

RESEARCH GRANTS COUNCIL

Hong Kong PhD Fellowship Scheme 2024/25

Guidance Note for Applicants

The Guidance Note should be read by applicants before their completion and submission of their Hong Kong PhD Fellowship Scheme (HKPFS). Please ensure that you read this Guidance Note carefully before completing and submitting your initial application. The Research Grants Council (RGC) may stop processing your application if your application does not meet the requirements set out in this Guidance Note.

SCHEME PROCESS

- (a) The deadline for the submission of initial application for the HKPFS is **1 December 2023 at 12:00 noon Hong Kong time**. Late submissions will not be considered.
- (b) Applicants should note that the online application system, Hong Kong PhD Fellowship Scheme Electronic System (HKPFSES), will **time out automatically after idling for 30 minutes**. All unsubmitted entries will be lost upon system time-out.
- (c) Initial application, excluding this Guidance Note, is composed of the following sections:
 - A. Personal Particulars
 - B. Choice of University(ies) and Programme(s) for PhD Study
 - C. Authorization and Declaration
 - D. Source of Information
- (d) In order to ensure consistency and fairness to all applicants, **each applicant should only submit one initial application** through the HKPFSES at <https://cerg1.ugc.edu.hk/hkpfs/InitApplication.jsp>. In the event that an applicant is found to have submitted more than one initial application, all applications submitted by the same applicant for the HKPFS will be **disqualified** even if the applicant is nominated by an university to compete for the HKPFS award. In case multiple initial applications have been made by mistake, applicant is advised to contact HKPF@ugc.edu.hk immediately for assistance **before the initial application deadline**.

- (e) The initial application form, except for the field requiring the input of applicant's Name in Chinese (if applicable), must be completed **in English**.
- (f) Upon submission of the initial application, an HKPFS Reference Number will be automatically generated and assigned for each applicant. An email confirmation stating the **HKPFS Reference Number** and details of the **log-in password** will be sent to the email address specified by the applicant. Applicants are strongly advised to **save and / or print out the email confirmation** for future reference. The **HKPFS Reference Number [PF23-xxxxx]** must be quoted by the applicant in all correspondence with the RGC and in all applications to the chosen University Grants Committee (UGC)-funded universities as indicated in this initial application. An applicant will need to log-in using the HKPFS Reference Number and log-in password if he/she wishes to change the choice of universities/department/programmes at a later stage.
- (g) Applicants **may make changes** to choice(s) of university / department / programme **until** the closing of initial application deadline. However, only two choices saved in the HKPFSES as at the deadline will be processed. **The RGC will not accept any subsequent changes / requests of change of application from applicants after the initial application deadline.**
- (h) After completing an initial application, applicants should submit a **full application to the chosen university(ies)** quoting the HKPFS Reference Number **before the university's deadline. Different universities may have their own submission deadlines, and applicants are reminded to take note of them carefully.** Information on the submission deadlines of the eight participating universities is available at <https://cerg1.ugc.edu.hk/hkpfs/apply.html>. **An initial application that is not followed up with a full application to university will be considered void and it will not be processed further by the RGC.**
- (i) Applicants should ensure the completeness, accuracy and consistency in the data submitted to the RGC through the HKPFSES and information submitted to individual university. Any incompleteness, inaccuracy or inconsistency may lead to an application not being considered under the HKPFS.
- (j) Information provided through the HKPFSES will be cross-checked with the information contained in applications submitted to universities for verification purposes. The cross-checking will be done in such a way that in cases where an applicant chooses and submits full application to more than one university, each university is only aware of the submission to itself and not of the other submission.

- (k) Applicants must comply with the admission and application requirements of individual university concerned. Individual university will usually conduct interviews with applicants as part of the assessment for selection. For programme information, requirements for PhD admission, application methods and deadlines, regulations and policy of individual university, please check with individual university concerned.
- (l) Universities will nominate selected candidates to the RGC to compete for the HKPFS award. **In the event that an applicant is nominated by two universities, the RGC will only process the nomination tendered by the university for which the applicant has indicated priority and subsequent award of fellowship by the RGC will also be according to the indicated priority of the applicant.** If an applicant selects two different programmes within the same university and is nominated, the university shall have the discretion to decide on which programme it supports the nomination.
- (m) Applicants who are not selected for the award of HKPFS may be accepted by a university for regular PhD admission and may be offered a postgraduate studentship or other funding support by the university.
- (n) The email account provided by the applicants in the initial application will be used by the RGC in future correspondence, including award of fellowship, with the applicants.
- (o) Enquiries concerning the HKPFS should be made using the applicants' e-mail account specified in the initial application to HKPF@ugc.edu.hk quoting the HKPFS Reference Number. Questions regarding admission requirements as well as other university's information should be directed to the relevant universities. Information of the eight participating universities is available at <https://cerg1.ugc.edu.hk/hkpfs/institutions.html>.
- (p) **The RGC does not charge any application fee for HKPFS.** However, universities may charge application or other processing fees. Please check with the universities of your choice for details.
- (q) The RGC will **only** notify successful applicants the offer of fellowship awards by email and letter. The results will be announced in May 2024 at https://www.ugc.edu.hk/eng/rgc/funding_opport/hkpfs/funded_research.html. The decision of the RGC is final and the RGC will not provide feedback to individual applicant.

- (r) The RGC reserves the right to amend the information contained in the Guidance Note and the related application form at any time at its discretion without prior notice. The RGC has the sole right and discretion on the interpretation of the Guidance Note and other arrangements relating to the application, implementation and operation of the HKPFS.

Research Grants Council
August 2023