

# THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

## (AAPC Paper)

### Internal Guidelines for the Second Research Matching Grant Scheme (RMGS)

#### Timeframe and Coverage

1. As announced in the 2024 Policy Address, the Government will launch the second Research Matching Grant Scheme (RMGS) totalling HK\$1.5 billion.
2. Pending the release of the official Operation Guide, the University Grants Committee (UGC) has shared the proposed operational arrangements for the Second RMGS.
  - (a) The Scheme will be implemented for four years from 1 May 2025 to mid-2029 (the four-year period), and will cover 8 UGC-funded universities (including their self-financing arms/ units but excluding their non-local extension arms) and 13 local self-financing degree-awarding institutions.
  - (b) The maximum amount of matching grant permissible for each institution (“the ceiling”) is HK\$200 million, which will be awarded on a first-come-first-served basis, based on the bank-in date of **donations and research grants/research contracts received from non-Government/non-public sectors designated solely for research-related expenditure/purpose** (“research funding”).
  - (c) For each eligible institution, the Government will provide HK\$1 matching grant for HK\$1 research funding received by the University on the first HK\$20 million (“the floor”), and after reaching the floor, HK\$1 matching grant for every HK\$2 research funding received by the University for the rest of the pool on a competitive basis up to the ceiling of HK\$200 million. Therefore, in order to reach the ceiling, the University needs to obtain research funding amounting to HK\$380 million (or more) during the effective period of RMGS.
  - (d) To promote continuous collaboration between the universities/institutions and interdisciplinary sectors, for each year within the four-year period, the UGC will apply an **annual upper limit** to the total amount of matching grants to be disbursed by the Government (**2025-26: HK\$300 million; 2026-27 to 2028-29: HK\$400 million**), as well as the matching grants to be received by each institution (**HK\$60 million**). This will encourage the universities/ institutions to sustain efforts in expanding research funding sources.

Financial Year	Application Timetable	UGC Annual Upper Limit	Institutional Annual Upper Limit
2025-26	1 <sup>st</sup> cycle: 1/5/2025 – 31/10/2025 2 <sup>nd</sup> cycle: 1/11/2025 – 31/12/2025	\$300 million	\$60 million
2026-27	1 <sup>st</sup> cycle: 1/1/2026 – 30/4/2026 2 <sup>nd</sup> cycle: 1/5/2026 – 31/10/2026 3 <sup>rd</sup> cycle: 1/11/2026 – 31/12/2026	\$400 million	\$60 million
2027-28	1 <sup>st</sup> cycle: 1/1/2027 – 30/4/2027 2 <sup>nd</sup> cycle: 1/5/2027 – 31/10/2027 3 <sup>rd</sup> cycle: 1/11/2027 – 31/12/2027	\$400 million	\$60 million
2028-29	1 <sup>st</sup> cycle: 1/1/2028 – 30/4/2028 2 <sup>nd</sup> cycle: 1/5/2028 – 31/10/2028 3 <sup>rd</sup> cycle: 1/11/2028 – 31/12/2028	\$400 million	\$60 million

### Internal Threshold and Matching Formula

3. Matching grants will be allocated on a first-come-first-served basis. In view of the annual upper limit imposed by the UGC, and in order to incentivize Principal Investigators to maximize the solicitation of research funding for RMGS, the University would operate under the following policies:
  - (a) For the sake of cost effectiveness, the University will adopt an internal threshold of HK\$500,000 or above for research funding to be submitted for application of RMGS.
  - (b) For fair and easy administration, a uniform allocation ratio of HK\$1 research funding eligible for RMGS: HK\$0.5 matching grant will be adopted, subject to the University obtaining the maximum amount of matching grants within each cycle. Research funding received will be matched on a pro-rata basis once the competitive pool of RMGS has been exhausted or the institutional upper limit/ ceiling of the University has been reached, whichever is the earlier.

### Eligibility and Uses

4. Eligibility and uses of research funding or matching grant for the Second RMGS have not been announced yet. Below are the eligibility criteria of research funding that can be matched and the permissible usage of Government matching grants from the First RMGS for reference.
  - 4.1 The faculties/research institutes and centres/departments/units have the responsibilities to ensure that the funding submitted for application to RMGS comply with the eligibility criteria.
    - (a) Only donations and research grants/research contracts from non-Government/non-public sectors to the universities/institutions during the four-year period will be eligible for matching. Accordingly, reimbursement to research projects ended before the start of RMGS will not be eligible for matching.

- (b) Research grants/research contracts from non-Government/non-public sectors refer to R&D initiatives commissioned/supported by a non-Government/non-public funding source, including but not limited to that from local charities/foundations, industry, as well as other local and non-local funding sources<sup>1</sup>.
- (c) There should be no “double matching” or “double subsidies”. In other words, projects having secured various public/Government funds from local (including the Innovation and Technology Fund, research grants from the UGC and Research Grants Council, funding from the Hong Kong Jockey Club, funding from the MTR Corporation Ltd) /non-local authorities (including cross-boundary Mainland public funding, Government/public funds from regions outside Mainland), and donations/research grants/research contracts already matched with public funds under other matching schemes will not be eligible for any matching grants under RMGS.
- (d) Donations/research grants/research contracts received and matching grants obtained under RMGS should be designated solely for research-related expenditure/purpose. Examples of such expenditure/purpose include but are not limited to:
  - (i) purchase of major research equipment;
  - (ii) purchase of research-related/technology licence;
  - (iii) expenses for application for patent (research purpose);
  - (iv) staff costs of research personnel charged solely for the research initiative/project/activity under RMGS. Any indirect costs (i.e. “on-costs”) arising from R&D projects/activities will not be eligible for matching;
  - (v) costs of setting up research facilities (including rental, operation and maintenance expenses, while government matching grants are not applicable to capital works for UGC-funded universities);
  - (vi) provision of support for researchers’/students’ research activities monitored by universities/institutions, including research scholarship, students visiting overseas institutions for research-related work, visit for research collaboration with overseas institutions, attending academic conferences, etc.; and
  - (vii) provision of research fellowship or research award.
- (e) Since RMGS aims at facilitating research collaboration between the industries and the higher education sector, the matching grants should be used to support research directly, rather than for setting/topping up any endowment fund by a university/institution. Donations for setting up endowment fund will not be eligible for matching. That said, a specific amount drawn from an endowment and deposited in a separate account dedicated for a particular research project is eligible for matching.

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<sup>1</sup> For instance, funding from: Croucher Foundation (i.e. Croucher Innovation Award, CAS-Croucher Funding Scheme for Joint Laboratories; Croucher Senior Research Fellowships, Croucher Senior Medical Research Fellowship); S.K. Yee Medical Foundation; Lim Peng Suan Charitable Trust Research Fund; Microsoft Research Asia; Hong Kong Obstetrical and Gynaecological Trust Fund, are considered research grants from non-government/non-public sectors.

- (f) In line with the principle that a donation made by university/institution staff should be at arm's length, the recipient cannot be the donor. This means that staff members or their related companies making donations/research sponsorships to their own project are not eligible for matching, as independence from conflict of interest is dubious.
  - (g) While the list as given in para. 4.1(d) above is not exhaustive, the key element is that the donation/funding should be dedicated for research and development. Faculties/research institutes and centres/departments/units should provide brief description of the usage of expenditure or, as far as practicable, information on the research project/initiative/activity to be supported.
  - (h) The UGC Secretariat reserves the final right to define research-related purpose.
- 4.2 The matching grants will be deployed for the purpose of incoming research funding, unless otherwise specified by donors or beneficiary parties for such other research projects/activities that (i) fulfill the eligibility criteria of RMGS and (ii) are mutually agreed between the donors and the University.

### **Application Procedures**

- 5. The faculties/research institutes and centres/departments/units have to seek confirmation in advance that the donors are aware of, and have no objection to, their donations/research grants/research contracts being applied for matching. Please note that the University will not give consent to UGC to disclose the names of the donors/grantors/contractors on the UGC website.
- 6. Faculties may exercise their own discretion to prioritize applications in terms of funding size, nature or impact of funding purpose, etc., prior to the submission to Office of Institutional Advancement (OIA)/ Office of Research and Knowledge Transfer Services (ORKTS) for vetting.
- 7. To facilitate the processing of RMGS, the faculties/research institutes and centres/departments/units should report to respective offices for vetting the RMGS applications.:

#### Private donations to

Office of Institutional Advancement

Contact person: Ada Fung, email: [ada.fung@cuhk.edu.hk](mailto:ada.fung@cuhk.edu.hk), tel: 3943 7321

(Forms for RMGS can be downloaded from OIA website at  
<https://www.oia.cuhk.edu.hk/eng/policies-guidelines>)

Finance Office

Contact person: Ryan Wong, email: [ryan.wong@cuhk.edu.hk](mailto:ryan.wong@cuhk.edu.hk), tel: 3943 7271

Research grants/research contracts to

Office of Research and Knowledge Transfer Services

Contact person: Jang Sae-Pang, email: jangsae-pang@cuhk.edu.hk , tel: 3943 8929

Finance Office

Contact person: Angela Chan, email: angelachan@cuhk.edu.hk, tel: 3943 7250

Finance Office will compile RMGS reports to the UGC on a regular basis, and create respective project accounts.

8. The proposed operational arrangements for the Second RMGS issued by UGC is enclosed for reference. The official Operation Guide has not yet been released by UGC, but we will keep you informed as soon as it becomes available.

**Action Sought**

9. Research matching grants will be of great importance to the development of the University. AAPC is invited to consider and approve the above guidelines of the Research Matching Grant Scheme.

11 February 2025