

UGC allocates another \$100 million to support research related to COVID-19 and other novel infectious diseases

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

The University Grants Committee (UGC) and the Research Grants Council (RGC) today (January 18) announced the allocation of another one-off funding of \$100 million under the Collaborative Research Fund (CRF) to support the UGC-funded sector in conducting more collaborative research projects related to COVID-19 and other novel infectious diseases (NIDs). This followed their additional funding of \$250 million in May last year under the CRF and the Theme-based Research Scheme to support the UGC-funded sector in conducting research related to the same diseases.

The Chairman of the UGC, Mr Carlson Tong, said, "The rapid and unrelenting spread of COVID-19 has brought about a huge impact on people's livelihood around the world, including Hong Kong. We face unprecedented challenges not only to our public health system but also to education, business operation and all facets of life in our community. Even after the pandemic is eventually put under control, Hong Kong and the world will still have to recover and we will have to adjust our lives to the 'new normal'. Through the additional funding of \$250 million last year and the further allocation of \$100 million this year, the UGC would like to encourage the UGC-funded sector to conduct more research to address the implications of COVID-19 for Hong Kong society and also to better prepare us for any future epidemic."

He added, "Same as last year, while priority will be given to COVID-19 research and those projects that may be completed early, NID research in all facets and disciplines is welcomed. In particular, we call on the UGC-funded sector to actively respond to the 'new normal' as a result of the changes to our lives brought about by the pandemic, including conducting research on solutions that can help mitigate the impact on our society and people's livelihood, and better equip us should another NID emerge after we recover from this pandemic. We expect that the additional funding will support around 16 to 20 medium-size research projects."

The RGC issued an invitation to the UGC-funded universities today for submitting applications by the deadline of February 22, 2021. Further information is available on the website of the RGC (www.ugc.edu.hk/eng/rgc/funding_opport/crf/call_letter.html).