

RESEARCH GRANTS COUNCIL

Joint Laboratory Funding Scheme (JLFS)

Explanatory Notes (JLFS2) for completing the Application Form (JLFS1)

All applicants should read this Explanatory Notes carefully before completing and submitting your proposal. The Research Grants Council (RGC) may stop processing your application if it does not comply with any of the requirements set out in the Explanatory Notes.

GENERAL

- (a) These notes are intended to be read by applicant(s) / related staff of university(ies) before completion and submission of a proposal for JLFS. Please note that the item numbers in these notes correspond to those in the application form.
- (b) The form is in 3 parts, Part I: Summary of the proposal; Part II: Details of the proposal; and Part III: University's endorsement, commitments and declaration of research ethics / safety.
- (c) For applications which have genuine special needs to be completed in a language other than English, applicant(s) / university(ies) are required to provide an English version on the Abstract and Proposal Details (i.e. Impact and objectives; Background of proposal and motivation; and Plan(s) for purchase or establishment of equipment / facilities, and engagement of research supporting staff) in pdf file format.
- (d) In order to ensure consistency and fairness to all applicants, applicants must complete the applications, **including attached pdf documents**, in the following standard RGC format. **Failure to comply with the application format and/or the allowable page may lead to disqualification of the application.**

Font: Times New Roman

Font Size: 12 point

Margin: 2.5cm all round

Spacing: Single-line spacing

PDF version: compatible with Adobe Acrobat Reader 5

- (e) All sections of the relevant parts should be completed. Where information sought is not applicable or not provided under a particular section, insert “NA” or “Nil”.
- (f) Please mark the project reference number at the top-right hand corner of each page for easy identification. This project reference number should be used and quoted in all future correspondence. Format of the project reference number should be as follows:

“JLFS/[Field Area (i.e. M/E/P)]-[University Code][2-digits serial number]/18”

- (g) Each application should be submitted in **two hard copies and one soft copy** (allows search function and with size up to 5MB per proposal saved in a CD / USB flash drive) to the University Grants Committee (UGC) Secretariat through the Research Offices of respective universities **by 5:00 p.m. on 25 February 2019.**
- (h) To help reduce the cost of processing and save paper, applicants are urged to keep the length of proposals and attachments to the minimum and use double-sided printing / photocopying when making copies. It is important that applicants should comply with the page / word limits specified in various sections of the application form. Applications will be disqualified if the proposals are found to have exceeded the allowable page / word limits in various sections or have abused the purpose of the “Supporting Documents” in Section 13 of Part II of the application form (only letter(s) of collaboration and supporting documents for the purpose of research ethics / safety approval are allowed to be attached. Supplementary materials such as papers, manuscripts, publications or detailed research work are not acceptable). Unless otherwise instructed, applicants should not make use of Section 13 to supplement the contents of other sections.
- (i) It is the obligation of the Project Coordinators (PCs) to ensure that their respective applications contain sufficient information, comprehensible to both specialists and non-specialist, for evaluation. Incomplete submission (such as those lacking substantial data / information for evaluation) or inconsistent / inaccurate information would lead to the disqualification of an application.
- (j) Applicants are not allowed to mention anything not related to the research proposal per se in the application form (such as describing the funding rules) with a view to communicating to the reviewers that the latter should give a certain rating if they intend to support the projects. Should such act be discovered, the applications concerned will be disqualified.

- (k) Applicants are prohibited to communicate with RGC Council and JLFS Selection 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.
- (l) PCs should include the project costs only (excluding on-costs) in the application.
- (m) Unless otherwise stated, all funding levels stated in this application form are in Hong Kong Dollars.

INFORMATION UPDATE

- (n) A brief update of the proposal, if any, should be submitted to the UGC Secretariat on or before **23 April 2019**, indicating any significant changes, e.g. changes in the eligibility of the PC, investigator(s)'s CVs, alternative funding obtained, declarations of related research work, grant records, etc. It should be emphasized that such update should be confined to the above-said changes, and applicants should not use the opportunity to revise their proposals substantially. The information update in one hard copy should be appended to the proposal which should be submitted to the UGC Secretariat.
- (o) If an update is provided for ethics / safety approval for an application, the respective Research Offices should submit the relevant updated data to the RGC on or before **23 April 2019**. Submission of letters on ethics / safety approval is however not required at this stage, but such letters, if necessary, may need to be provided upon RGC's request.
- (p) If an update is provided for approval for access to Government / official / private data and records for an application, the respective Research Office should submit the relevant updated data to the RGC on or before **23 April 2019**. Evidence of approval should also be submitted at this stage.

ENQUIRIES

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

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

- (s) The RGC is fully committed to the principle of honesty, integrity and fair play in the conduct of its business. To uphold public trust and protect public interest, it is important for all applicants to note and observe the “RGC Code of Conduct” and “Extracts from the Prevention of Bribery Ordinance” at:
https://www.ugc.edu.hk/doc/eng/rgc/guidelines/code/code_of_conduct.pdf.

PART I SUMMARY OF THE PROPOSAL

[To be completed by the applicant(s)]

1. Particulars of the project

- (a)(i) Each application should be submitted with only one applicant nominated as the PC and no applicant should submit more than one application in this capacity. Other joint applicants will be regarded as Co-Principal Investigators (Co-PIs). Each Co-PI should have a clear, distinct and material role. Excessive number of Co-PIs should be avoided.

The PC of the JLFS project grant must be a member of the joint laboratory and an academic staff member of an UGC-funded university with conditions of employment meeting ALL the following requirements:

- (i) having a full-time¹ appointment in the university proper²;
- (ii) being in Staff Grades from “A” to “I”³ as defined in the Common Data Collection Format (CDCF) (i.e. from “Professor” to “Assistant Lecturer”, see Appendix B);
- (iii) being primarily engaged in and spending at least 80% of time in degree or higher degree work at the university proper; and
- (iv) salary being wholly funded⁴ by the university proper.

PCs falling in the following categories are subject to the following additional requirements besides meeting criteria (i) to (iv) above:

- (a) A newly appointed staff member should have formally entered into a contract of service with the university on or before 25 February 2019 and that his / her appointment would take effect on or before 1 May 2019.
- (b) A staff member employed on a fixed term contract should be eligible at the time of funding award being offered tentatively in June 2019 as well as throughout the whole project period; or
- (c) A visiting scholar should have a full-time employment at the university proper covering the whole project period.

An academic staff member who is engaged in non-degree programmes which are still funded by the UGC may also apply and serve as PC. Eligible staff in this category must be wholly funded from the General Funds of the university concerned.

Notwithstanding these, cases of exceptional circumstances may be considered by the RGC on a case-by-case basis. The university should

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

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

³ Excluding polytechnic staff grades.

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

seek the RGC’s special approval for such cases before submitting the application.

To ensure record accuracy and to facilitate identification of PCs, PCs should enter the name as shown on his / her Hong Kong Identity Card / passport (where applicable) and use the standardized format of names for all project team members including Collaborators as agreed with respective universities when submitting all RGC grant applications:

	PC Surname	PC Other Name *
e.g.	Chan	Peter Tai-wai
e.g.	Zhong	Yaping
e.g.	Robinson	Philip G

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

The applicant should indicate whether he / she or any of the team members is / are RGC Council / Subject Panel Member(s) as at the deadline of the application and provide the number of hours per week to be spent by the PC and each Co-PI on the proposed project.

The PC and each local project team member are required to provide an ORCID iD to facilitate identification of researchers. Overseas project team members are encouraged to provide one. ORCID iD can be registered for free at <http://orcid.org>.

- (a)(ii) The project title should be informative, but short and concise.
- (b)(i) In general, to facilitate the appointment of the right experts to evaluate the proposal, PC should select a specific primary field area as far as possible. If a PC selects a non-specific primary field area, i.e. Others, for his / her proposal, he / she must select a specific secondary area close to the field area of the proposal. The schedules showing the field area descriptions and the corresponding codes are at Annex B(1) to B(5) of Explanatory Notes for completing the Application Form for the General Research Fund (GRF2).

To indicate the cross-disciplinary nature of a proposal, a PC is allowed to select the secondary field area / code from a subject area which is different from that of the primary field area / code. Cross-disciplinary proposals will be evaluated jointly by experts from different subject areas. The RGC reserves the authority to decide whether an application is cross-disciplinary or not.

- (b)(ii) Please give a maximum of five keywords to characterise the work of the proposal. Applicants normally should not change any of the keywords.

- (b)(iv) JLFS projects to be funded should last for no more than **two** years.

- (c) A short abstract of a maximum of 400 words comprehensible to a non-specialist should be typed in the text box. This should be informative and indicative of the nature of research to be conducted. If a proposal is funded, the abstract of the proposal will be uploaded on the RGC website for public's information. The applicant will be approached for a Chinese version of the abstract for public access shortly after the announcement of the funding results, or an English version if the original abstract is presented in Chinese.

PART II DETAILS OF THE PROPOSAL

[To be completed by the applicant(s)]

RESEARCH DETAILS

This is the major portion of the application. It should be presented clearly and concisely and at the same time be detailed enough to indicate the significance and merits of the proposed research and to permit a meaningful evaluation of the worthiness of the project. The RGC will not further process the application if insufficient / incomplete information is provided on the application form.

1. Impact and objectives

- (a) The impact and objectives of the proposal must be limited to 800 words. State the purpose of the proposal and identify the key issues and problem being addressed. The key issues and the elements of the problem should be described and those elements which are critical to the solution of the problem should be clearly identified. Also, state the possible outcome of the project, its relevance, significance and value, such as contribution to academic, educational, scientific or professional development or potential for practical application.
- (b) The objectives of the project and reasons for undertaking the project must be presented in point form.

[A maximum of 13 A4 pages in total in Standard RGC format for Sections 2, 3(a) to 3(g), excluding references which will be separately provided at Section 3(h)]

2. Background of proposal and motivation

State whether work has been / is being carried out by you and/or others on a related subject. Outline what motivates you to undertake the proposed research, previous and alternative approaches to the problem and their deficiencies, and list key references to relevant research by you and others. If the proposal arises from an on-going research, give an update of the progress of the research concerned.

3. Project description

- (a) A complete description of the plan for purchase or establishment of equipment / facilities, research materials, and/or research related software licenses or datasets, including specifications, list of vendors, quotations, service contract, delivery time, and any further development plan. Where appropriate, experiments, tests and required facilities should be described. The relevant scientific principles and techniques on which the problem solution depends should also be presented. Outline uniqueness and justification of the proposed approach with its plan of investigation, giving citation from literature where applicable.

- (b) A complete description of the plan for engagement of research supporting staff for assisting the development and/or operation of the equipment / facilities.
- (c) A brief description of the key research projects to be supported by the equipment / facilities, and the possible outcome of the research projects. Also, articulate how the proposal, if funded, could come up with something innovative in addition to the research work that is being conducted.
- (d) A one-page Gantt chart showing the project activities should be given.
- (e) If the equipment / facilities is / are intended to be share-used within or outside the joint laboratory, applicants are required to describe potential users other than project team members, and provide plans for facility(ies) management and user training.
- (f) Applicants are required to describe the governance and sustainability plan for the equipment / facilities and the maintenance plan for the anticipated useful life of the equipment. This allows the reviewers to have more information to ensure effective use of public resources and uphold the principle of value for money when considering the applications.
- (g) Applicants are required to elaborate on the expected deliverables of the project; how the deliverables are related to the project objectives or can enhance the research capacity of the joint laboratory; and how the effectiveness of the project on enhancement of the research capacity of the joint laboratory can be measured.
- (h) The page limit of Sections 2, 3(a) to (g) does not include references. All references should be provided in full and include all authors.

4. Re-submission of a proposal not supported previously

- (a) Applicants need to provide details in case the proposal is a re-submission (submitted to the UGC / RGC before) or is largely similar to a proposal that has been submitted to the UGC / RGC or other funding bodies. It is the responsibility of the applicants to declare clearly and honestly whether the proposal is a re-submission. Applicants should re-visit the main concerns / suggestions previously expressed by external reviewers if an earlier / similar version of the proposal has been assessed before. The RGC reserves the right to discount the rating of an application for its failure to acknowledge the fact that it is a re-submission of a previous application.
- (b)&(c) These sections allow the applicant to respond to those comments, and explain whether and what changes have been incorporated in the latest proposal. Some external reviewers' comments may be more agreeable / disagreeable than others. However, if a rebuttal is offered, it should be

scholarly and preferably measured. Under the existing policy, re-submitted proposals will be treated as fresh applications in a peer review and handled in an identical manner to other new applications. Although the JLFS Selection Panel will take into account the PCs' responses to reviewers' comments, the JLFS Selection Panel is not obliged to invite the same group of external reviewers for assessment of the new application.

PROJECT FUNDING

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

While RGC may fully or partially fund the approved projects, universities 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.

Permissible items

- A detailed budget for the project throughout the project period should be given. PC and Co-PIs are not regarded as project staff and their salaries must not be paid from RGC's project fund. Academic staff remunerated by any UGC-funded universities in Hong Kong must not be paid with honorarium or other forms of payment.
- The estimated costs should not include any "hidden" costs covered by recurrent block grant expenditure, such as the normal salaries of teaching staff who spend a portion of their time on research, cost of utilities, stationery, etc. They should include only expenditure which are directly related to the proposed project and would not otherwise be separately incurred, for example, salaries of technician specifically employed for the set-up of equipment / system funded by this project.
- In cases where a particular Research Assistant (RA) is employed for several projects, his salary should be apportioned accordingly.
- Detailed justification should be provided. Otherwise, the RGC will not consider the request.

5. Cost and justification

(a)

(i)&(iii) Equipment / Facility, Research Materials and Research-related Software License / Dataset

Please itemize all expenses for purchase or establishment of equipment / facilities, research materials and research-related software license / dataset. RGC fund should not be used to purchase personal electronic devices such as cell phones, iPods, iPad, MP3 Players, digital cameras and PDAs except with sound justification as approved by the RGC. In addition, the RGC will not provide funding for the purchase or use of standard equipment such as desktop PCs, servers, laptop computers, printers and scanners known to be available, or reasonably expected to be provided in the universities concerned. Universities may be required by the RGC to confirm the availability of university's resources prior to their acceptance of an award. This is what the RGC means by "university's commitment".

The following points should be addressed:

- Why is / are the equipment / facility / research materials / research-related software license / dataset essential?
- Has the joint laboratory / university already provided such equipment / facility / research materials / research-related software license / dataset?
- Is there similar equipment / facility / research-related software license / dataset elsewhere in other universities and what is the possibility of sharing?
- Cost of equipment / facility / research-related software license / dataset – evidence showing that major discounts have been secured / are being secured. Information supporting the estimated cost of equipment / facility / research-related software license / dataset must be given e.g. quotes from suppliers. Items costing over \$200,000 and without supporting quotations will NOT be considered.

Please mark respective item number(s) clearly in the quotation(s). The quotation(s) must be submitted together with the application on or before the deadline of submission of applications. No late submission will be accepted.

For purchase of equipment / facility / research-related software license / dataset at or over \$2.5 million, the following supplementary information is required:

- Has the joint laboratory / university already been provided with similar equipment / facility / research-related software license / dataset? If yes, please explain the need for the purchase.
- Is there similar equipment / facility / research-related software license / dataset available elsewhere in other universities? If yes, please provide the following information regarding such equipment / facility / research-related software license / dataset in other universities as far as possible:
 - brand / model details and the year of purchase of the equipment / facility;
 - details and the year of purchase of the research-related software license / dataset;
 - the number of hours of its utilization and/or percentage of utilization (say per month or per year as appropriate);
 - the estimated number of hours (say per month or per year as appropriate) available for use by other universities per year;
 - whether and how it can perform more / less functions and capabilities than the equipment / facility under application;
 - whether there is a practice of shared use of the equipment / facility / research-related software license / dataset with other universities currently and in the past two years; and
 - any other reasons that preclude the shared use of the equipment / facility / research-related software license / dataset with other universities.
- Level of use: please provide the estimated number of staff members and/or students expected to use the equipment / facility / research-related software license / dataset under application and the estimated number of hours per annum of utilization.
- Will the equipment / facility / research-related software license / dataset be available for use by universities / institutions / organisations other than the collaborating universities / institutions / organisations under the application? If yes, please state the extent of shared use by other universities / institutions / organisations such as the number of hours available for sharing per week.

(a)(ii) Research Supporting Staff

Please state the number, rank, duties, duration and cost of staff involved, with justifications for the proposed rank and duration. The applicant is required to justify the need of research supporting staff. The grant only supports the remuneration of personnel who are directly involved in the assisting the development and/or operation of the equipment / facility of the project concerned. The rates for RA and Senior Research Assistant in the

academic year 2018/19 are \$275,000 per annum and \$441,000 per annum respectively. The rates are only meant for reference. The rates will be reviewed regularly by the RGC. The total staff costs supported will then depend on the indicative rates or the rates proposed by the applicants concerned, whichever is lower.

- (c)&(d) Please confirm whether or not the requested equipment / facility / research-related software licence / dataset is available in the joint laboratory. If yes, please explain why such related equipment / software cannot be used by the applicant(s).

6. Existing facilities and major equipment available for this research project

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

7. Funds secured or to be secured

Other sources of funds can include private donations, awards or grants from other organizations, contract research funds from commercial enterprises or special allocations made by the university from the block grant or the indicated grant for equipment, etc. It should be noted that the amount secured from other sources will be deducted from the total cost of the project in Section 5(a) of Part II.

The RGC has the sole discretion in deciding the final funding. Even if the proposal is fully funded as requested, the RGC funds must not be spent on items that are prohibited unless it is explicitly allowed by the RGC.

PROJECT TEAM

8. Particulars of PC and Co-PIs

- (a) This section should summarize the qualifications of the PC and each Co-PI(s) who will be involved in the project. The CVs to be attached should include the following information, as appropriate:

Name, academic qualifications, previous academic position(s) held (with date(s)) & present position (state if applicant is a visiting academic from overseas), previous relevant research work, publication records including the five most representative publications in the recent five years and five representative publications beyond the recent five years (10 at maximum) and others including research-related prizes and awards, brief description of experience in consultancies, service as a referee in evaluating other grant applications, patents, PhD theses supervised, etc.

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

Each CV should be limited to either two A4 pages in standard RGC format as stated in Section (d) under "General" of the Explanatory Notes.

- (b) Please give details of the plan of collaboration. The role and specific task(s) of each individual (including the PC and Co-PIs) in the proposed research should be described clearly. If the research involves collaboration with other research team(s) and/or university(ies), letter(s) of collaboration should be attached to Section 13.

This section should be limited to either two A4 pages or a maximum of 800 words in standard RGC format as stated in (d) under "General" of the Explanatory Notes. .

DECLARATION OF RELATED PROPOSALS / EQUIPMENT / FACILITIES & GRANT RECORD

9. Declaration of similar equipment / facilities

PC and Co-PIs should declare if there is similar equipment being set up or already set up elsewhere in Hong Kong and/or the laboratory of the Mainland partner.

10. Declaration of Related Proposals and Grant Record of Project Coordinator / Co-Principal Investigators

It is the responsibility of applicants (both PC and Co-PI(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. Failure to declare related projects / proposals (irrespective of whether submitted to / funded by UGC / RGC and not limited to those in the past five years) in these sections may result in disqualification of the application and debarring from applying for future UGC / RGC grants. PC / Co-PI(s) are required to declare if there is any related research work that is being / has been conducted in relation to the proposal; and provide clarifications that 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 two proposals / projects / research work are similar. The judgement of the RGC is final. Therefore, it is always advisable for the PC or the Co-PI(s) to declare related research work when there is uncertainty. The PC or the Co-PI(s) are advised to make the declaration and elaborate the difference in the proposals / projects to avoid misunderstanding. Declaration of related proposals / projects / research work does not necessarily mean that the proposals concerned will be adversely affected. The RGC may still fund the proposals concerned if the applicants are able to justify the differences of the proposals / projects / research work for separate funding.

- (a) For the PC, please provide details on each of the research projects / proposals undertaken / submitted by the PC (in capacity of PC / PI / Co-PI / Co-I) including
- (i) research projects funded from all sources (irrespective of whether from UGC / RGC) that was completed in the past five years;
 - (ii) on-going research projects funded from all sources (including project(s) funded but yet to commence; irrespective of whether from UGC / RGC); and
 - (iii) proposals pending funding approval (irrespective of whether submitted to UGC / RGC).

Please also provide the objectives for each of the completed / on-going / pending projects / proposals under (i), (ii) and (iii) as well as the number of hours per week spent on each of the on-going projects (except the involvement as Co-I in General Research Fund / Joint Research Schemes projects funded by RGC) under (ii).

The PC should declare (iv) any related research work that is being / has been conducted in relation to the proposal (irrespective of whether from UGC / RGC and not limited to the past five years), 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. Please provide the details of the related research work (such as the title of the projects and/or papers / publications, or a brief description of the preliminary research work, etc.) whether or not such work was part of a funded project; and provide clarifications that distinguish that related research work from the work requested to be funded through this proposal. Any researcher who fails to disclose any related research work that is being / has been conducted in relation to the proposal will be subject to disciplinary action.

- (b) For each Co-PI, please provide details on each of the research projects / proposals undertaken / submitted by each Co-PI (in capacity of PC / PI / Co-PI / Co-I) including:
- (i) on-going research projects funded from all sources (irrespective of whether from UGC / RGC); and
 - (ii) proposals pending funding approval (irrespective of whether submitted to UGC / RGC).

Please also provide the number of hours per week spent on each of the on-going projects (except the involvement as Co-I in General Research Fund / Joint Research Schemes projects funded by RGC) under (i).

Each Co-PI should declare (iii) any related research work that is being / has been conducted in relation to the proposal (irrespective of whether from UGC / RGC and not limited to the past five years), 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. Please provide the details of the related research work (such as the title of the projects and/or papers / publications, or a brief description of the preliminary research work, etc.) whether or not such work was part of a funded project; and provide clarifications that distinguish that related research work from the work requested to be funded through this proposal. Any researcher who fails to disclose any related research work that is being / has been conducted in relation to the proposal will be subject to disciplinary action.

ANCILLARY INFORMATION

11. Research Ethics / Safety Approval and Access to Government / Official / Private Data and Records

(a) Research Ethics / Safety Approval

It is the responsibility of the university and the PC 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 or 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 PC. The PC's university is required to complete and sign Part III of the application form to confirm whether the research proposal involves human subjects and certify whether the relevant approval is required and if required, the relevant approval has been given / is being sought.

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

It is the responsibility of the university and the PC 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 PC. The PC's university is required to complete and sign Part III of the application form to confirm the relevant approval, if necessary, has been given / is being sought.

For both Section 11(a) and (b), applications should not be submitted unless the approval of the appropriate authority(ies) has / have been or is / are being sought. The RGC will regard the applications as being withdrawn if no confirmation of approval is provided to the RGC by **23 April 2019**.

If the university / PC declared that no approval was required but the RGC / JLFS Selection Panel eventually considered otherwise, the related application may be disqualified.

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

Release of completion report

PCs 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 PC) to the public through the RGC website. PCs 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.

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

Public access of publication resulting from research funded by the RGC

- (i) Upon acceptance of a paper for publication resulting from the work done on a research project funded in whole or in part by the RGC, the PC 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 PC's university's repository for open access;
- (ii) if both (i) (A) and (B) are not allowed, the PC should request the publisher's permission to place either version in his / her university's repository for restricted access immediately upon publication or after an embargo period of up to twelve months if required by the publisher; and
- (iii) subject to the publisher's agreement on (i) or (ii) above, the PC should deposit a copy of the publication in his / her university's repository as early as possible but no later than six months after publication or the embargo period, if any.

13. Letters of Collaboration and Supporting Documents

Only letter(s) of collaboration and supporting documents (e.g. ethics / safety approval letters) are allowed.

Other than the abovementioned, applicants should not make use of this section to supplement the contents of other sections. Applications will be disqualified if the proposals are found to have abused the purpose of this section.

The PC should confirm that the Co-PIs and Collaborators listed in the proposal have explicitly agreed to serve in the project team and a copy of the proposal has been provided to each Co-PI. Further documentary proof on the collaboration should be provided upon request of the RGC / UGC Secretariat.

**PART III UNIVERSITY'S ENDORSEMENT, COMMITMENTS AND
DECLARATION OF RESEARCH ETHICS / SAFETY**

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

1. University's Endorsement

The university should confirm that it has evaluated and given support to the application before submission to the RGC. The university is also required to confirm that (i) the PC is a member of the joint laboratory as stated in Section 1(a) of Part I of the application form and has been endorsed to submit the application on behalf of the joint laboratory; (ii) the PC fully meets the criteria for the grant under JLFS; and (iii) the applicants will have the number of hours per week as declared in Section 1(a) of Part I of the application form to supervise the proposed project without prejudice to his / her existing commitment in other research work, teaching and administrative duties.

The university is also required to report to the RGC immediately if a PC subsequently becomes ineligible for the grant and recommend to the RGC for approval a suitable new PC, if any, to take over / conclude the commenced project.

2. University's Commitments

(a)&(b) The university is required to verify and confirm whether the application is in line with its role, and that adequate supervision, research facilities and training provisions are in place to meet the need of RPg students so employed under the research grant if the application is supported by the RGC. Nevertheless, it should be also made clear that the primary duty of the PC of the grant is to complete the project according to plan and that the training of students should not be used to justify any delay in project completion nor unsatisfactory project performance.

(c) to (e) For items (c) to (e), please see the notes for Section 5 in Part II.

(f) To safeguard the interests of the researcher and the university, universities bear primary responsibility for prevention, detection and investigation of research misconduct, including but not limiting to misusing of funds, data falsification, plagiarism and seeking duplicate funding for projects which the applicant has already completed partially or entirely. University is strongly advised to use anti-plagiarism software before submitting the application to the RGC and verify if this application has been scanned by anti-plagiarism software in item (f) and provide reason(s) for not doing so.

3. Research Ethics / Safety Approval and Access to Government / Official / Private Data and Records

- (a) The university should confirm that the approval of the appropriate authority(ies) has / have been or is / are being obtained in respect of projects involving safety hazards or the use of living animal or human subjects, including those in social sciences research (e.g. potential physical or psychological harms, discomfort or stress to human subjects in a research project, subjects' privacy, etc.). It should be noted that all applications must be vetted by the universities to ascertain if they involve human subjects. All approval / exemption of research ethics / safety must be obtained by **23 April 2019**. If the university is unable to confirm by 23 April 2019 that the required approval and/or exemption has / have been obtained, the RGC will stop processing the application which will be regarded as to have been withdrawn.
- (b) The university should confirm that the approval of the appropriate authority(ies) has / have been or is / are being obtained in respect of access to data / records critical to the proposed research. If the university is unable to confirm **by 23 April 2019** that the required approval has been obtained, the RGC will stop processing the application which will be regarded as to have been withdrawn.

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

Part III should be completed by the appropriate administrative authority or responsible person(s) in the university.

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UGC Secretariat
December 2018

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

Purpose of Collection of Information and Personal Data

1. Information and personal data contained in your research grant application are collected for the following purposes:

- (a) determination of your eligibility, as a staff member of a UGC-funded university, to apply for a competitive grant from the Research Grants Council (RGC);
- (b) assessment of the merits of the research proposal which you have submitted for funding support;
- (c) assisting the RGC committees / subject panels in identifying external reviewers to assess your research proposal;
- (d) compilation of periodic reports and statistical returns for analysis and research by the RGC / UGC in relation to the use of public funds;
- (e) sharing of data with other government departments / research funding agencies for the avoidance of duplicate funding; and
- (f) for successful projects, such data will be used for project monitoring, promotion, publicity and may also be published on the RGC website.

Handling of your information and personal data

2. Your research proposal including your personal data (e.g. CVs) will be handled with care by the RGC. Staff of the UGC Secretariat, members of the RGC and RGC committees / 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 committees / panels 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 committees / panels, 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 universities.

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
Research Grants Council
7/F Shui On Centre
6-8 Harbour Road
Wanchai
Hong Kong

Fax: 2845 1183

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STAFF GRADES, Modes and Funding Sources

Academic Grades

Academic, Senior

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

Academic, Junior

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

Academic Supporting Staff

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

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

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

Non-Academic Grades

Non-academic, Senior

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

Non-academic, Junior

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