

**Research Grants Council
Research Impact Fund**

Basis for Evaluating Research Proposals

In evaluating research proposals under the Research Impact Fund (RIF), we put equal weights to both Academic Merit and Potential Research Impact. Details are set out in the following paragraphs —

A. Academic Merit

The academic merit of the proposal is rated using the following 7-point scale:

Point	Detailed Description
5	Outstanding and internationally excellent. Provides full and strong evidence and justification for the proposal. Should be accorded the highest priority for funding.
4.5	Demonstrates very high international standards. Provides strong evidence and justification for the proposal. Should be funded as a matter of priority.
4	Demonstrates high international standards and provides good evidence and justification for the proposal. Worthy of consideration of funding.
3.5	Demonstrates good international standards but in a competitive context, it is not of sufficient priority to recommend for funding.
3	Has adequate qualities but is not internationally competitive. Not recommended for funding.
2	Has some strengths and innovative ideas but also has major weaknesses and flaws. Not recommended for funding.
1	Has numerous and significant weaknesses and flaws. Not recommended for funding.

Similar to other funding schemes administered by the Research Grants Council (RGC), the following criteria would be considered when assessing the fundability of a proposal:

- (a) the academic merits;
- (b) the long term goal of the proposal and its potential to develop into an area of strength;
- (c) the opportunities for effective synergism among the participating researchers, research groups and universities;
- (d) the viability of the proposal, particularly in terms of its project management. The project team's ability to put in place an effective governance structure to ensure prudent deployment of resources would be important considerations.
- (e) the originality and innovative aspect of the proposal and the advances the research result would bring about to the related field if the proposed research is successful;
- (f) feasibility in implementation;
- (g) any additional support, on top of the mandatory 30% from university/ organisational partner(s); and
- (h) maximum value of money.

B. Potential Research Impact

The potential research impact of the proposal is rated using the following 7-point scale:

Grade	Detailed Description
5	Outstanding impact in terms of their reach and significance.
4.5	Very high impact in terms of their reach and significance.
4	High impact in terms of their reach and significance.
3.5	Moderate impact in terms of their reach and significance.
3	Some impact in terms of their reach and significance.
2	Limited impact in terms of their reach and significance.
1	The impact is of either no reach or no significance.

The RGC values both local and global impact as well as both short and long term impact. Whether the impact is substantial is the critical factor.

Potential research impacts will be assessed in terms of their reach and significance, regardless of the geographic location in which they occurred. The criteria of ‘reach and significance’ will be understood as —

- (a) ‘reach’ is the extent and/or breadth of beneficiaries of the impact; whereas
- (b) ‘significance’ is the degree to which the impact has enabled, enriched, influenced, informed or changed the products, services, performance, practices, policies or understanding of commerce, industry or other organisations, governments, communities or individuals.

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