



The Chinese University of Hong Kong-The University of Manchester Seed-corn Fund for Early Career Researchers 2021

Guidelines for Applicants

Deadline: Monday, 25th October 2021 (1500 Hong Kong Time, 0800 BST UK)

The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) and The University of Manchester (UoM) share a common vision to expand the frontiers of knowledge and contribute to the betterment of societies. To capitalise on the research strengths of both universities and to create greater impact, a Seed-corn Fund scheme and a Strategic Research Fund scheme were established to build and strengthen research collaboration between the two universities. A list of the projects supported in previous calls can be found on the [webpage](#).

The current call invites applications for the Seed-corn Fund. The overall aim of the fund is to seed partnership development between the two universities by providing initial support for high-quality research collaborations that include Early Career Researchers (ECRs). Funding is available for researchers at both universities to develop new partnerships that will lead to long-term collaborative research projects that can access external funding sources for the next phase of their research.

The fund is open for proposals across all research areas.

Activities and Scope of Support

Proposals may include targeted research support such as joint workshops, researcher exchanges, experiments, data collection, research seminars/presentations and the formation or development of a collaborative network. All proposals should include ECRs as active members of the research team and potentially as a Co-PI.

At UoM, an ECR is defined as an individual who is within six years of their first academic appointment. This duration excludes any period of career break. At CUHK, academic staff members who are Assistant Professors or below will be considered as ECRs in this scheme.

Proposals should fall into one of the following categories: **Peer-to-peer** (ECR–ECR as Co-PIs), **Developmental** (ECR–mid/senior career researcher as Co-PIs), where the project provides an ECR with research opportunities not otherwise available at their institution, or **Network** (multiple researchers at all career stages, including ECRs on both sides of the team).

Collaborators from other research institutions may participate in the joint research activities at their own expense, where the benefit of their involvement to the UoM-CUHK partnership is justified in the proposal.

Costs

Projects will be funded for a period of 12 months and should aim to start no later than January 2022.

The funding provided is intended to support expenses, including but not limited to costs of travel (PIs, post-doctoral fellows, research associates, graduate researchers) between the institutions, and necessary related consumables. Existing staff time including the Co-PIs time cannot be costed to the project.

Eligible Costs	Ineligible costs
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Travel costs including flights, hotels and subsistence• Experiments and consumables• Data collection• Directly incurred staff, e.g. Research Assistant• Costs associated with organising workshops and meetings• Publications	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Replacement research/teaching costs• Directly allocated costs including applicants' time• Indirect costs/estates costs• Equipment• Scholarships• Conference attendance• Tuition fees• Honoraria

Eligibility

To be eligible, a proposal must include a PI from UoM and CUHK and at least one other researcher from each institution under one of the three categories specified above.

UoM: Academic staff members from all disciplines and at all levels are welcome to apply.

Applicants do not need to have a permanent post, but they must have an existing contract at the time of application, and that contract must cover the full period of the grant.

Emeritus and honorary staff are not eligible to apply as Co-PI but may be members of the project team.

CUHK: Academic staff members holding full-time employment from all disciplines and at all levels are welcome to apply. Award holders are required to remain in university service for not less than a year upon completion of the activities in the proposal.

Funding

The funding envelope for the research fund comprises £15,000 from UoM and £15,000¹ from CUHK. We expect to award three projects in this round. Applications may request up to £5,000¹ (equivalent in HK\$) per project for the CUHK collaborator and £5,000 for the UoM collaborator for a funding period of one year.

Each institution will pay funds directly to its researchers. Approval of expenditure will be governed by each university for the portion of funding provided. PIs should adhere to the purchasing guidelines of the respective universities to which reimbursement is to be sought. Reimbursement of each expenditure item will be capped at the approved amount and should be made within one month from the time the purchase is made or the service is consumed. The PIs must seek approval from the respective universities should there be any change in the budget plan.

¹ To be provided in HK\$ using the exchange rate at the time of the award.

How to Apply

This is a joint call and one joint application per project should be submitted online using [SmartSurvey](#). The form can be previewed [here](#). The following documents should be submitted along with the application:

- Abbreviated Curriculum Vitae of the PIs with a selected list of publications (maximum 2 pages).
- A budget plan outlining all areas of expenditure, with an itemised breakdown and the cost to be borne by each university. It is expected that a similar level of activity will take place at both universities and applicants are advised where possible to split the cost more or less equally between the two universities.
- A support letter from the head of the home department and the collaborating school/faculty to show their involvement in the collaboration plan.
- **For CUHK staff:** An endorsement form to be completed by the CUHK heads of departments/units and faculty deans/directors of institutes to confirm their intention of renewing the applicants' contract, if applicable, and their support for the application. To download the form, please click [here](#).

Timeline

Call opens	Monday, 13 th September 2021 (1500 Hong Kong Time, 0800 BST UK)
Deadline for submission of proposal	Monday, 25 th October 2021 (1500 Hong Kong Time, 0800 BST UK)
Communication of results to applicants	Early December
Start date of Awards	January 2022

Evaluation Criteria

A joint review committee will assess proposals according to the academic merit and the following criteria (with equal weighting) within each of the three categories (Peer-to-Peer, Developmental, and Network), as well as the level of engagement with/involvement of ECRs:

- **Project design and rationale:** How clearly presented and justified is the design and basis for the collaboration? (25% of the evaluation score).
- **Project impact:** How clearly linked are the academic gains to the planned activities and performance indicators? (25%)
- **Impact of collaboration:** How strong is the link between the proposed collaboration and the research project? Would it be possible to complete the project and achieve the results without this partnership? (25%)
- **Capacity for future collaboration/funding:** What is the extent to which future collaborations are possible as a result of the proposed exchange activities? What is the ability of the proposed work to access future external funding? (25%)

Reporting

Successful applicants must, as a condition of receiving an award under this call, submit a joint report outlining the outcomes, project impact and opportunities for future collaboration within one month of completion of the project.

Other Information

The scope of support for travel, accommodation and subsistence is as below:

- **UoM:** As a guide for UoM staff, the costs of hotels in Hong Kong should be in the region of £130 per night and subsistence £40-50 per day. All flights and hotels should be booked through the University's approved supplier [Key Travel](#).
- **CUHK:** The costs of accommodation and subsistence are capped at the per diem allowance designated for the city to be visited. The rate of per diem allowance can be found on the [CUHK Finance Office website](#).
- Only economy class airfares are supported.

CUHK: CUHK award holders will be responsible for arranging the practicalities of the visit, if applicable. They include but are not limited to, traveling plans, visa application, accommodation, and personal health and hospitalisation insurance coverage as required.

For outgoing visits, CUHK award holders will normally be covered under the "[CUHK's Group Travel Insurance \(Staff\)](#)". Award holders are advised to purchase additional travel insurance as deemed necessary².

Information about this call

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² CUHK award holders are responsible for purchasing adequate insurance to cover for their visits. CUHK is not liable for any loss, damage, cost, or expense whatsoever incurred by or attributable to any action or omission by any of the award holders in accordance with this scheme.