RESEARCH GRANTS COUNCIL

**COMPETITIVE RESEARCH FUNDING SCHEMES FOR
THE LOCAL SELF-FINANCING DEGREE SECTOR 2024/25**

INTER-INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME (IIDS)

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

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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 also make reference to the "Guidelines on Disbursement, Accounting and Monitoring Arrangement for the Competitive Research Funding Schemes for the Local Self-financing Degree Sector" (SF-DAMA) from the RGC website.

This Guidance Notes is in two parts: SECTION 1 summarizes 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 organize 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	Caritas Institute of Higher Education
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.**

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[1] A PI / Co-PI who is / will be seconded to conduct research in a university or a research institute / body / agency in the 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 the 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 / organizations. 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 entertain 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 organizing 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 applicant(s) / institution(s) are required to provide an English version on the Brief Description of the Project and Project Details (Project Objectives; Pathways to Impact Statement and Programme Outline of the Project).

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. **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

11.   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/B01/24.   The codes for the five subject panels are:

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

12.   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

13.   The **deadline for submission of application is 1 March 2024 (Friday) 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 and hard copies must be **identical**.   The application will not be processed if such discrepancies are spotted.

14.   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 **6 March 2024 (Wednesday) 5:00pm**.

15.   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(d) 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(d) to supplement the

contents of other sections.

Assessment

16.   The application will be assessed by 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.

17.   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.**

18.   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

19.   A brief update of the proposal, if any, should be submitted to the RGC on or before **21 June 2024**, indicating any essential changes, e.g. changes in the eligibility of the PI and Co-PIs, addition / removal of Co-PI(s) and Co-I(s), alternative funding obtained, declaration of related proposals, investigator(s)'s CV, grant records, etc.   It should be emphasized that such an update should be confined to the above said changes only.   Applicants should not use the opportunity to revise their proposals substantially.

20.   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 **21 June 2024**.   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.

21.   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 **21 June 2024**.

22.   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.

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;
- 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 summarize 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 <u>two</u> 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(d) 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 <u>one</u> 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.

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 <u>two</u> 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 <u>two</u> A4 pages.

Impact refers to the demonstrable contributions, beneficial effects, valuable changes or advantages that research brings to the economy, society, culture, public policy or services, health, the environment or quality of life; and that are beyond academia.   It may include social and economic impact and research that translates into products and services, as well as research that aligns with important policy, community and social objectives.   The Pathways to Impact Statement should address the following questions:

- Who are the potential beneficiaries of the proposed research in the short (1-3 years), medium (4-10 years) and long term (over 10 years)?
- How will the potential beneficiaries benefit? What will be the objective demonstrable / measurable benefits beyond academia?
- What will be done during and / or after the project to increase the likelihood of achieving the identified benefits and reaching the identified beneficiaries?

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 <u>two</u> A4 pages.   The programmes / activities

and schedule should be practical and feasible.

An implementation schedule for the activities to be organized should also be given in <u>one</u> 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 <u>one</u> 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 / Continuation of Funded Project**

(a)   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 PI 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 <u>discount the rating of an application for failure to acknowledge</u> that it is a re-submission of a previous application.

(b)&(c)   This section allows the applicant to respond to previous comments and explain whether and what changes have been incorporated in the latest proposal.   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. 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.

(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 organizations, contract research funds from commercial enterprises, or special allocations made by the institution (including seed funding), etc.   It should be noted that the amount secured from other sources should be stated in Part 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.**

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PART IV   DECLARATION OF TIME COMMITMENTS, GRANT RECORD AND RELATED RESEARCH WORK OF INVESTIGATORS

1.   **Declaration of Time Commitments**

Please provide (i) the number of on-going individual research projects currently held by the PI in any capacity[2]; and (ii) the number of on-going collaborative research projects currently held by the PI in any capacity[3]. Research projects funded from all sources (irrespective of whether from UGC / RGC) should be included, except those funded under the joint research schemes and the fellowship schemes administered by the RGC.   A project is regarded as "on-going" if the completion report of the project has not been submitted / will not be submitted by the application deadline of the current exercise.

If the number declared in (i) exceeds three or the number declared in (ii) exceeds two, please provide (iii) overall amount of time spent on research by the PI in percentage terms; and (iv) justifications on how the PI would be able to take up the proposed additional research project if funded while maintaining the research quality.

2.   **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:

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[2]   Projects funded under the Faculty Development Scheme (FDS) and Inter-Institutional Development Scheme (IIDS) are regarded as individual research projects.   PI holding the capacity of PI, Co-PI, Co-I or collaborator in such projects should declare.

[3]   Projects funded under the Institutional Development Scheme Research Infrastructure Grant (IDS(R)) and Institutional Development Scheme Collaborative Research Grant (IDS(C)) are regarded as collaborative research projects.   PI holding the capacity of Project Coordinator (PC), Co-PI, Team leader, Team member, Co-I or collaborator in such projects should declare.

^   Project holder / Team leader is applicable to projects under the Institutional Development Scheme (IDS) from

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

(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) <u>in the past five years</u>;

(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).

(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:

2014/15 to 2018/19 exercises and the IDS Research Infrastructure Grant from 2019/20 exercise onwards.

^ 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.

(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 research proposal is carefully reviewed for its compliance with applicable laws, health and safety guidelines and ethical standards.   Ethics clearance should be sought for research involving living animals and / or human subjects including social sciences research involving human subjects (e.g. potential physical / psychological harms, discomfort 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 research 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 21 June 2024.   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)   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 as well as the terms and conditions laid down by the RGC.

PART VII   INSTITUTIONAL ENDORSEMENT AND DECLARATIONS OF RESEARCH ETHICS / SAFETY APPROVAL

[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 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 7th 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 this project can be successfully completed.   The institution will also provide necessary infrastructural and overheads supports such as normal academic equipment, consumables, postage, fax, stationery, reference books, overseas telephone charges, etc. to the approved projects where appropriate; and

(h)   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 21 June 2024.   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

(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 21 June 2024 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 (21 June 2024), the RGC will regard the application as being**

withdrawn and will stop further processing it.

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

The institution should ensure that the approval of the appropriate authority(ies) will be obtained and provided to the RGC by <u>21 June 2024</u> in respect of access to data / records that are critical to the proposed research. **If such approval is not obtained by deadline (<u>21 June 2024</u>), 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.**

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

UGC Secretariat
November 2023

**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. 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 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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**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

**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

**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

**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