

Research Grants Council announces funding results of General Research Fund and Early Career Scheme 2024/25

The following is issued on behalf of the University Grants Committee:

The Research Grants Council (RGC) today (June 27) announced the funding results of the General Research Fund (GRF) and the Early Career Scheme (ECS) for 2024/25. Altogether, 1 255 successful proposals were granted funding totalling \$1.1 billion.

In this round of exercise, the RGC received 3 533 GRF and 634 ECS applications from academic staff of the eight universities funded by the University Grants Committee. This represents an increase of 10 per cent and 21 per cent respectively as compared with that of last round.

After rigorous international peer reviews, 1 046 GRF projects were approved with a total funding of around \$980 million, which compares with that of last year, with an overall success rate of about 30 per cent. The funded proposals cover all the disciplines of business studies, biology and medicine, engineering, humanities and social sciences, and physical sciences.

Moreover, the RGC also decided to fund 209 ECS projects with a total amount of around \$140 million. This represents an increase of 12 per cent in terms of the number of projects funded, with an overall success rate of about 33 per cent.

The RGC Subject Panels commended the marked improvement in the overall quality of research proposals submitted under the GRF and ECS in recent years, including the originality of the proposals as well as the innovative methodologies that they put forward to tackle research questions. The research outcomes will support further development in various research fields.

The Chairman of the RGC, Professor Timothy W. Tong said, "It is heartening to see the enthusiasm of the Hong Kong research community in taking forward individual exploratory research as evidenced by the significant increase in the number of applications and the outstanding research quality in this round of exercise.

"The RGC endeavours to propel the growth of the thriving Hong Kong research ecosystem by administering different individual and collaborative research funding schemes. Amongst them, the GRF and ECS, which support all research disciplines for individual researchers, are instrumental in the Council's mission to develop a robust research base for maintaining academic vigour and catering to the needs of Hong Kong."

The RGC has stepped up efforts in recent years in supporting early-stage researchers in Hong Kong to further bolster Hong Kong's capacity as a world-leading education and innovation hub. Professor Tong said that it was encouraging to see an increased number of proposals funded under the ECS this year. The RGC looks forward to remarkable research outcomes from these talented individuals.

The GRF and the ECS are individual research funding schemes under the RGC. The GRF supplements universities' own research support for researchers who have achieved or have the potential to achieve excellence. The ECS aims to nurture junior academics and prepare them for a career in education and research. Following international practice, the RGC has adopted a peer-review mechanism to assess research proposals primarily based on academic quality and merit.

The 2024/25 funding results of the GRF and the ECS are available on the RGC website (GRF: ugc.edu.hk/eng/rgc/funding_opport/grf/funded_research.html; ECS: ugc.edu.hk/eng/rgc/funding_opport/ecs/funded_research.html).