

# RESEARCH GRANTS COUNCIL

## Hong Kong PhD Fellowship Scheme

### Terms and Conditions

1. The Hong Kong PhD Fellowship (“the fellowship”) Scheme is administered by the Research Grants Council (RGC) for selected candidates admitted as new full-time PhD students in University Grants Committee (UGC)-funded universities of Hong Kong.
2. An awardee of the fellowship (“awardee”) must be a registered full-time PhD student of the university specified in the offer letter during the fellowship period.
3. In the event that the programme offer made by the university is conditional, the candidate concerned must comply with the conditions before he/she is eligible for the fellowship.
4. An academic year normally runs from July to June of the subsequent year. Subject to the agreement of the university concerned, an awardee’s student candidature may start from 1 July the earliest. Under normal circumstances, an awardee should register in September, but he/she may delay the student registration to 31 January of the subsequent year, the latest, if justifiable reasons are provided and accepted by the RGC as well as the university concerned.
5. The fellowship provides each awardee with a monthly stipend and an annual conference and research related travel allowance<sup>1</sup> (“annual travel allowance”) for a period up to three years. The rates of monthly stipend and annual travel allowance for the 2023/24 academic year are HK\$27,600 and HK\$13,800 respectively and will be revised according to the Composite Consumer Price Index (CPI) announced by the HKSAR Government in July annually<sup>2</sup>.
6. Normally, an awardee is not permitted to concurrently register at another tertiary institution. If concurrent registration takes effect without prior approval from the RGC, the fellowship will be terminated and the awardee is required to refund the fellowship received after the effective date of

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<sup>1</sup> The eligibility and disbursement of the research related travel allowance are subject to the prevailing practice and policy of the university concerned.

<sup>2</sup> The rates of monthly stipend and annual travel allowance will be reviewed annually, and universities will be informed of the new rates at the beginning of each academic year.

concurrent registration.

7. An awardee is not permitted to undertake any part-time or full-time paid employment during the fellowship period unless exceptional approval has been given by the RGC with strong justification and support from the affiliated university.
8. An awardee must observe all rules, regulations and requirements prescribed by the university concerned. In the event that he/she is expelled from the university in the course of the studies, the RGC may at any time prematurely terminate the fellowship.
9. Provided that the regulation of the university concerned so allows, an awardee is entitled up to 30 days of non-academic leave<sup>3</sup> each year and the unused non-academic leave may be carried forward to the following years. The university concerned has the discretion to grant approval on non-academic leave applications so long as the limit stated above has not been exceeded and any leave taken does not exceed 30 consecutive days. If the proposed non-academic leave to be taken will exceed the aforementioned limits, prior approval from the RGC is required. Fellowship during non-academic leave taken above the said limits will be suspended.
10. An awardee is required to comply with the residence requirement of the affiliated university. Subject to this, he/she may spend an aggregate period of up to 183 days outside Hong Kong for academic/research activity in the three-year fellowship period. If an awardee stays outside Hong Kong for academic/research activity for an aggregate period exceeding 90 consecutive days, or an aggregate of 183 days, the stipend will be suspended immediately unless prior approval by the RGC has been given upon provision of strong justification by the affiliated university.
11. An awardee's eligibility for the fellowship will be reviewed on an annual basis during the fellowship period. The evaluation is based on the awardee's academic performance, supervisor's evaluation, and the degree of intellectual well roundedness as assessed by the university. Subject to the recommendation and endorsement from the relevant university, an awardee will be eligible to receive the fellowship in the subsequent year.
12. The fellowship shall be discontinued/terminated in either of the following situations:
  - i. change of programme of study without the approval of the RGC;
  - ii. drop out from the university during the fellowship period;

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<sup>3</sup> If non-academic leave entitlement of the affiliated university is less than 30 days each year, regulation of university concerned shall prevail.

- iii. early completion of the programme by the awardee;
  - iv. dismissal of the awardee by the university;
  - v. unsatisfactory progress of studies as determined by the university; and
  - vi. termination of study by the university.
13. In the event that any misrepresentation, fraudulent, and non-disclosure of information during the application stage is detected, the fellowship shall be terminated immediately, and the awardee concerned is liable to refund in full the stipend and travel allowance paid under the Hong Kong PhD Fellowship Scheme.
14. An awardee is obliged to take part in activities to promote the Hong Kong PhD Fellowship Scheme when necessary.
15. The above terms and conditions may be revised from time to time by the RGC. In the event that changes are made, the updated terms and conditions will always supersede earlier versions, and the awardees will be informed of the changes accordingly.

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**UGC Secretariat**  
**March 2023**