

RESEARCH GRANTS COUNCIL (RGC)

POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP SCHEME (PDFS) 2024/25

Guidance Notes (PDFS-2) for completing the Nomination Form

All nominees and supporting universities should read the *Guidance Notes* as well as *Operation Guide for the RGC Postdoctoral Fellowship Scheme (PDFS)* carefully before completing and submitting the nomination. A nomination may not be processed if it is found not to have complied with any of the requirements set out in the Guidance Notes.

PREAMBLE

- (a) These notes are intended to be read by the nominee/ related staff of supporting university before completion and submission of a PDFS nomination.
- (b) The nomination form (PDFS-1) contains 10 sections from A to J. **All sections of the form should be completed. The nominee is required to complete Sections A to H, and the supporting university should complete Sections I and J.** Where information sought is not applicable or not provided under a particular section, insert “N/A” or “Nil”. The section numbers in these notes correspond to those in the nomination form. Not all sections are explained in these notes.
- (c) In order to ensure consistency and fairness, all nominees and nominating / supporting universities must complete the nominations, **including the appended pdf attachments**, in the following standard RGC format. **Failure to comply with the following format may lead to disqualification of nominations.**

Font : Times New Roman

Font Size : 12 point

Margin : 2.5 cm all round

Spacing : Single-line spacing

PDF version: compatible with Adobe Acrobat Reader 6

- (d) **The deadline for submission of nomination is 5:00 p.m. of 31 October 2023 (Tuesday).** One soft copy in text-searchable PDF (with related PDF attachments if applicable) and two hard copies (including the original version) of each nomination are required to reach the UGC Secretariat by the deadline. The content of the soft and hard copies must be identical. Please name the soft copy using the RGC reference number. The soft copy of the nomination should be saved in one DVD/ USB memory stick as far as possible. Late submission

will not be entertained.

- (e) The RGC reference number should be used and quoted in all future correspondence. The number is in the format of “PDFS2425” + dash “ - ” + **one-digit university code + selection panel code (“H” or “S”) + two-digit ordinal number (e.g. PDFS2425-3H01)**. Details of the last three components of the number are set out as follows:

(i) One-digit university code

Please refer to the list below:

1. City University of Hong Kong
2. Hong Kong Baptist University
3. Lingnan University
4. The Chinese University of Hong Kong
5. The Hong Kong Polytechnic University
6. The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology
7. The University of Hong Kong
8. The Education University of Hong Kong

(ii) Selection panel code

H – Humanities, Social Sciences and Business Studies Panel

S – Sciences, Medicine, Engineering and Technology Panel

(iii) Two-digit ordinal number

It indicates the order of nomination case(s) made by the supporting university for each selection panel in this exercise (e.g. H01 to H05 and S01 to S07).

- (f) In view of the substantial amount of data involved, the supporting university is required to submit the nominations together with a summary of critical information (in Excel table format, template to be provided to the Research Office under separate cover by email) on all nominations made in this exercise. The completed critical data file (in Excel) should reach the UGC Secretariat via email by the deadline (i.e. **5:00 p.m. of 31 October 2023 (Tuesday)**).
- (g) To help reduce the cost of processing and save paper, nominees and supporting universities are urged to keep the length of research plan and attachments to the minimum by using double-sided printing/ photocopying when making copies. It is important that nominees and supporting universities should comply with the page/ word limits specified in various sections of the nomination form.

- (h) In case more than one nomination of the same candidate are received by the UGC Secretariat, the candidate concerned would be requested to indicate his/her preferred supporting university before the assessment stage commences. Only the nomination by the candidate’s preferred supporting university will be processed further.

SECTION A PARTICULARS OF THE NOMINEE

- (a) To ensure record accuracy and to facilitate identification of the nominee, his/her name on the Hong Kong Identity Card/ Passport (where applicable) should be used and entered in the standard RGC format:

	Surname (in capital letters)	Other Name*
e.g.	CHAN	Peter Tai-wai
e.g.	ZHONG	Yaping
e.g.	ROBINSON	Philip

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

- (b) In view of heightened personal privacy concern, the nominee is only required to provide the first 4 characters of HKID/ Passport number (e.g. A123XXXX).
- (c) Please provide the required details of the nominee, including his/ her Open Researcher and Contributor ID Identifier (ORCID iD).
- (d) Please select a panel to assess the nomination. The RGC shall have the discretion to decide on the selection panel responsible for the final assessment of each nomination.
- (e) For S-Panel nominees, please declare whether you are applying or will apply for the “Jockey Club Global STEM Postdoctoral Fellowship for Translational Research and Application” this year. Please note that candidates applying for the “Jockey Club Global STEM Postdoctoral Fellowship for Translational Research and Application” will not be considered for the PDFS fellowship in the same year. Such candidates’ nominations for PDFS will be deemed as withdrawn from the supporting university in the exercise concerned.

SECTION B ACADEMIC REFEREES

- (a) The Academic Referee’s Report Form (PDFS-3) should be forwarded to each

of the nominee's two academic referees.

- (b) The referee's report should be written by those who know the nominee well rather than providing just another recommendation letter from the supporting university. The two academic referees should be familiar with the nominee's academic achievements and research ability.
- (c) The proposed postdoctoral supervisor(s) of the nominee during the fellowship period is/ are not allowed to be the nominee's academic referee(s). Please see (b) of Section I for more details.
- (d) Persons from non-academic background are considered not appropriate to act as academic referees.
- (e) The referee's report should be entirely written by the academic referees, who should return their completed report directly to the supporting university for their inclusion in the submission of nomination.
- (f) The referee should refrain from mentioning the name of the supporting university to enable blind review to be conducted.

SECTION C ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS

- (a) Both the nominee and the supporting university are responsible for ensuring the authenticity of the attached documents and the accuracy of information in this section.
- (b) Please ensure that soft copies of each graduation certificate and official transcript are provided in a legible manner.
- (c) If the nominee has not obtained/ been conferred a PhD degree or an equivalent qualification at this stage, please provide (i) a letter preferably from the Registry/ Graduate School concerned, or from the Faculty/ School/ Department concerned, proving the status/ progress of the PhD degree including the expected month of award; and (ii) the unofficial transcript for the PhD study.

SECTION D PUBLICATIONS AND OTHER RESEARCH OUTPUT, PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS, PRIZES AND AWARDS, AND TRAINING

- (a) Both the nominee and the supporting university are responsible for ensuring the authenticity and accuracy of information in this section.

- (b) Please attach a list of publications, and provide the number of journal articles/ book chapters/ conference papers published.
- (c) For details of the most representative publications, please attach, if applicable, (dated) letter/ email of acceptance for publications not yet published but have been formally accepted by journal/ publisher/ conference after the completion of review process of the publications.
- (d) If applicable, please provide details of research output other than publications (e.g. creative works) to demonstrate your research productivity.
- (e) Please provide details of the most representative professional qualifications, prizes and awards attained which may reflect properly the nominee's academic capability and research potential.
- (f) Please provide details of training received that is relevant to the nominee's proposed research/ research project to be assigned to the nominee during the fellowship period.

SECTION E PROPOSED RESEARCH

- (a) Please refrain from mentioning the name of the supporting university and the name of any serving academic in the supporting university to enable blind review to be conducted.
- (b) The **project title** should be informative, but short and concise.
- (c) The nominee should confirm his/ her **research field area(s) and code(s)**, lists of which are provided in Annex A. To facilitate the appointment of the right experts to evaluate the proposal, the nominee should select a specific primary field area as far as possible. If the nominee selects a non-specific primary field area, i.e. Others, for his/ her proposal, he/ she must select a specific secondary field area close to the field area of the proposal.
- (d) A short **abstract** of a maximum of one A4 page comprehensible to a non-specialist should be provided. This should be informative and indicative of the nature of the research to be conducted.
- (e) The **objectives** of research must be presented in point form. Reasons for undertaking the research shall be provided. Nominees are required to identify the key issues and problems being addressed. The key issues and the elements of the problem should be described and those elements which are critical to the solution of the problem should be clearly identified. On proposals concerning Creative Arts, nominees should ensure that proposals submitted to the RGC should contain research elements which contribute to academic attainments.

- (f) For **potential impact**, nominees are required to state the possible outcome(s) of the research, its relevance, significance and value, such as contribution to academic, educational, research or professional development or potential for practical application.
- (g) For **background of research, research plan and methodology**, please state whether work has been / is being carried out by the nominee and/ or others on a related subject. Outline previous and alternative approaches to the problem and their deficiencies, list key references to relevant research by the nominee and others. For continuation of previous projects, the progress made and results achieved during the previous years should be clearly summarised. The summary should be sufficiently detailed to allow an evaluation of the worthiness of the project for continuation of support. For new projects, the reasons for investigation and the relevant findings should be clearly demonstrated.
- (h) A complete description of the research plan, the selected approach to the problem solution and a Gantt chart (if applicable) showing the research activities should be given. Where appropriate, experiments, tests and required facilities should be described. The relevant research 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.
- (i) Nominees are required to list the name of journal, conference or other dissemination means, e.g. book chapter, for dissemination of research output. Illustrations are confined to a maximum of one A4 non-text page for diagrams, photos, charts and tables etc., if any.
- (j) All references, with a maximum of two A4 pages, should be provided in full and include all authors. Generally accepted citation format (e.g. American Psychological Association (APA) format) should be used.

SECTION F PAST RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

- (a) Please elaborate related experience or participation in research projects, while refraining from mentioning the name of the supporting university and the name of any serving academic in the supporting university to enable conduction of blind review.

SECTION G LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

- (a) Please elaborate leadership experience as well as achievements inside and outside academia, while refraining from mentioning the name of the supporting university and the name of any serving academic in the supporting university to enable conduction of blind review.

SECTION H WORK EXPERIENCE

- (a) Please provide details of any relevant work or employment experience for the nominee.

SECTION I UNIVERSITY ASSESSMENT

- (a) Prior to submitting a PDFS nomination to RGC, the supporting university should conduct interview assessment with the potential nominee on his/ her academic strength, research ability and potential, degree of fitness, leadership, etc., and provide the assessment results and related information in this section for the selection panel's information/ reference. This is an important part of the nomination process and universities should ensure they provide sufficient details for the nomination to be assessed in a competitive context.
- (b) Comments of the proposed postdoctoral supervisor(s) on the nominee's academic strength, research ability and potential, etc. should be presented/ incorporated in this section as appropriate.
- (c) Please refrain from mentioning the name of the supporting university and the name of any serving academic in the supporting university to enable conduction of blind review.

SECTION J UNIVERSITY STATEMENT ON SUBMISSION

- (a) The appropriate authority within the nominating university should complete this section, including confirmation of the eligibility of the nominee for the PDFS and confirmation of the university's commitment to the terms of the fellowship award related to employment, funding, monitoring and reporting.
- (b) This section must be signed by the representative of the supporting university.

ENQUIRIES

- (a) Enquiries about the content of this set of Guidance Notes and other related matters about the PDFS should be directed to the Research Offices of the Universities first. Research Offices, if in doubt, should consult the UGC Secretariat (via email to PDFS@ugc.edu.hk) for clarification. Also, correspondence regarding PDFS matters including enquiries, appeals and complaints should be made through the Research Offices of the Universities.
- (b) The guidelines on handling the information and personal data contained in PDFS nominations are set out at Annex B.

UGC Secretariat
August 2023

**List of Research Field Areas and Codes
for Sciences, Medicine, Engineering and Technology**

Biological Sciences

(Subject Area: M1)

<u>Field Area</u>	<u>Code</u>
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
Neuroscience	1129
Plant Sciences / Plant Biology	1130
Stem Cell Biology	1131
Virology	1132
Others (please specify)	1199

Medicine, Dentistry & Health

(Subject Area: M2)

<u>Field Area</u>	<u>Code</u>
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
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

Medicine, Dentistry & Health

(Cont'd) (Subject Area: M2)

<u>Field Area</u>	<u>Code</u>
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
Personalised Medicine	1252
Rehabilitative and Physical Medicine	1254
Stem Cell Therapy	1256
Others (please specify)	1299

Civil Engineering, Surveying, Building & Construction

(Subject Area: E1)

<u>Field Area</u>	<u>Code</u>
Building & Construction	2101
Environmental	2102
Geotechnical	2103
Structure	2104
Surveying	2105
Water	2106
Transportation	2107
Urban Development	2108
Others (please specify)	2199

Computing Science & Information Technology

(Subject Area: E2)

<u>Field Area</u>	<u>Code</u>
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 (please specify)	2299

Electrical & Electronic Engineering

(Subject Area: E3)

<u>Field Area</u>	<u>Code</u>
Communication	2301
Electronics	2302
Photonics	2303
Signal & Image Processing	2305
Bioelectronics	2306
Power Electronics	2307
Power System	2308
Microwave and Terahertz Engineering	2309
Others (please specify)	2399

Mechanical, Production & Industrial Engineering

(Subject Area: E4)

<u>Field Area</u>	<u>Code</u>
Design	2401
Engineering Management	2402
Fluid	2403
Marine Engineering	2404
Materials	2405
Mechanics & Dynamics	2406
Operations Research	2407

Mechanical, Production & Industrial Engineering

(Cont'd) (Subject Area: E4)

<u>Field Area</u>	<u>Code</u>
Production & Manufacturing	2408
Robotics & Automation	2409
Textile	2410
Thermal	2411
Biomechanics	2412
Fuel Engineering	2413
Others (please specify)	2499

Chemical Engineering

(Subject Area: P1)

<u>Field Area</u>	<u>Code</u>
Chemical Engineering	3101
Biophysics	3102
Energy	3103
Environmental Sciences	3104
Biochemical Engineering	3105
Food Science and Technology	3106
Others (please specify)	3199

Physical Sciences

(Subject Area: P2)

<u>Field Area</u>	<u>Code</u>
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 (please specify)	3299

Mathematics

(Subject Area: P3)

<u>Field Area</u>	<u>Code</u>
Applied Mathematics	3301
Pure Mathematics	3302
Probability & Statistics	3303
Mathematical Finance and Insurance	3304
Others (please specify)	3399

**List of Research Field Areas and Codes
for Humanities, Social Sciences and Business Studies**

Psychology and Linguistics

(Subject Area: H1)

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

Social and Behavioural Sciences

(Subject Area: H2)

<u>Field Area</u>	<u>Code</u>
Anthropology	4101
Public Administration & Political Science	4105
Sociology	4106
Architecture	4401
Law	4402
Nursing	4408
Public Health	4409
Social Work	4410
Social Services / Management	4411
Urban Studies and Planning	4412
Visual Design (including advertising, graphic, visual communication, digital media)	4414
Product Design (including fashion, industrial, product)	4415
Environmental Design (including interior design, space design)	4416

Social and Behavioural Sciences

(Cont'd) (Subject Area: H2)

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

Humanities and Arts

(Subject Area: H3)

<u>Field Area</u>	<u>Code</u>
Media and Communication	4151
Literature	4204
Creative Arts: Dance	4207
Creative Arts: Dramatic Arts	4208
Creative Arts: Music	4209
Creative Arts: Visual Arts (including Drawing, Painting, Sculpture, Film and Photography)	4210
Creative Arts: Writing	4211
Film, Visual and Media Studies	4221
History	4213
History of Arts	4214
Musciology / Music History	4215
Translation Studies	4216
Cultural Studies / Cultural Policy	4222
Philosophy	4218
Religious Studies	4219
Sexuality and Gender Studies	4220
Journalism and Media	4407
Contemporary Art	4420
Area Studies (including Japanese Studies, China Studies, European Studies)	4421
Chinese History (including Socio-economic, Military, Legal Social and Cultural History)	4422
Classical Chinese, Chinese Thought and Paleography	4423
Hong Kong Studies	4424
Others – relating to Humanities and Arts (please specify)	4299

Education

(Subject Area: H4)

<u>Field Area</u>	<u>Code</u>
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

Business Studies

(Subject Area: B)

<u>Field Area</u>	<u>Code</u>
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 (please specify)	5199

Handling of Information and Personal Data
Contained in PDFS Nominations

Purpose of Collection of Information and Personal Data

1. Information and personal data contained in the PDFS nomination are collected for the following purposes:
 - (a) determination of the eligibility of nominee concerned for the award of PDFS fellowship;
 - (b) assessment of the merits of the research proposal/ plan submitted;
 - (c) compilation of periodic reports and statistical returns for analysis and research by the RGC/ UGC in relation to the use of public funds;
 - (d) sharing of data with other government departments/ research funding agencies for the avoidance of duplicate funding; and
 - (e) for successful nominations, such data may be used for project monitoring, promotion, publicity and may also be published on the RGC website.

Handling of Information and Personal Data

2. The nomination including personal data 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 the nominee wants to exclude any individuals from access to the submitted information, please inform the RGC separately at the juncture of submission of nomination.

Physical Retention of Nominations

3. Nominations 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.

Right of Access to Personal Data

4. Notwithstanding the arrangement described above, nothing in this note will affect the legal right of nominee concerned to request access to personal data held by the RGC about his/ her nomination 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

5. 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) Special Duties 1
Research Grants Council
7/F Shui On Centre
6-8 Harbour Road
Wanchai
Hong Kong

Fax: 2845 1183

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