The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Strategic Partnership Award for Research Collaboration

Guidelines for Applicants
Deadline: 30 November 2021

1. Preamble

As part of the Chinese University of Hong Kong's global engagement effort, a special funding scheme, Strategic Partnership Award for Research Collaboration (SPARC), has been established to build joint research programmes with some of the University's key partners. The aim of SPARC is to seed new collaborative research programmes in the University's strategic research areas which will be impactful and can be sustained through external funding sources for the next phase of their development.

2. Partners & Strategic Areas for Collaboration

The current round of the Award supports collaborative research projects with selected key partners primarily in the four strategic research areas[1] identified in the University's Strategic Plan (CUHK 2025), which are *China: Tradition and Modernity; Innovative Biomedicine; Information and Automation Technology;* and *Environment and Sustainability.* Projects which do not fall within the four areas may also be considered.

The selected partners for the current round of application include:

- The University of Auckland, New Zealand
- The University of Chicago, USA
- The University of Queensland, Australia
- University College London, UK
- University of California, San Diego, USA
- University of Toronto, Canada
- Utrecht University, the Netherlands
- Others (with justifications)

While the current round of application will focus on the list of selected partners listed above, strong applications to work with other top-tier institutions[2] will also be considered should funding be available.

3. Activities & Scope of Support

The Award is intended to support expenses, including but not limited to those involved in scoping studies, data collection, preparation of publications, and submission of major international grants. Travel cost including those associated with the hosting of joint workshops, researcher exchange and research seminars, may also be included, although it is expected that with the current state of the pandemic, travel will not be feasible and interactions with collaborators will take place through online platforms.

---

[1] To learn more about CUHK's research priorities, please visit Research and Innovation - CUHK Strategic Plan 2021-2025.

[2] For example, those falling within the top 50 of the QS and Times Higher Education World University Rankings.

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

Eligible Costs	Ineligible Costs
• Travel, accommodation and subsistence for CUHK faculty members and incoming academic visitors • Presentation of joint work at conferences • Delivery and courier • Organization of symposiums/ target workshops • Salaries of personnel, e.g. short-term Research Assistants and clerical support staff • Experiments and related consumables • Data collection, e.g. surveys • Small scale equipment necessary for the project • Publications	• Replacement research/teaching costs • Time of existing staff • Scholarships • Tuition fees • Honoraria

4. Eligibility

- At 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.

5. Funding

- An award of up to HK$150,000 will be provided to each selected application and will be paid to the CUHK PI upon the award.
- A budget should be provided and expenditure should be made according to the budget plan. Major changes to the expenditure plan will require prior approval.
- Procurement of goods and services should be adhered to the University's purchasing guidelines.
- 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.

6. Application

- Each proposal must include a PI from CUHK and a PI from the partner institution(s).
- There should be at least one other researcher from each institution to be involved in the proposal, besides the PI.
- An online application form should be completed and submitted together with the following documents:
  - Abbreviated Curriculum Vitae of the PIs with a selected list of publications (max. 2 pages).
  - A budget plan outlining all areas of expenditure with an itemised breakdown. To download the template, please click here.
  - A support letter from the head of the home department and the collaborating school/faculty to show their involvement in the collaboration plan.
  - An endorsement form to be completed by the CUHK heads of departments/units and faculty deans/directors of institutes to confsirm their (1) support for the application, and (2) intention to renew the applicants' contract if the applicants' existing contract will expire within one year upon completion of the project. To download the form, please click here.

7. Award Selection

- Selection will be made by a panel chaired by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) taking into account a number of factors including, but not limited to, academic merit of the applications, recommendations from the applicants' heads of departments/units and faculty deans/directors of institutes, and the availability of funds.
- Applications will be assessed according to a number of criteria, including for example:
    - Project design and rationale: Eg. How clearly presented and justified is the design and basis for the collaboration?
    - Project impact: Eg. How clearly linked are the academic gains to the planned activities and performance indicators?
    - Impact of collaboration: Eg. 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?
    - Continuity and capacity for future collaboration/funding: Eg. 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?
- Applicants will be notified of the results by January 2022.

8. Reporting

Award holders should submit a report outlining the outcomes, project impact and opportunities for future collaboration within one month upon completion of the project.

9. Other Information

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 necessary[3].

10. Enquiries

For enquiries, please contact Ms. Olivia Kwok, Office of Academic Links, on 3943-1315 or at oliviakwok@cuhk.edu.hk.

---

[3] 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 award.