



## Terms and Conditions of Postgraduate Studentships (PGSs) 2016/17

### A. Purpose

1. Postgraduate studentships (PGSs) are awarded to full-time research postgraduate students (RPgs) of the University to provide them with financial assistance to cover their daily subsistence, tuition fees and other related expenses during the course of their study. The PGS is provided to ensure that full-time RPgs do not need to be concerned with looking for other sources of income to support themselves and should devote full efforts to their studies.
2. Awards given are based on academic merit, English language proficiency, and the suitability of the RPgs for the proposed program of study, as is the selection of applicants for admission to postgraduate studies.
3. PGS awards may be funded by the University, research grants secured by faculty members, donations, or a combination of these. The terms and conditions for PGS awards described here apply to all PGS awards, regardless of their source of funding.

### B. Eligibility

Only full-time regular RPgs of the University, except those on "Off-campus Study" status, are eligible to apply for PGS. Applicants who may simultaneously be recipients of government grants and loans will be treated on the same way in the selection process. Holders of other scholarships/awards may receive PGS provided that this does not violate the terms and conditions of the other scholarship(s)/award(s). The studentship is conditional on demonstrated competency in English that satisfies the requirements of the University as well as the home division/department/program office of the student concerned.

### C. Administration

The allocation and administration of PGSs to RPgs is the responsibility of the division/department/program office the RPgs are registered with.

### D. Duration and Amount

1. PGS award commences at the time when a full-time RPg begins his/her studies at the University. PGS may be offered, at most, for one academic year only. Awards for the subsequent academic year(s) will be reviewed and determined before the beginning of each academic year, subject to the availability of funding and satisfactory performance of the awardees.
2. The maximum PGS amount in the 2016/17 academic year is HK\$15,700, except for awardees of the Hong Kong PhD Fellowship Scheme (HKPFS), awardees of the Asian Future Leaders Scholarship Program (AFLSP), and full-time PhD students who have passed their qualifying examination and have done well in their work. The actual PGS rate a student receives is determined by the home division/department/program office. The PGS rate, subject to annual review, may be adjusted upward or downward.
3. As a general rule, PGS recipients who are studying beyond their normative period should be supported by sources other than UGC and RGC funding.
4. All new full-time RPgs are required to take a spoken English test administered by the Center for Language Education before the start of the first term of their study at HKUST. Students whose

test score is below the threshold score are required to take and pass an English language course, LANG5000, which has been designed to help improve their spoken English proficiency.

5. RPs whose spoken English test score was below the threshold score or who failed to take the test before the first term of study at HKUST are not allowed to take up teaching assistant duties which involve direct classroom interaction with students or any teaching-related duties which involve communication with students in spoken English until they have passed LANG5000. Divisions/Departments/Program Offices may link the performance of students in LANG5000 with the PGS rate those RPs receive by reducing the PGS rate by 25% for students who fail LANG5000 after the first attempt.
6. PhD students who have passed their qualifying examination and have done well in their work may receive, beginning from the next term following the passing of the qualifying examination, a higher PGS rate of no more than HK\$16,147. The actual PGS rate for these PhD students is determined by the home department. Any PGS amount higher than HK\$16,147 should be endorsed by the Office of Postgraduate Studies (PGSO) on a case-by-case basis. Neither UGC nor RGC funding may be used to support a higher rate of PGS to RPs. The division/department/program office's commitment to pay these higher rates can only be on an annual basis as the continued provision of PGS in subsequent years will depend on the performance and the study progress of the PGS recipients as well as funding availability.
7. For PGS recipients who take up accommodation provided by the University, room rental will be deducted from the PGS amount. Campus accommodation policies and details of accommodation arrangements can be obtained from the Student Housing and Residential Life Office, a sub-office of the Office of the Dean of Students.

#### **E. Other Conditions**

1. PGS recipients, including HKPFS and AFLSP awardees, are not employees of the University, and PGS/HKPFS/AFLSP award is not taxable income.
2. As the provision of PGS award is to ensure that subsistence living of recipients is covered, RPs should devote full-time efforts to their studies. During the Fall and Spring Terms, full-time RPs are not allowed to engage in any full-time or part-time employment with the University or any other employer. The only exception to the rule is that full-time RPs who are not receiving PGS may take up no more than 10 hours per week on-campus part-time work, subject to the prior approval of the student's thesis supervisor, the departmental PG coordinator, Associate Dean (PG) of the School, and PGSO. Non-local RPs must also satisfy the conditions of their stay laid down by the Immigration Department of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKImmDept).
3. During Winter or Summer Term, with the prior approval of the student's thesis supervisor, the divisional/departmental PG coordinator, Associate Dean (PG) of the School, and PGSO, an RP may engage in full-time research assistantship (RA) work within the University. In such cases, the PGS will be temporarily suspended during the period of employment as research assistants. Students who wish to take up an RA appointment should seek the prior approval of PGSO via their home department before they commit themselves for Winter or Summer RA work. Non-local RPs must also satisfy the conditions of their stay as laid down by HKImmDept.

4. All recipients of PGS, including HKPFS and AFLSP awardees, may be required to engage in ancillary duties related to teaching and/or research, which supplement their formal degree program. The nature of these assignments may vary from time to time according to need. However, they are limited to 36 effective hours per month on average. "Effective hours" include both contact hours and preparation time. In the case of research-related duties, if the duties performed by an RPg are directly related to his/her own thesis research or project, the 36-hour limit should not apply. Such duties are not considered to be "work" as mentioned in the preceding paragraph.
5. With the prior approval of the home division/department/program office, PGS recipients may have up to 21 calendar days' leave in an academic year (1 September to 31 August). This leave is inclusive of Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays that lie within the leave period. Those who arrive late will have their annual leave pro-rated. Unused leave for one year cannot be carried forward to the next academic year. The decision on whether or not a leave request should be granted rests jointly with the thesis supervisor of the RPg and the divisional/departmental PG coordinator.

#### **F. Termination**

1. PGS recipients not performing satisfactorily in their program of study, including their ancillary duties, or who fail to demonstrate competency in English that satisfies their home division/department/program office, may lose their award or receive a partial award, but normally with at least one month's written notice given by their home division/department/program office. Engagement in unauthorized work mentioned in Paras E1 to E3 above may also lead to the termination of PGS.
2. The PGS award is conditional on the PGS recipient undertaking and continuing full-time research postgraduate studies at HKUST. Unauthorized leave will result in the immediate cancellation of PGS without prior notification. One month's advance notice is not required in such circumstances.
3. A PGS recipient who takes more leave than is allowed (See Para E5) may have his/her PGS payment suspended with no prior warning. For those who take leave from study or are required to take academic leave, their PGS will stop from the time they start their leave, or earlier as advised by the home department.
4. The payment of PGS will cease in the month the recipient has completed his/her program of study at the University, i.e. the month when a student submits his/her final thesis to the Academic Records and Registration, Academic Registry.
5. Under exceptional circumstances and with the support of Dean's Office concerned and PGSO, the termination of a PGS award may be immediate without prior notification.
6. HKPFS and AFLSP awardees are also required to comply with the terms and conditions of the respective awards.