

JC STEM Early Career Research Fellowship for Translation and Application

Application Guidelines (2026/27)

Purpose

The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust (“the Trust”) has set up the JC STEM Early Career Research Fellowship for Translation and Application (“the Fellowship”) as a strategic initiative to nurture a pool of promising STEM post-doctoral researchers who aspire to translate scientific research into industry application. The Fellowship will provide comprehensive support and development programmes to help them develop their research and innovation career, expand their professional network and create social impact. The Research Grants Council (“RGC”) of Hong Kong is a Partner Organisation of this Fellowship.

Scope and Duration of Support

2. Up to 10 Fellowships will be awarded in each cohort. Each Fellowship will last for three years comprising the following –

- a. a stipend of up to \$579,200 per annum for three years, with additional 15% gratuity to be offered upon completion of the Fellowship¹;
- b. academic development and exchange allowance: up to \$32,000 per annum for three years;
- c. research project seed funding: up to \$389,000;
- d. proof-of-concept (“PoC”) fund: up to \$500,000 (subject to the condition as set out in para 3); and
- e. capacity building programmes to be offered by the Trust and its partner to enhance its translational capability, commercialisation readiness and exposure to industry and innovation ecosystems.

3. Over the course the Fellowship, Fellows are eligible to apply for a PoC fund, which aims to support and accelerate the development of new technologies, products, processes, and services arising from Fellows’ research, with a view to advancing translation and application through appropriate commercialisation pathways. Applications for PoC funding must clearly set out, among others, the proposed development activities, expected outcomes, and the relevant industry partner(s) and their contributions. Applicants could include the PoC activity in the application for the Trust’s consideration. When their research has progressed to an appropriate stage, upon the support of their Nominating University, Fellows could submit the PoC plan for the Trust’s review and approval. Awarded Fellows are expected to participate directly in PoC activities, wherever feasible, to gain hands-on experience in commercialisation and to strengthen collaboration with industry partners.

¹ Final package will be recommended by the Nominating University based on its human resources policy and subject to the Trust’s approval.

Eligibility

4. Eligible applicants must fulfil the following criteria:
 - a. have obtained/ been conferred the first PhD degree or an equivalent qualification in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics disciplines on or after 1 January 2023; or will complete the required qualification on or before 31 December 2026. (If the Nominee's conferment date is after 31 December 2026, he/she must provide supporting documents that they have fulfilled all graduation requirements and is/ will be awarded a PhD degree by their university);
 - b. be legally permitted to work in Hong Kong; and
 - c. be supported by the nominating University Grants Committee ("UGC")-funded university at which s/he wishes to hold the Fellowship.
5. Applicants who wish to apply for other fellowships in Hong Kong in parallel should observe the eligibility requirement of other fellowship schemes. For instance, applicants nominated to this Fellowship will not be considered by the RGC Junior Research Fellow Scheme.
6. Research agencies and academic institutions in the United States and other jurisdictions outside of Hong Kong have legal and regulatory obligations with respect to research security, and may implement risk-based policies and practices in support of research integrity and security. Applicants are reminded to review research security obligations that may apply to him/her, as appropriate, and/ or consult with the Nominating University or other appropriate academic institutions to understand the possible impact of these laws and regulations on the Nominee.

Nomination Process

7. All eight UGC-funded universities may nominate up to 10 applicants for the Fellowship in this exercise. Applications without accompanying nominations from eligible universities will not be accepted. Each applicant should only be nominated by one UGC-funded University. Should one applicant be nominated by more than one university in this cohort, all applications (under the same applicant) will be disqualified.
8. Nominating Universities shall conduct internal assessments on each of the applicants before completing the University Nomination Form. Duly completed nominations (comprising the Application Form to be completed by the applicant and the University Nomination Form) should be endorsed by the Head of University (or his/ her designated Vice-President) and submitted via the designate office of the Nominating University (please refer to the list of contact person in each of the UGC-funded Universities at Annex A) to the Trust by the specified deadline as set out below.
9. The proposed supervisor or director/ head of the laboratories or research groups with which the applicants will be affiliated is required to provide a talent development plan outlining how the applicants will be nurtured to become champions and leaders in commercialisation and research translation within the laboratory/ research setting for the assessment purpose. The plan should clearly demonstrate the director/ head's commitment to supporting the applicants' progression towards becoming an independent translational research leader. This should include, but not limited to, the development objectives during the Fellowship period, coaching and leadership opportunities, team support and professional network building, as well as pathway to independence. Applicants are encouraged to participate in the Government-funded research and innovation initiatives such as

centres under InnoHK research clusters, State Key Laboratories and Hong Kong Branches of Chinese National Engineering Research Centers to foster synergy, enhance impact, and develop leadership capacity within the translational research ecosystem.

10. The research proposal submitted should represent the original ideas and work of the applicant, or of the applicant in collaboration with their proposed supervisor at the nominating university. Applications that are substantially developed using artificial intelligence (“AI”), or that contain sections substantially generated by AI, will not be considered as reflecting the applicant’s original work and will not be considered by the Trust. Applicants must declare and describe any use of AI tools in the preparation of their application, including how such tools were used. By nominating an applicant, the Nominating University confirms that it has conducted appropriate checks on the application and is satisfied that the Applicant’s declared use of AI tools is accurate and complies with the University’s relevant policies and guidelines.

11. Both applicants and the Nominating University shall bear the responsibility to ensure that the nomination contains complete and sufficient information for evaluation. Incomplete nominations (such as those lacking University Nomination Form, missing data/ information required for evaluation, etc.) or inconsistent/ inaccurate information would lead to disqualification of nomination.

12. Nominations should be submitted to the Trust by **5pm on 29 October 2026**. University’s cover letter and hard copies of each nomination with University chop shall reach the Trust (Address: The Hong Kong Jockey Club, One Sports Road, Happy Valley, Hong Kong. Attention: Mr Calvin Chan, Deputy Executive Manager, Charities) by 12 November 2026. Applicants should observe the internal deadline of their respective University in order to go through the University’s internal selection and nomination process. Late submissions will not be processed.

Selection Criteria

13. Nominations will be assessed and selected according to the Trust’s peer-review procedure with the following criteria:

- a. Applicant’s academic and research track record;
- b. Applicant’s aspirations and capabilities in research translation
- c. Scientific merit and translational potential of the proposed research; and
- d. Support provided by the applicant’s supervisor and university for applicant’s development as a translational research leader.

14. The Trust will form a panel comprising internationally renowned experts to oversee the assessment and finalise its selection result for the Trust’s endorsement. Information of submitted applications may be shared with partner organisation(s) and/ or service provider(s) for eligibility check, assessment and selection purposes.

Announcement of Results

15. It is expected that universities concerned will receive the selection result in June 2027.

Key Conditions of Grants

16. Should the Fellowship application be successful, Nominating University should offer the awarded Fellow with a full-time position as post-doctoral fellow or equivalent rank. Subject to careful consideration of the Fellow's performance in the Fellowship period with clear evidence to the satisfaction of the Trust, the Nominating University may offer a job promotion to the Fellow within the Fellowship period on the condition that the Trust's Donation remains unchanged, and the new job position is not in tenure track.

17. Awarded Fellows will be named "JC STEM Early Career Research Fellows," which should be used in all publications, programmes and other announcements related to the proposed research during the term of the Fellowship. Awarded Fellows should attend the award presentation ceremony in person and actively participate in the Fellowship programmes (including but not limited to capacity building programmes arranged by the Trust and its partners as well as conferences/ forums under the JC STEM Circle) and other Trust's events as set out in the result notification letter. Awarded Fellows may also be invited to attend other Trust's talent development initiatives and events.

18. Nominating Universities are responsible for the monitoring of Fellows and should ensure that they will deliver the pledged output/ outcome and the expected impact. Nominating Universities are also responsible for any cost overrun of Fellows' research. Requests for change of Nominating University will not be considered save in very exceptional circumstances, and will be subject to the Trust's approval and agreement by the parties concerned.

19. Notwithstanding that the support by the Trust should be acknowledged in all publications and publicity materials during the Fellowship period, the Trust will not claim copyright nor other intellectual property right of the output/ work produced involving the Trust's fund in the Fellowship. The arrangement on all copyrights/ royalties/ intellectual properties arising out of any work during the Fellowship period shall follow the relevant and prevailing guidelines and policies of the Nominating University concerned.

20. Should the application be successful, detailed conditions of grants will be provided to the Nominating Universities concerned.

Disbursement and Monitoring of Fellowships

21. Nominating Universities of awarded Fellows will be the grantees of the Trust and will be responsible for the supervision of the Fellows. Funding from the Trust will be disbursed via the Nominating Universities concerned to awarded Fellows. Acceptance of the Fellowship should be signed by the President/ Vice-Chancellor of the Nominating University with an undertaking signed by each awarded Fellow.

22. Nominating Universities should report to the Trust at least one month in advance should there be any changes on the appointment of the Fellows (including advancement, resignation, termination, etc.).

23. Awarded Fellows should submit, via the Nominating Universities, progress reports and financial statements according to the specified schedule. In addition, awarded Fellows should

prepare a final Impact Report, to be submitted at the end of the Fellowship, summarising the impact and social benefits created throughout the Fellowship period.

Enquiries

24. All enquiries should be directed to the research offices of respective Universities in the first instance. Their contact details are provided at Annex A.

University Designated Office and Contact Person

Ms Pat Lam Research Grants & Contracts Office City University of Hong Kong 83 Tat Chee Avenue Kowloon Tong, Kowloon	Tel: 3442 6278 Email: pat.lam@cityu.edu.hk
Miss Trudi Chan Research Office Hong Kong Baptist University Kowloon Tong Kowloon	Tel: 3411 7941 Email: ro-rgm@hkbu.edu.hk
Dr Macy Huen Office of Research and Knowledge Transfer Lingnan University 8 Castle Peak Road Tuen Mun, New Territories	Tel: 2616 7509 Email: macyhuen@LN.edu.hk
Ms Gladys Chan Research Office The Chinese University of Hong Kong Shatin New Territories	Tel: 3943 5428 Email: ro-grants@cuhk.edu.hk
Dr Lemon Kwan Research and Development Office The Education University of Hong Kong 10 Lo Ping Road, Tai Po, New Territories	Tel: 2948 8158 Email: hmkwan@eduhk.hk
Ms Carol Chan Research and Innovation Office The Hong Kong Polytechnic University Hung Hom Kowloon	Tel: 2766 7021 Email: l-c.chan@polyu.edu.hk
Ms Iris Pak Research Office The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology Clear Water Bay, Kowloon	Tel: 3469 3010 Email: irispak@ust.hk
Ms Emily Lee Research Services The University of Hong Kong Pokfulam Hong Kong	Tel: 3917 5930 Email: esylee@hku.hk