

RPg Quota for 2014/15

1. SUMMARY

1.1 This paper proposes the following:

- (a) Allocation of the following RPg student numbers for RAC approval:
 - i) **996** “block-based” as detailed in Annex 1,
 - ii) “competition-based” involving **140** “definite” portion as detailed in Annex 2,
 - iii) **99** “overshoot” places for i) and ii) to cover possible attrition, and
 - iv) **50** central reserve pool places.

This allocation paper is based on a total RPg student number of **1,285** (i.e. 996 + 140 + 99 + 50).

- (b) A budget of **\$5.41m** for RAC approval, to
 - i) establish a central reserve pool of 50 places for graduate divisions to bid,
 - ii) cover the PGS cost for expected exits between September and October 2014 of the “block-based” allocation, and
 - iii) cover the PGS cost for over-enrolment to minimize quota wastage due to attrition for “competition-based” places.
- (c) Procedural guidelines for the administration of the allocated quota, for consideration by the Executive Committee of the Graduate Council (GCExCo).

1.2 From 2012/13 onwards, the UGC has adopted a new approach in RPg student quota allocation whereby it will establish various “competition-based” schemes with reference to performance or quality assessment in addition to the traditional “block-based” allocation.

1.3 In response to the UGC’s new allocation mechanism, there have been changes in the procedure for the allocation of the UGC’s “overall” RPg student quota given to the University. The procedure for allocating the “block-based” portion of quota will be similar to that of previous years: the internal allocation will take into account the UGC’s new allocation mechanism, statistics on completion, attrition, Ph.D. ratio, as well as quality assurance processes. In addition, the bidding from the University central reserve pool will also take into account graduate divisions’ internal management on RPg students in addition to the factors considered in previous exercises.

1.4 The UGC has informed the University of the “block-based” and the “definite portion” of “competition-based” of RPg allocation for 2014/15, while the “tentative portion” of competition-based” numbers will not be available until March/April 2014. In order not to delay the admission of good quality applicants, it is recommended that the University allocate in one go both the “block-based” places, and the “definite” and “tentative” portions of “competition-based” places. The “tentative” portion is estimated to be less than 11 this year, and provisions are made for “overshoot” places

as buffer for the “tentative” portion. If the number announced in March/April is in short of the “overshoot” places, the University is requested to support the PGS of these numbers. Number in excess of the “overshoot” places will be injected to the central reserve pool for bidding. The Graduate School will report the final allocation of “competition-based” numbers to the RAC upon receipt of UGC’s notification of the “tentative” allocations in March/April 2014.

2. UGC POLICY

2.1 The UGC indicated in its letter dated 6 July 2010 the new approach in RPg student quota allocation for the 2012-15 Triennium. The new approach established “competition-based” schemes in addition to the traditional “block-based” allocation. This change has fundamentally affected our internal allocation as detailed in the rest of this paper.

2.2 UGC Policy Changes

Allocation of RPg numbers in 2014/15 takes place under a number of developments effected by UGC policy changes:

2.2.1 The census date is 31 October of each academic year.

2.2.2 The UGC informed the University in its letter dated 28 February 2012 of the allocation of the 5,595 RPg places to the eight UGC-funded institutions starting from 2012/13 as follows:

<u>Method</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Arrangement</u>
(a)	Hong Kong PhD Fellowship Scheme	405 places
(b)	Past award results of RGC funding schemes	600 places for each method by phases
(c)	The results of the latest Research Assessment Exercise (RAE)	
(d)	Outcome-based evaluation of RPg programmes of institutions	
(e)	By the expansion of the Hong Kong PhD Fellowship Scheme and/or by proxy attachment to RGC projects (start from 2012/13, both method (b) and proxy attachment to RGC projects are based on RGC projects funded over the immediate past three years)	Approximately 200 places to be allocated annually
(f)	Existing ratio of distribution	Allocation will be reduced by phases to 2,790 by 2016/17 starting from 2012/13

Table 1

The projected allocation of RPg places by means of the above method is summarized in the table below:

Allocation of RPg Places by Different Methods

Method	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
(a)	405	405	405	405	405 (7%)
(b)	125	250	375	500	600 (11%)
(c)	125	250	375	500	600 (11%)
(d)	125	250	375	500	600 (11%)
(e)	200	400	600	600	600 (11%)
(f)	4,615	4,040	3,465	3,090	2,790 (49%)
Total:	5,595	5,595	5,595	5,595	5,595 (100%)

Table 2

3. INTERNAL ALLOCATION PRINCIPLE

3.1 In view of the changes in the UGC allocation mechanism, an Ad hoc Sub-committee for RPg Allocation Policy (referred as “Ad hoc Sub-committee” below), formed in 2010 to examine the existing allocation mechanism and to identify areas of improvement, resolved that places allocated by UGC to the University based on the outcome-based performance scheme would be internally distributed by adopting UGC’s allocation criteria. The “block-based” allocations, which would decrease annually, would be internally distributed by means of a framework similar to the traditional approach.

3.2 Counting of attrition and completion rates

Concern has been expressed that the previous policy may have the adverse effect of rewarding lax standards. Therefore, as from the 2004 intake, students who are discontinued for academic reasons (but excluding those who leave of their own accord) during the first half of their normative period will not count as attrition for this purpose. Please refer to paragraph 4.3.1 for details.

3.3 Monitoring of entrance qualifications

The UGC has requested that the University to report its entrance qualification of RPg students via the annual data collection exercise from 2012/13 onwards so this remains an important performance indicator.

In previous exercises, divisional adjustments had been made based on this category. However, such adjustments were relatively small in recent years and the Executive Committee of the Graduate Council at its meeting held on 11 November 2011 resolved to entrust the responsibility of monitoring entrance quality to Faculties. Faculties are requested to report their monitoring policy and admission results to the Graduate School. They are also encouraged to make internal allocation adjustment to reward graduate divisions with excellent entrance qualifications.

As central pool bidding will still be based mainly on the academic merits of the applicants, entrance qualifications remain a key factor for our admission policy in spite of this change.

3.4 Tilt towards doctoral students

Incentives have been introduced since 2006/07 to encourage graduate divisions to tilt

towards doctoral students. The Ad hoc Sub-committee has also agreed that from the 2011/12 exercise onwards, measurement of the Ph.D. student ratio should be defined in terms of graduates in the previous academic year.

Thus, the percentage of M.Phil. (or Ph.D.) graduates is equal to

$$\frac{\text{Number of M.Phil. (or Ph.D.) graduates in previous academic year}}{\text{Total number of RPg graduates in previous academic year}}$$

- 3.5 As recommended by the Ad hoc Sub-committee, all fractional adjustments to divisional quota, no matter positive or negative, will be tallied as they are in future exercises instead of rounded-off as in previous practice. As a result, adjustments to small graduate divisions will follow the same mechanism as larger graduate divisions.
- 3.6 The “central pool bidding” places will be limited to 50. The optimal number of bidding places will be reviewed from time to time.
- 3.7 To provide flexibility for strategic development considerations, faculties are allowed to make adjustments to quota of graduate divisions under their respective jurisdiction in the quota allocation exercise.

4. “BLOCK-BASED” ALLOCATION - PROPOSED POLICY AND OVERALL NUMBERS

4.1 Total number available (996)

According to UGC’s letter dated 31 July 2013, the number of “block-based” allocation to CUHK, namely method (f), is 996 fte in 2014/15.

4.2 Base figure (1,079)

The actual “block-based” enrolment as of 31 October 2013 was 1,300 fte, substantially in excess of the total number available for 2014/15. Hence, each division will first be given its current enrolment (as of 31 October 2013) under “block-based” quota, less 17%. After deducting 6.25 fte for adjustment, plus 50 central reserve places, it adds up to 1,123 for the University as a whole. In the base number, students admitted by “non-block-based” scheme are excluded. Those who will resume/assume studies in the 2nd term of 2013/14 or in the 2014/15 academic year are included. These are recorded under column A in Annex 1.

4.3 Adjustments to the base figure

4.3.1 Deductions on the basis of completion and attrition statistics

- (a) The Ad hoc Sub-committee decided that a 2-year average is to be adopted from the 2011/12 exercise onwards. The Graduate School has compiled completion and attrition rates for the cohorts that entered from 2005/06 to 2006/07. The divisional figures are shown in Annex 3.

From the 2004 intake onwards, students who are discontinued for academic reasons (but excluding those who leave of their own accord) during the first half of their normative period will not count as attrition for this purpose. Therefore,

students admitted in 2004 onwards and fall into this category will be excluded from the statistics.

Graduate divisions are encouraged to weed out poor performers as early as possible, so as not to waste resources. In particular, for graduate divisions operating the articulated MPhil-PhD programmes, doctoral students who are discontinued for failing the candidacy requirement will not count towards attrition for this purpose.

For the University as a whole (comparative figures for one year earlier in brackets)

completion rate = 89.56% (90.83%)

attrition rate = 9.02% (8.46%)

- (b) The overall performance is similar to that of last year, however, some graduate divisions have not performed satisfactorily. The Ad hoc Sub-committee also agreed that an adjustment be made, amounting to
- (i) a deduction of approximately 5% of the enrolment for graduate divisions that have completion rates at 70% or below, or attrition rates at 25% or above, and
 - (ii) a deduction of approximately 10% of the enrolment for graduate divisions that have completion rates at 60% or below, or attrition rates at 35% or above.

(c) In summary, the graduate divisions affected are as follows.

Graduate Division	Completion (%)	Attrition (%)	Enrolment	Adjustment	Remark
Translation	75	25	4.15	-0.21	High attrition rate
Law	75	25	9.13	-0.46	High attrition rate
Anatomical & Cellular Pathology	64.29	35.71	7.47	-1.12	Low completion rate and very high attrition rate
Nursing	66.67	33.33	3.74	-0.37	Low completion rate and high attrition rate
China Studies	75	25	4.98	-0.25	High attrition rate
Total adjustment				-2.41	
Threshold	70	25			
Average	89.56	9.02			

Table 3

4.3.2 Adjustments for Ph.D. ratio

- (a) As mentioned in previous years, since the UGC established the Hong Kong PhD Fellowship Scheme as a permanent allocation mechanism and channeled substantial number of quota to support the scheme, there is in effect a policy of tilting towards doctoral students at the UGC level. Hence, it will be the last year for the Graduate School to implement an internal policy on this item.

The following will be implemented for the last time this year. In order to provide a more accurate measurement of the Ph.D. ratio, the Ad hoc Sub-committee resolved that starting from 2011/12 exercise onwards, the ratio will

be defined in terms of the graduates in a given academic year. Graduate divisions with Ph.D. graduate ratio above 80% will receive no adjustment on this account.

- (b) Graduate divisions with Ph.D. graduate ratio at 35% or below will be given a negative adjustment of 3% reduction of the enrolment, capped at 1 fte. This will be applied to graduate divisions with more than 2 graduates in a year.

In summary, graduate divisions affected in 2014/15 are listed below (based on the number of graduates in 2012/13).

Graduate Division	Ph.D. (%)	M.Phil. (%)	Enrolment	Adjustment
Anthropology	22	78	13.28	-0.4
Cultural Studies	25	75	8.3	-0.25
History	33	67	25.73	-0.77
Linguistics	0	100	9.96	-0.3
Philosophy	14	86	12.45	-0.37
Mathematics	14	86	24.9	-0.75
Economics	18	82	34.86	-1
Total adjustment				-3.84
Threshold	35			
Average	62	38		

Table 4

- (c) Divisional figures are shown in Annex 4.

4.4 The total adjustment would be -6.25 from the enrolment figure after taking into consideration the factors listed in paragraphs 4.3.1 - 4.3.2.

4.5 Exits between September and October 2014 (14)

Following UGC's change on the census date from 15 January to 31 October, it is no longer necessary to make provision for the exits between September and January in the total quota allocation. Provisions for exits between September and October each year have been included in the calculation of the net admission quota for that year, starting from 2012/13 exercise onwards.

However, the information will still be listed separately to facilitate the funding calculation. A total of 14 students (in fte) will exit between September and October 2014. The divisional distribution can be found in Column C in Annex 1. As usual, it is expected that the University will bear the cost of PGS support for these students. In regard to the PGS, assuming the University central budget bears the cost of 0.8 PGS, the cost will be about $14 \times 100\% \times 0.8 \times \$14,000^1$ per month $\times 2$ months = **\$0.31m**.

4.6 The **Quota Allocated**, which is the sum of A+B, is shown in a separate column in Annex 1.

4.7 Attrition and leaves of absence (35)

- (a) Attrition is defined as registered students leaving the University before completing their degrees, but excludes students declining offers of admission

¹ The proposed PGS-1 rate for 2013/14 is HK\$14,000 per month, while PGS-2 is HK\$14,490. Because most of all these extra students will be master students or pre-candidacy doctoral students, the lower PGS-1 rate would apply.

and failing to register. Only leaves of absence of one term or more are counted. The historical attrition rate is 1.35% and the leave of absence rate is 1.79% in the first term of an academic year (Annex 5), projecting to 35 students for the first term of 2014/15.

It is both desirable and necessary to make up for these losses, preferably by over-enrolment in August/September, when the largest and best pool of applicants is available. There are two options for doing so.

- (b) Each department/graduate division should make up its own loss. But since these losses are not predictable except statistically, it is difficult for departments/graduate divisions to plan ahead of time, and to make up for anticipated losses before they actually occur.
- (c) As an alternative option, the University as a whole can form a quota reserve together with associated resources for PGS support. The reserve will be used for the implementation of the central pool bidding. As stated in paragraph 3.6, the Ad hoc Sub-committee agreed to limit the reserve to 50 places (slightly higher than the projected attrition and leave of absence). This central pool is to be held by the Dean of the Graduate School and will be allocated in the period April 2014 to September 2014 to those graduate divisions that have already attained the bulk of their own quota (in the sense of offers having been taken up). For this purpose, offers will be regarded as taken up only when the students concerned have registered and paid tuition fee, normally within three weeks of the offer. This mechanism permits the anticipated losses to be made up in August/September, and also provides incentives for graduate divisions to handle their admission in a timely fashion.

The latter option, which has been adopted for a number of years, is again recommended. Departments/graduate divisions will no longer be permitted to make *any* recommendation for admission offers after **30 May 2014**, except by application for places within this central reserve pool or by admission outside quota.

The funding implication is as follows. Assume that 100% of the 50 places are fully supported by the University central budget and that on average they need to be supported for 2 months extra. The funding is then about $50 \times 100\% \times \$14,000 \times 2 \text{ months} = \$1.4m$.

4.8 Areas of Excellence (AoE)

Under the new allocation method, UGC will notify individual principal investigator (PI) of the award of AoE places. As such, they will not be included in the quota allocation listed in this paper.

4.9 Students outside quota

As before, students substantially supported by externally awarded peer-reviewed competitive research grants or donations/private funds may be counted outside quota, upon application to the Dean of Graduate School.

4.10 Faculty adjustments

The Ad hoc Sub-committee resolved that Faculties should be allowed the flexibility of making adjustments to the “block-based” allocations of graduate divisions under their respective jurisdiction. After RAC approval is sought on the overall enrolment numbers, Faculties will be notified for making adjustments among its own graduate divisions. These adjustments could be based on admission qualification, for example, and should be communicated to the Graduate School before a stated deadline so that the net admission (intake) quota could be calculated for each graduate division for the upcoming admission exercise. If the adjustments involve changes across price groups, the Faculty concerned should forward the adjustments to the RAC for approval before the net admission quota of the affected graduate divisions could become effective.

5. “COMPETITION-BASED” ALLOCATION – PROPOSED POLICY AND OVERALL NUMBERS

5.1 Number available

5.1.1 As mentioned above, the UGC assigned the “competition-based” allocation by using methods (a) to (e). For methods (a), (b) and (e) places, UGC employs a three-year allocation window. That is, the quota allocated in 2012/13 will be committed for a period of three years. However, for methods (c) and (d), UGC employs a one-year allocation window. For ease of administration, the internal distribution for method (b) through (e) will be one-off and for a period of three years. The Hong Kong PhD Fellowship places, i.e. method (a), are controlled directly by RGC and will not be included in the “competition-based” quota distributed internally.

5.1.2 The UGC divides the “competition-based” allocation into “definite” portion and “tentative” portion. As stated in UGC’s letter dated 31 July 2013 (Annex 6), the “definite” allocation for method (b) to (e) in the 2014/15 academic year is 395 (58+69+107+108+44+9) fte, including those admitted in 2012/13 and 2013/14 academic year. Since the number allocated by the UGC in a given year for a given competition-based method will first be used to satisfy prior commitments arising from the three-year allocation window, only remaining quota is subject to new distribution. The net new quota available, after deducting those admitted in the previous year, is $395 - 255$ (i.e. $58 + 72 + 72 + 44 + 9$) = 140 fte. The “tentative” allocation for 2014/15 will be allocated by the UGC in March/April 2014 after the conclusion of Hong Kong PhD Fellowship Scheme.

5.1.3 Based on the experience of previous years, it was difficult for graduate divisions to admit students if the allocations were only made known at the later stage of the admission exercise (i.e., in late April/May). And according to UGC’s letter dated 31 July 2013, 231 places (including the “tentative” portion) are reserved for the HKPFS in 2014/15. Thus, there should not be substantial un-allocated places under method (e) after deducting the HKPFS places. It is therefore proposed to make a buffer of slightly higher than last year instead of making estimation on the “tentative” portion.

5.2 Allocation for different methods

5.2.1 Allocation for method (b) and (e)

According to the UGC announcement, method (b) and (e) will be distributed by making reference to the same performance index, namely, “rolling success for institutions to obtain funded RGC projects in the past three years,” with the stipulation that different weightings are accorded to different type of funded RGC project.

It is possible to compute the weighted success number for each graduate division or each interdisciplinary programme by crediting all eligible projects to their hosting units. If a project is credited to more than one graduate division or programme, the total sum of credits should be equal to its project weight defined by UGC. The weightings have been stipulated in the UGC letter dated 28 February 2012 (for example, for GRF it is 1 and for AoE it is 5).

Denote the value of this index for graduate division or programme k by $S(k)$. Let the total available places for allocation under category (b) and (e) be A , then the internal allocation for graduate division or programme k is defined by:

$$\frac{S(k)}{\sum_k S(k)} * A$$

For 2014/15, the number for these methods is 69 (58+69+44+9-58-44-9).

5.2.2 Allocation for method (c)

The UGC allocated RPg numbers for method (c) according to the results of the latest Research Assessment Exercise (RAE). The latest RAE results made reference to research outputs published prior to 2006 and had already been used as a measure in previous allocation exercises. Some Faculties/Departments may object to using this index as an internal distribution. A more updated substitute is the Research Funding Index (RFI), which is updated annually. Nevertheless, as the Research Funding Index has already been applied in various funding considerations, some Faculties/Departments may criticize formulas that are based on this as “double benefit” or “double penalty”. Although neither index is truly desirable, it is proposed that the latest Research Funding Index be used for the reason that it would provide more incentives for Departments to improve their publication records in anticipation of the upcoming RAE.

Denote by $R(k)$ the 2013/14 RFI of graduate division k or interdisciplinary programme k . (The divisional RFI is equal to the corresponding departmental RFI. The interdisciplinary programme RFI is equal to a weighted average of the RFI of the involved departments.) Denote by $B(k)$ the “block-based” RPg allocation of k .

Let the total available places for category (c) be C , then the internal allocation for graduate division or programme k is defined by:

$$\frac{R(k)B(k)}{\sum_k R(k)B(k)} * C$$

For 2014/15, the number for this method is 35 (107-72).

5.2.3 Allocation for method (d)

The UGC allocated RPg numbers for method (d) according to an “outcome-based evaluation of RPg programmes of institutions”. According to the UGC letter of 28 February 2012, the UGC assessed both the narrative commentary and the supporting figures on measures such as the nature and extent of the teaching taken by research-active staff and the rationale of their deployment, the selection of RPg students (i.e., intake quality), research outputs from RPg students, completion times and completion rates, as well as first destination of RPg students in both academic and non-academic fields.

In view of the fact that the parameters adopted by UGC in deciding the allocation in this category is not as clear as the other categories, the percentage share of each graduate division or programme in the “block-based” was adopted for the internal distribution.

In the next triennium it is expected that UGC will allocate method (d) quota based on a number of outcome-base statistics mentioned in the 28 February 2012 letter. Earnest efforts will be needed by graduate divisions to collect these statistics accurately. Data on the “performance” of the RPg programmes, e.g. publication records, career destinations, will be collected to inform the distribution in this category in the future.

For 2014/15, the number for this method is 36 (108-72).

5.3 Total number for method (b) to (e)

The allocation of “competition-based” numbers is shown in Annex 2. The number computed in method (b), (c), (d) and (e) will be summed up before rounding. A total of 140 places will be allocated. In order to avoid possible under-enrolment for the “competition-based” allocation and in view that no estimation has been made for the “tentative” portion this year, 22 “overshoot” places (approximately 16%) are requested to make up for attrition during the year.

- 5.4 As mentioned in paragraph 1.4, while it would benefit graduate divisions in admitting the best pool of applicants by advancing the admission of the “tentative” places, there are in fact uncertainties: the result being either above or below the estimation. If the number announced by the UGC in March/April 2014 is larger than the buffer, it is proposed that the “extra” places be allocated by the Dean of Graduate School by using the same method as in the bidding for the central reserve pool. If the number is smaller than the buffer, the University will have to support the PGS of these “overshoot” students. Based on the above and that no estimation has been made for the “tentative” portion this year, it is suggested making a slightly higher level of provision of over-enrolment should be allowed this year. Assuming the University central budget bears the cost of the PGS, the cost will be about 22 x \$14,000 per month x 12 months = **\$3.7m**.

6. OVERALL BUDGETARY IMPLICATION

6.1 The budget required is about

For reserve on Central Pool	\$1.40 m
For PGS cost to cover expected exits between Sep & Oct 2014 of block-based allocation	\$0.31 m
For PGS cost to cover “overshoot competition-based” allocation	<u>\$3.70 m</u>
Total	\$5.41 m

7. IMPLEMENTATION

7.1 The following steps are proposed to make the admission process competitive. Also, by laying down clear guidelines, the many colleagues who take up acting appointments as department chairmen and graduate division heads will be in a better position to manage the admission process.

7.2 Faculty adjustments

As mentioned above, Faculties would be allowed the flexibility of making adjustments to the “block-based” allocations of graduate divisions under their respective jurisdiction. Same as last year, after RAC approval is sought on the overall enrolment numbers, Faculties will be notified for making adjustments among its own graduate divisions.

7.3 Taking old students outside quota

Graduate divisions that wish to take currently enrolled students outside quota for the academic year 2014/15 should apply, on the usual form, not later than 31 January 2014. In the case where such external support does not cover the whole normative period, the graduate division/department must make a pledge of alternate sources of support (e.g. PGS within quota) for the remainder of the normative period.

7.4 Offers of admission

7.4.1 Admission offers will be sent starting from December 2013 (for non-local students only), combined with the award of PGS in the case of full-time students. Departments should make allowance in their one-line budgets for the departmental share of PGS support. Recommendations for admission should reach the Graduate School according to the schedule already announced.

7.4.2 All offers of admission will be good only if taken up by the registration date prescribed on the Admission Notification (by registration and payment of fees). Graduate divisions are reminded that deferred payment of fees should not be approved lightly, as experience has shown that this often leads to declines in the end, making it difficult to fill the places vacated late in the summer. Deferrals may be granted more liberally to non-local students, since there would often be genuine difficulties.

7.5 Cases requiring justification

Cases requiring justification will be dealt with in the Graduate School Admissions Committee, a sub-committee formed under GCExCo, which is scheduled to meet as follows:

6 March / 16 April / 29 May / 10 July / 21 August 2014

Documents should reach the Graduate School two weeks before these meeting dates, namely on

21 February / 4 April / 16 May / 27 June / 8 August 2014

7.6 Over-enrolment

Graduate divisions are allowed to over-enrol full-time RPg students for up to 40% of the NAQ if they meet any of the following requirements.

- (a) If a student declares at admission application that he/she does not need PGS for the whole normative study period, graduate divisions are not required to set aside additional funding for the purpose of supporting the student's PGS.
- (b) If the PGS of a student will be fully supported by an external source, such as an external non-UGC/RGC grant or a government agency outside of Hong Kong.
- (c) If a graduate division declares that they can afford to provide 100% PGS by Department budget or other funding source.

The above will subject to the condition that students admitted under these categories will **not** be counted in the "base number" for RPg quota allocation, and approval from the Dean of Graduate School is required. The University will not charge overhead to graduate divisions for admitting students under this Scheme.

7.7 Bidding from the University central reserve pool

7.7.1 Upon exhausting their own *Quota Allocated*, graduate divisions may bid from the University central reserve pool. The allocation from this pool will take into account the timely management of the admission process, the completion and attrition statistics, the quality of the intake as well as graduate divisions' internal management on RPg students such as grade submission and admission management. Thus, with the applications, each graduate division is requested to submit tables on the qualifications of its students and research support for RPg students on a prescribed form, one for each of the following groups:

- students already proposed for admission to its PhD (or equivalent) programmes in 2014/15
- students already proposed for admission to its MPhil (or equivalent) programmes in 2014/15
- research support for RPg students
- students for whom extra places are sought
- referee reports for the students

- 7.7.2 In order to encourage better monitoring of students' progress, timely submission of grade and study plan/progress report will also be taken into consideration. Graduate divisions with missing grades for two months or more from the grade submission deadline without approved explanation or with outstanding study plan/progress report may **NOT** be able to participate in the upcoming central pool bidding exercise.
- 7.7.3 The Dean of the Graduate School will allocate these centrally held places in tranches as soon as possible.
- 7.7.4 Because there is planned over-enrolment, the Dean of the Graduate School may decide not to allocate all the places in reserve, if the quality is not outstanding, or if attrition turns out to be lower than expected.
- 7.8 Further adjustments of quota
- 7.8.1 Graduate divisions should arrange to have their latest offers sent out by the end of May 2014, to be valid up to 30 June 2014. **The Graduate School will examine the availability of remaining quota in July 2014, and may withdraw places from graduate divisions that are under-enrolled, transferring them to graduate divisions that are able to attract more students.** Because quota may be adjusted, no offers will be permitted after **30 May 2014** except by explicit approval of the Dean of Graduate School.
- 7.8.2 Moreover, graduate divisions that have difficulty in filling their quotas should inform the Graduate School as soon as possible, and relinquish them voluntarily. They would then not be penalized for under-enrolment in future performance-based internal allocation of quota.
- 7.9 Use of “competition-based” allocation
- 7.9.1 While the formulation of three-year allocation window ameliorates the annual fluctuation problem, it does not remove all commitment mismatches. Graduate division that admits four-year Ph.D. students should sort for other funding to support these students in their final year. If a graduate division does not have sufficient University allocated quota and funded Hong Kong PhD Fellowship places to support all its committed PGS and fellowship numbers, the graduate division is not allowed to admit new research students.
- 7.9.2 In the unlikely scenario that the remaining quota in one method is negative, quota from other methods will be applied to satisfy the commitment. Since any graduate division may experience year-to-year performance variation, this proposal would allow graduate divisions to share the burden of these fluctuations among themselves.
- 7.10 Non-local ceiling
- 7.10.1 The Government has lifted the ceiling on non-local RPg students. However, the University as a whole still needs to maintain a reasonable quota for local students, especially for MPhil programmes. Therefore, from 2006/07 onwards, the internal ceiling for non-local RPg students under “block-based allocation” has been

MPhil	PhD*
50%	80%

(* including doctoral students in articulated MPhil-PhD programmes, but excluding students in the HK PhD Fellowship Scheme)

Table 5

- 7.10.2 The “competition-based” allocation will also subject to the above ceiling. However, graduate divisions with an enrolment of 10 fte or below are exempted from the above ceiling. It is proposed that the same ceiling be adopted for 2014/15. The implementation details of the above ceiling will be communicated later when the Graduate School informed graduate divisions of the net admission (intake) quota.

8. PGS SUPPORT

- 8.1 The University will be responsible for 0.8 of the PGS support for students admitted under the “block-based” quota, up to the *Quota Allowed N*; if this number is exceeded, only the first *N* students admitted will be counted.

It is expected that in general the University will also be responsible for 100% of the PGS support for those admitted against the quota in the central reserve pool in the first year, but for better financial control this will be approved on a case-by-case basis by the Dean of the Graduate School and graduate divisions will be informed immediately thereafter.

- 8.2 In addition, Departments could also get additional funding from “competition-based” places. The University will first make good for the PGS and allocate the remaining funding to the one-line budget according to three standard funding rates to be announced by RAC annually.

9. FUTURE POLICIES

- 9.1 As mentioned in paragraph 2.2.2, the RPg places allocated by UGC to each institution under category (f) will be decreasing in the coming years. Graduate divisions are encouraged to focus their strategies and efforts on gaining more places from UGC via the various competitive schemes offered by UGC under category (a) – (e) in paragraph 2.2.2.
- 9.2 According to the data provided by the Faculties, on average, Faculties were able to maintain 91.2% in category A. Please refer to Annex 7 for details. Some graduate divisions might be a bit lenient in the categorization. The Graduate School will continue monitoring the situation.

~ END ~