at the deadline of the application.

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

(b) Please summarise the qualifications of the PI, each Co-PI and Co-I who will be involved in the project. The CV(s) to be attached should each have a maximum of two A4 pages and include the following information –

CV

(i) Name
(ii) Academic qualifications (with dates in "date/month/year" format and name of awarding universities)
(iii) Previous academic positions held (with dates in "date/month/year" format)
(iv) Present academic position (with date(s) in "date/month/year" format)
(v) Previous relevant research work
(vi) Other relevant matters such as research-related prizes and awards, brief description of consultancy experience, service as a referee in evaluating other grant applications, patents, PhD theses supervised, etc.

Publications List

(vii) Section A – Five most representative publications in the recent five years
Section B – Five representative publications beyond the recent five years with the latest publication entered first

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 the Panel's consideration. **Failure to comply with the above requirements may lead to disqualification of the concerned application.**

(c) Plan(s) for Collaboration

The plan should make clear the roles and specific task(s) of each individual member of the project team. If the project involves collaboration with other research team(s) / institution(s), letters of collaboration should be attached to Part V(f) of the Application Form.

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

3. Particulars of the Project

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

(b) Please indicate the nature of the proposed project by selecting the appropriate box(es).

(c) Please indicate the duration of the project, which should last for **no more than one year**. The project should start no later than six months after the announcement of funding result.

(d) For all proposals, the primary and secondary fields of research and codes should be stated clearly. Please refer to **Annex B**. 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 allowed. To facilitate the appointment of the right experts to evaluate the proposals, a PI should select a specific primary field area as closely as possible.

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.

(e) Please provide the proposed dates of the activities (in "month/year" format), the location and the estimated number of participants. The programmes / events of the project should be opened to other institutions and to the public.

(f) A brief description 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 project to be conducted. Please include the RGC Reference No. in the brief description. If a proposal is funded, the brief description will be posted on the RGC website for public's information. The applicant will be approached for a Chinese version of the brief description for public access shortly after the announcement of the funding results, or an English version if the original brief description is presented in Chinese.

(g) Please provide the total amount of funding requested. The amount should be consistent with the one quoted under Part III Section 1(a)(E) of the Application Form.

(h) The PI should provide details where the proposal is a re-submission (submitted to the UGC / RGC before), largely similar to a proposal that has been submitted to the UGC / RGC or other funding bodies, or a continuation of funded project. It is the responsibility of the PI to declare clearly and honestly whether his / her proposal is a re-submission. The RGC reserves the right to discount the rating of an application for failure to acknowledge that it is a re-submission of a previous application.

PART II DETAILS OF THE PROPOSAL

This is the major portion of the proposal. It should be presented clearly and concisely with sufficient details to indicate the significance and merits of the proposed project and to permit a meaningful evaluation of the worthiness of the project.

1. Project Objectives

Please provide a maximum of two A4 pages outlining in bullet-point form for the Project Objectives. These should include a summary of –

- Reasons for undertaking the project; and
- The key issues and / or problems being addressed – these should be described and those elements which are critical to the solution of the problem should be clearly identified.

2. Pathways to Impact Statement

Please provide a maximum of two A4 pages.

The Pathways to Impact Statement shall demonstrate how the research team will realise the "impact" beyond the academia by the findings / outcome of the research proposal and by addressing any associated risks. For the purpose of this section, impact is defined as the demonstrable contributions, beneficial effects, valuable changes or advantages that research qualitatively brings to the economy, society, culture, public policy or services, health, the environment or quality of life; and that are beyond the academia. The impacts may occur in any geographical location whether locally, regionally, nationally or internationally.

The statement shall address the following –

(a) Who are the potential beneficiaries of the proposed research in the short (one to three years), medium (four to ten years) and long term (over ten years)?

(b) How will the potential beneficiaries benefit? What will be the objective demonstrable / measurable benefits beyond academia?

(c) What will be done during and / or after the project to increase the likelihood of achieving the identified benefit and reaching the identified beneficiaries?

(d) What are the potential risks that might adversely affect the achievement of the stated impact and how will such risks be mitigated?

The statement shall be comprehensible to a lay person.

Applicants may find the impact case studies available on the Research Assessment Exercise 2020 Impact Database (https://impact.ugc.edu.hk/) useful reference to understand more about research impact. These case studies demonstrated the impact generated by the underpinning research undertaken from January 2000 to September 2019. For the purpose of this Pathways to Impact Statement, the research team should describe how the research findings arising from this proposal would / could be used, and what the research team and universities would do, in bringing about and achieving future impact beyond academia. It should be noted that research impact may or may not be arising from a single research. Hence, the expected impact as described in the Pathways to Impact Statement may also include findings from other research, but the part to be contributed by this research proposal should be clearly defined.

The PI should also elaborate on how the research capability of academics can be enhanced through this project, the research topics that may be generated and the future planning that may be implemented after completion.

3. Programme Outline of the Project

Please provide the description of the project including a planned / tentative programme in a maximum of two A4 pages. The programmes / activities and schedule should be practical and feasible.

An implementation schedule for the activities to be organised should also be given in one A4 page in total.

4. Particulars of Potential Speaker(s)

The potential speaker(s) can be academic staff from the local self-financing degree-awarding institutions, or any expert from local / overseas institutions. Please provide details of the potential speakers in the table with the references in one A4 page.

5. Collaboration with Other Self-financing Degree-awarding Institutions

Please specify the distinctive role(s) and quantify the participation of eligible local self-financing degree-awarding institutions involved in the project.

6. Re-submission of a Proposal Previously NOT Supported

(a) If this application is the same as or similar to the proposal(s) submitted under any UGC / RGC funding schemes but not supported previously, the PI should provide a summary of all the previous submissions and re-visit the main

concerns / suggestions previously expressed by reviewers if an earlier / similar version of the proposal has been assessed before.

(b) This section allows the applicant to respond to previous comments and explain whether and what changes have been incorporated in the latest proposal. Please ensure that sufficient revision and improvement based on the comments provided by the Assessment Panel have been made. If a rebuttal is offered, it should be scholarly and measured. Re-submitted proposals will be treated as fresh applications for peer-review and handled in an identical manner to other new applications. Although the Assessment Panel will take into account the PI's responses to the reviewers' comments, the Panel is not obliged to invite the same group of external reviewers to assess the new application.

PART III PROJECT FUNDING

Unless otherwise specified, all funding levels stated in the Guidance Notes and the Application Form are in Hong Kong dollars.

1. Proposed Funding

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, reference books and overseas telephone charges to funded projects.

The RGC reserves the right to impose penalty on any institution which fails to screen out non-compliant applications.

(a) Budget

There is no funding threshold or ceiling for approved IIDS projects. The approved funding will be subject to the justification of the proposal and each requested item. If any overseas travel is required for the speaker(s), the grant can support up to business class roundtrip air passage by the most direct route, hotel accommodation, and subsistence allowance. The expenses / allowances should follow the RGC's, procurement should be done in accordance with the RGC's, Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC)'s and / or the institutional procurement procedures and guidelines, whichever is more stringent, and should not exceed the limit set by the institution. Should there be any expenses exceeded the set limit, institutions are required to bear the differences.

Academic staff remunerated by any 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.

No venue cost should be charged by the applying institution and / or the collaborating local self-financing degree-awarding institution(s).

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.

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

(D) 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

(F) 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) Funding Allocation for Collaborating Institutions

Please provide details of funding allocation to the eligible institutions involved in the application.

2. 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 organisations, 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 III Section 1(a)(B)(vi) of the Application form, and it will be deducted from the total cost of the project.

If revenue will be generated from the project (e.g. enrolment fees of participants), the amount of funding to be awarded may be reduced or the institution will be required to return the revenue generated to the RGC after the completion 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's funds must not be spent on non-permissible items unless approval is obtained from the RGC in advance.**

PART IV GRANT RECORD AND RELATED RESEARCH WORK OF INVESTIGATORS

Grant Record of Investigator(s)

It is the responsibility of the PI, Co-PI(s) 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-PI(s) and Co-I(s) understand(s) the requirements and has / have declared all related research work. **If the PI, Co-PI(s) and / or Co-I(s) fail(s) to disclose any related research work that is being / has been conducted in relation to the proposal in this section, the PI, Co-PI(s) and / or Co-I(s) will be subject to disciplinary action even if the proposal is finally not supported. The application may be disqualified and the PI, Co-PI(s) and / or Co-I(s) may be debarred from applying for 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 / PC / Co-PI / Co-I / Project holder^ / Team leader^) including –

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

(ii) on-going research projects funded from all sources (irrespective of whether from the UGC / RGC); and

(iii) proposals pending funding approval from all sources (irrespective of whether from the UGC / RGC).

(b) For each **Co-PI**, please provide details on each of the research projects undertaken and proposals submitted by the Co-PI (in the capacity as PI / PC / Co-PI / Co-I / Project holder^ / Team leader^) including –

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

(ii) on-going research projects funded from all sources (irrespective of whether from the UGC / RGC); and

(iii) proposals pending funding approval from all sources (irrespective of whether from the UGC / RGC).

^ Project holder / Team leader is applicable 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 onwards.

(c) For **each Co-I**, please 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 research projects funded from all sources (irrespective of whether from the UGC / RGC); and

(ii) proposals pending funding approval from all sources (irrespective of whether from the UGC / RGC).

(d) **All PI, Co-PI(s) and 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, 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.) on whether or not such work is / was part of a funded project; and

(ii) details to distinguish the 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 / already conducted are related. The judgement of the RGC is final. Therefore, it is always advisable for the PI, Co-PI(s) and the Co-I(s) to declare related proposals / projects / research work when there is uncertainty. The PI, Co-PI(s) 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 proposal concerned if the PI, Co-PI(s) 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 will not be regarded as fulfilling the declaration requirements in this Section. PI, Co-PI(s) and Co-I(s) are responsible to report <u>immediately</u> via RCs of the institutions to the UGC Secretariat any updates on grants records, including declaration of related research work.

PART V RESEARCH ETHICS AND OTHER APPROVALS

(a) Research Ethics / Safety Approval

Please complete the declaration related to ethics and safety approvals. It is the responsibility of the institution and the PI to ensure that the 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 or stress to human participants that a research project might generate, subjects' privacy, etc.). The primary responsibility of seeking the relevant approval and ethics clearance rests with the PI. The PI's institution is required to complete and sign at Part VII 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

Please complete the declaration. 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 proposal. The primary responsibility of seeking the relevant approval rests with the PI. The PI's institution is required to complete and sign the Part VII of the Application Form to confirm whether the relevant approvals are required and if required, the relevant approvals have been given / are being sought.

For both (a) and (b) above, the institution and the PI should ensure that such approval will be obtained and provided to the RGC by 18 June 2027. The institution and the PI should also note that if such approval is not submitted by the deadline, the RGC will regard the IIDS application as being withdrawn and will cease processing it. **If the institution / PI declared that no approval was required but the RGC / Panel eventually considered otherwise, the application may be disqualified.**

(c) 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 and / or researchers concerned) to the public through the RGC website. PIs 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.

(d) Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

It is the responsibility of the PI to disclose, where applicable, the usage of AI models / systems / tools in preparing the proposal, and to ensure that the submitted proposal complies with the relevant institutional policies of his / her institution. This compliance must be maintained during the proposal preparation stage, and at all times throughout the project period if funded.

PIs are required to disclose the details of AI usage including but not limited to the models / systems / tools being / to be used, purpose of usage, how and the extent of such AI usage. For avoidance of doubt, use of AI for all purposes should be disclosed, including but not limited to generating research ideas and refining research questions; literature review and information retrieval; language editing assistance; citation management; and data analysis. PIs are reminded to review, verify and validate AI generated content. PIs assume full responsibility for the scholarly and scientific integrity, accuracy, originality and intellectual content of all AI-generated content in the proposal and research work if funded.

The concerned institution is required to complete Part VII of the application form to confirm that the details provided by the PIs regarding the use of AI are accurate and are in compliance with the relevant institutional policies.

In the event of a non-disclosure, or when an PI makes an incomplete / inaccurate disclosure about the use of AI models / systems / tools with regard to an application, the RGC reserves the right to take appropriate actions.

(e) Data Collection and Management

(i) Data Collection and Consent: Please explain what data will be collected, from whom or what sources, and for what purposes. Research involving collection and use of personal or medical data must comply with relevant ethical standards, applicable laws and regulations[2]. Data collection should be fair and lawful and, where appropriate, with the consent of the data subject. PIs may be required to provide evidence of consent from the data subject / owner (respective collaborator(s), authorities and / or participants) when necessary, e.g. a letter of support or written agreement.

(ii) Data Management and Security: Please take all practical steps to secure and protect the collected data and research data in both physical and digital forms, i.e. limit disclosure of identifiable information, implement encryption, access control (including clearly setting out policy on remote access and portable storage devices), backup, database and network protection, etc. for the data concerned, and provide regular data security training for the research team. PIs should describe how data will be organised, documented, maintained, shared and preserved both throughout the project lifecycle and beyond. PIs should also outline measures to protect data from unauthorised access, loss, misuse or disclosure.

(iii) Data Sharing and Access: Please provide assurance that adequate precautions / controls are put in place to enable responsible sharing of the data concerned and comply with legal and fair contractual agreements between collaborator(s) / authorities and within PI's own research team. Sharing of and access to the data concerned should be limited to necessary personnel / organisations related to the research. If the research will be published publicly, the datasets should be anonymised to avoid risk of (re)identification.

(iv) Legal and Regulatory Compliance: Please provide assurance on meeting relevant legal and regulatory requirements governing the data, including privacy, confidentiality, intellectual property, export control, cybersecurity and research security obligations. If the data will be transferred across

[2] Particularly if the proposed research includes data relating to human participants, or involves international collaborations, or related to data of sensitive areas to be shared with or access by individuals or organisations outside Hong Kong.

jurisdictions, PIs should explain how to comply with applicable frameworks and requirements in relevant locations, including Hong Kong (with the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance), Chinese Mainland and other partner jurisdictions. This includes any cross-jurisdiction transfer, storage, access, sharing, processing, or linkage of research data between jurisdictions. Description should include measures to ensure compliance with applicable privacy and data-protection requirements.

(f) 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.

PART VI UNDERTAKING OF THE PI

It is the responsibility of the PI to ensure that the research activity(ies) / expenditure(s) of the project if funded will be carefully monitored for its / their compliance with applicable laws, health and safety guidelines and ethical standards, including but not limited to the Law of the People's Republic of China on Safeguarding National Security in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region as well as the terms and conditions laid down by the RGC.

PART VII INSTITUTIONAL ENDORSEMENT, COMMITMENTS AND CONFIRMATION

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

INSTITUTIONAL ENDORSEMENT

1. Eligibility Requirement for IIDS

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 IIDS 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 is / will be seconded to conduct research in a university or a research institute / body / agency in the Chinese Mainland / overseas jurisdiction with effect from the date as stated in the Application Form while retaining his / her full-time appointment and position with his / her parent institution and is still on the payroll of the parent institution;

(d) the applicant will abide by the in-house guidelines of his / her 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;

(e) the institution will inform the RGC as soon as the PI ceases to be eligible to apply, receive or hold an IIDS 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 application. However, change of PI from the seventh month may be considered by the RGC under the circumstances as stipulated in the SF-DAMA. The institution understands that failure in identifying a suitable new PI or obtaining approval from the RGC for change of PI will result in termination of the funded project;

(f) the institution understands that the IIDS grant, if given, will be withdrawn if the project does not start within six months 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;

(g) the institution understands that if the project is approved, the institution may need to provide additional funding to ensure that the 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;

(h) the institution will ensure that the research activity(ies) / expenditure(s) of the project if funded will be carefully monitored for its / their compliance with applicable laws, health and safety guidelines and ethical standards, including but not limited to the Law of the People's Republic of China on Safeguarding National Security in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region as well as the terms and conditions laid down by the RGC; and

(i) the Co-PI(s) and his / her institution have completed / will complete the declaration form at **Annex** to the Application Form and the completed declaration form is submitted together with the Application Form or to be submitted by 18 June 2027. Please give reasons if the declaration of the Co-PI(s) could not be provided.

INSTITUTIONAL COMMITMENTS

2. Support to PI

The institution of the PI is required to verify and confirm whether the project under the IIDS application is in line with the role of the institution, and that adequate supervision, facilities and training provisions will be in place 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 the plan. The institution is also required to confirm that the events / programmes offered in this proposal would be opened to other institutions and to the public

3. Declaration of Research Ethics / Safety Approval and Access to Government / Official / Private Data and Records / Use of AI / Data Collection and Management

(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 18 June 2027 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 grant approval or allow exemption according to their internal ethics / safety guidelines or obtain relevant ethics / safety approval from appropriate authority(ies). **If such approval is not obtained by deadline (18 June 2027), the RGC will regard the application as being withdrawn 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 18 June 2027 in respect of access to data / records that are critical to the proposed project. **If such approval is not obtained by deadline (18 June 2027), the RGC will regard the application as being withdrawn 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.**

(c) Use of AI

The institution should confirm that the details provided by the applicant regarding the use of AI, if any, are accurate and in compliance with the relevant institutional policies.

(d) Data Collection and Management

The institution should confirm that the collection and management of research data of the proposal is / will be in compliance with the relevant institutional policies of the institution.

For (c) and (d), **in the event of a non-disclosure, or when a PI makes an incomplete / inaccurate disclosure about the use of AI models / systems / tools / collection and management of data with regard to an application, the RGC reserves the right to take appropriate actions**.

Part VII of the Application Form should be completed, signed and submitted by the appropriate authority of the PI's institution.

UGC Secretariat
November 2026

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 / University Grants Committee (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 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. 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. By submitting the proposal, the applicant authorises the RGC to use the applicant's information, including but not limited to ORCID iD, for data matching with other Government bureaux / departments and relevant parties as well as other research funding agencies.

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

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Annex B(1)

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

Biological Sciences
(Subject Area : M1)

Field Area	Code
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

Biological Sciences (Cont'd)
(Subject Area : M1)

Field Area	Code
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)

Field Area	Code
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

Medicine, Dentistry & Health (Cont'd)
(Subject Area : M2)

Field Area	Code
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 Codes for Engineering Research Proposals

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

Field Area	Code
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)

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

Electrical & Electronic Engineering
(Subject Area : E3)

Field Area	Code
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)

Field Area	Code
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 Codes for Physical Sciences Research Proposals

Chemical Engineering
(Subject Area : P1)

Field Area	Code
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)

Field Area	Code
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 Area	Code
Applied Mathematics	3301
Pure Mathematics	3302
Probability & Statistics	3303
Mathematical Finance and Insurance	3304
Others – relating to Mathematics (please specify :)	3399

Annex B(4)

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

Psychology and Linguistics
(Subject Area : H1)

Field Area	Code
Psychology	4104
Linguistics and Languages	4108
Psycholinguistics	4109
Cognitive Neuroscience of Language	4110
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)

Field Area	Code
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
Archaeology	4417

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

Field Area	Code
Human Geography	4418
Social Policy	4419
Others – relating to Social and Behavioural Sciences (please specify :)	4195

Humanities and Arts
(Subject Area : H3)

Field Area	Code
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
History	4213
History of Arts	4214
Musciology / Music History	4215
Translation Studies	4216
Philosophy	4218
Religious Studies	4219
Sexuality and Gender Studies	4220
Journalism and Media	4407
Contemporary Art	4420
Film, Visual and Media Studies	4221
Cultural Studies / Cultural Policy	4222
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

Humanities and Arts (Cont'd)
(Subject Area : H3)

Field Area	Code
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

Annex B(5)

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

Business Studies
(Subject Area : B)

Field Area	Code
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