

Terms and Conditions of Postgraduate Studentships

The terms and conditions (T&C) in this document apply to all postgraduate studentships (PGSs) granted to research postgraduate students (RPgs) in HKUST irrespective of the sources of funding. The sources of funding may include the University Grants Committee (UGC), Research Grants Council (RGC), research grants secured by individual faculty members, donations and a combination of different sources. These T&C also apply to stipends granted under special award schemes like the Hong Kong PhD Fellowship Scheme (HKPFS) and Asian Future Leaders Scholarship Program (AFLSP).

A. Purpose and Nature of PGSs

1. PGSs are a form of financial support provided to full-time RPgs to ensure that they do not need to be concerned with looking for other sources of income to support themselves.
2. Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTA) engagement is an integral part of the RPg training and not an employment. All full-time PhD/MPhil students are required to act as GTAs. As such, PGS should not be mistaken as the remuneration for GTA duties. Given that students receiving PGSs do not enter an employer-employee relationship with the University, the PGS award is not taxable income.

B. Eligibility

1. PGSs are given based on academic merit including English language proficiency, and the suitability of the RPgs for the program of study.
2. Full-time regular RPgs, except those on "Off-campus Study" status, are eligible to be considered for PGS.
3. Holders of other scholarships/awards may be considered for receiving PGS on a case-by-case basis, with support from the respective Schools/Interdisciplinary Programs Office. HKPFS and AFLSP awardees will be awarded the respective Fellowship/Scholarship in lieu of the PGS.

C. Duration and Amount

1. Selected students will be notified of the PGS award granted to them in the admission offer letters. The PGS will be awarded on the condition that the student registers as a full-time research postgraduate student at HKUST in the specified program of study.
2. PGSs are offered at most for one academic year. Awards for subsequent academic year(s) will be reviewed on an annual basis and determined before the beginning of each academic year.
3. Students will receive PGS in each calendar month starting from September in Fall and February in Spring. Under special circumstances, a student may start his/her study substantially after the term has commenced and the PGS provided will be adjusted accordingly on a pro-rata basis.
4. The PGS rate (see table below) is reviewed annually and may be adjusted upward or downward. The regular PGS rate listed in the table below is applicable to all RPg students. However, a PhD student who has passed the qualifying examination and has done well in his/her work may receive a higher rate starting from the Fall/Spring term immediately following the passing of the qualifying examination, subject to availability of top-up funding from the respective department/supervisor. The post-qualifying examination rate is capped at the amount shown in the table below.

Academic Year	Regular PGS (per month)	Maximum Post-Qualifying Examination PGS (per month)	Stipend for HKPFS and AFLSP Awardees
2022/23	HK\$18,030	HK\$18,527	Please refer to the HKPFS/AFLSP award offer
subsequent year(s)	Subject to review and adjustment		

- 5 In case situation warrants, the HKUST Fok Ying Tung Graduate School (FYTGS) may consider approving an exceptionally higher PGS rate on a case-by-case basis. Where top-up beyond the post-qualifying examination rate is needed, neither UGC nor RGC funding may be used.
- 6 English language proficiency is a factor in granting PGS to a student. In general, students are expected to have passed the English Language Proficiency Assessment (ELPA) Speaking Test administered by the Center for Language Education (CLE) or the English course, LANG 5000, by the end of the first term of their study at HKUST. Failure to do so may result in 25% reduction of PGS in the following term, except in the case that exemption from ELPA is granted by CLE.
- 7 The PGS award is reviewed on a yearly basis, subject to satisfactory academic performance, research progress, English language proficiency, and GTA performance. Students not performing satisfactorily in their program of study may result in reduction or suspension of PGS, normally with at least one month's written notice from the respective academic unit.
- 8 Faculty members may continue to provide PGS to students under their supervision, who are studying beyond their normative study period, subject to availability of funding from sources other than UGC and RGC funding.

D. Suspension and Termination

1. Being full-time RPg students, PGS recipients should devote full efforts to their studies. They are not allowed to take up any part-time work, winter/summer work, or internship. Engagement in unauthorized work will lead to termination of PGS.
2. During Winter or Summer Term, an RPg may, subject to [prior approval](#), engage in full-time research assistantship (RA) work within the University, under the condition that his/her PGS will be suspended during RA employment period. As the RA engagement is an employment in nature, non-local students must be mindful that they comply with the conditions of their stay as laid down by the Immigration Department of the HKSAR.
3. PGS recipients shall comply with the relevant leave guidelines as stated in the [Handbook for Research Postgraduate Studies under "Study Commitment"](#). Unauthorized leave will result in immediate suspension of PGS.
4. In the case that a student takes leave from study or is required to take academic leave, the PGS will be suspended during the leave period, or from an earlier date as advised by the department/division. PGS will also be suspended if a student is exceptionally approved under special circumstance to take leave additional to the annual leave.
5. A graduating student will receive PGS payment up to and including the month that he/she submits the final thesis to the Academic Registry.
6. Under exceptional circumstances and with the support of respective Dean's Office/Interdisciplinary Programs Office and FYTGS, the termination of a PGS award may be effective immediately without prior notification.

HKUST Fok Ying Tung Graduate School (FYTGS)

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