

**RESEARCH GRANTS COUNCIL**  
**GENERAL RESEARCH FUND**  
**FOR INDIVIDUAL RESEARCH (TIME-OFF)**

**Supplementary Notes for Applicants**

These notes provide supplementary information, in addition to the Explanatory Notes (GRF2) for completing the Application Form, for applicants of the General Research Fund (GRF) seeking support for individual research.

**Objective**

2. The existing GRF funding template has been modified to better support research conducted by individual researchers. Through university's arrangement for period(s) of time-off, academic staff may be released from teaching and administrative duties to concentrate on the proposed research full-time.

**General Framework**

3. The support for individual research is open for applications in the fields of Humanities & Social Sciences and Business Studies only.

4. The GRF applications for individual research will be considered alongside with other GRF applications by the same subject panel at the same time, and evaluated according to the same criteria. There is no preference for one type of proposal over the other: the principal consideration being the quality of the proposals.

5. Existing GRF holders are eligible to apply for the RGC's support for individual research. Holders of the GRF for individual research are not eligible to hold another GRF for individual research at the same time, although holders of this support may hold other RGC or non-RGC grants concurrently.

6. This support for Individual Research enables the Principal Investigator (PI) to take time-off to carry out research in an individual and independent manner, in contrast to the conduct of research through supervision of research staff (e.g., Research Assistants). The PI may collaborate with others so long as individual ownership of a distinctive piece of work can be demonstrated.

7. The time-off is to be achieved through re-arrangements of teaching schedule, utilization of summer vacation or entitled sabbatical.

8. The research may be performed in or out of Hong Kong as justified by the nature of the research (e.g. location of archives or subject populations). Within a typical project of 24 to 36 months duration, the minimum period for time-off is four consecutive months, and the maximum period is 12 months in total. All (overseas)

trip(s) must be completed within the project duration. Applicants should apply for time-off from their respective universities that suit their schedules and needs of the project.

9. During the time-off the PI is expected to work full-time on the proposed research. He / she should not accept any teaching assignment (invited seminars and public lectures excluded) or undertake any other major research activity.

10. The time-off is intended mainly for field work, site visits, interviews, library or archival research, etc. The time-off is not primarily for solitary contemplation or extensive writing, as these activities can take place outside the period of time-off during the project duration.

11. Upon receipt of this support, the PI should ensure that teaching duties are rearranged. Failing that the RGC will withdraw the award.

### **Points to Note in Completing the Application Form (GRF1)**

12. Before applying for RGC's support, the PI should approach his/her respective university to seek an agreement-in-principle on the re-arrangement of his / her teaching schedule to allow for the proposed time-off.

13. Under "Research Plan and Methodology", the PI should include period(s) of the proposed time-off and the expected research activities to be conducted.

14. Under "Cost and Justification", the PI should include only expenses arising directly from the proposed research. Examples of these include: airfare, accommodation and travel per diem of the PI in overseas (if out of Hong Kong); hiring of temporary staff (such as local guides, porters or assistants) for on-site work; conference attendance. Expenses covered by recurrent block grant expenditure should not be included.

15. A standard provision of \$20,000 per grant per year may be provided for travelling in connection with attending conference / meetings outside Hong Kong.

UGC Secretariat  
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