

Funding Policies and Procedures regarding Teaching Development Grant

The Sub-Committee on Teaching and Learning (SCTL) under the Academic Quality Assurance Committee (AQAC) for Undergraduate Programmes is responsible for the approval and award of the University's Teaching Development Grant (TDG) allocated by the University Grants Committee (UGC).

1. General Principles

The objective of the TDG is to fund research and development projects that aim to advance teaching and learning at Lingnan. Internal TDG is allocated on the basis of competitive bids for projects, but team-based projects will be given a higher priority than individual projects in order to foster cross-fertilisation and collaboration. The call for applications will be made to all staff by the Centre for Innovative Teaching and Learning (CITAL). The principal project supervisors (PPSs) may consult experienced TDG holders and other experts when preparing their proposals. All proposals should be submitted through CITAL, which will forward them to the SCTL for consideration. The PPSs should also consult and inform their heads of department/line managers of the submission.

2. Eligibility

- 2.1 All full-time academic and administrative members of staff are eligible to apply for the teaching development grant. Each eligible applicant can submit at most two applications at one time, including applications submitted in the capacities of PPS(s), Co-Supervisor(s), and Team Member(s). At the same time, PPS should not have more than three on-going TDG projects for which he/she acts as the PPS at the commencement date of the project under application.
- 2.2 A non-Lingnan staff can join the project, but he/she only serves as a Co-Supervisor or Team Member and does not have any control over the budget. As such, the PPS should provide detailed explanations on the application concerning the benefits of the project to Lingnan and the institution of the Co-Supervisor respectively and an assurance that Lingnan students would be the primary beneficiary of the project.

3. Selection Process

- 3.1 The SCTL is responsible for advising on policies for the promotion, conduct, supervision and funding of Teaching Development Projects in the University, approving all internal funding allocations and monitoring the progress of projects.
- 3.2 Each application will be considered in the light of its:
 - potential contribution to the improvement of teaching and learning in the liberal arts context;
 - innovativeness and originality in promoting teaching development;
 - pedagogical benefits to the students and staff members concerned, as well as the potential for dissemination of practice to colleagues;
 - quality and merit;
 - feasibility within the time-scale and budget indicated in the proposal;
 - impact on the implementation of outcome-based teaching and learning;
 - collaboration with other institutions; and
 - plan for evaluation and dissemination of results.

In the spirit of the UGC and University emphasis on OBATL, projects are expected to adopt principles that have:

- a pragmatic approach intended to achieve tangible and transferable project outcomes relevant to the improvement of teaching and learning at Lingnan; and
- a sufficiently detailed project evaluation plan that includes how the evidence/lessons learned/resources created etc. will be disseminated and shared (e.g., departmental seminars, University-supported TDG presentations, or scholarly papers).

Initiatives linking teaching and research can be supported by TDG but these initiatives should have an emphasis on the enhancement of teaching and learning at Lingnan.

- 3.3 During the selection process, the SCTL reserves the right to co-opt members to assess applications that require expertise in a specialised area.
- 3.4 Priority will be given to project proposals focusing on the enhancement of teaching and learning at the University or programme level, in particular, and have an impact on a significant number of students. The funding must also be applied within the ambit of UGC-fundable activities. In other words, activities under self-financed or non-UGC-funded programmes will not be supported. Regular University activities should seek recurrent funding from the University rather than TDG. TDG should be project-based and thus are not available to support departmental workshops/seminars.
- 3.5 Projects with budget requests for more than HK\$200,000 will be reviewed by two external reviewers prior to discussion at a SCTL meeting. The CITAL will nominate reviewers with relevant expertise to the SCTL.

4. Duration of Projects

- 4.1 The maximum period of funding support for this round of TDG is up to three years.
- 4.2 Grant holders are expected to make every effort to ensure that the project progresses in accordance with the time-scale stated in the proposal. The following policies should be followed for University-funded teaching development projects:
 - 4.2.1 A notional commencement date is assigned to each project based on the time-table stated in the proposal.
 - 4.2.2 The completion date is calculated from the notional commencement date, to which the project duration approved by the SCTL is added.
 - 4.2.3 If a delay is anticipated, this should be reported in advance and an application made to extend the project duration. A detailed justification for an extension is required. The request must be made by completing a project extension request form at least two months before the expiry of the agreed-on completion date.
 - 4.2.4 Unless there are exceptional circumstances, an extension of time will be limited to a maximum of 12 months on the understanding that further funding is not required.
 - 4.2.5 A project account will be closed six months after the approved completion date unless prior approval has been obtained from the Chairman of the SCTL, in which case the account closing date will be extended accordingly.
 - 4.2.6 Extending the duration of a project without prior approval may result in the withdrawal of funding.

5. Budget Control Performed by the Finance Office (“FO”)

- 5.1 A grant should only be accepted when the funds provided plus other resources will be sufficient for the completion of the project.
- 5.2 The approved budget of a project is one-line in nature. The FO will clear budget for each Payment Application (“PA”)/Purchase Requisition (“PR”)/Hiring Request based on the uncommitted balance of the whole project, not on individual budget lines/items. Notwithstanding the above, approval by the SCTL is required for spending on items which cannot be categorised into one of the approved budget lines, for which FO will consult CITAL if necessary.
- 5.3 The PPS is fully responsible and accountable for the approved grant for his/her project, for example, to undertake to make good any deficit should it arise eventually and/or required to provide explanations for any substantial unspent balance upon project completion.
- 5.4 Only expenses genuinely incurred for a particular project within the project start date and end date can be charged to that project. All expenses approved by a PPS charging to a project shall be deemed to be valid expenses for the project, unless there is obvious evidence indicating otherwise, under such circumstances the FO shall seek advice from the CITAL.
- 5.5 The unspent balance of a project shall be returned to the SCTL for redistribution.
- 5.6 All PAs/PRs/Hiring Requests shall be sent to the FO for budget clearance/payment processing without routing through the CITAL.

6. Guidelines for Developing a TDG Budget

6.1 Budget Limit

- 6.1.1 The current budget limit for projects is normally HK\$200,000 per annum. Accordingly, a project with a duration of up to one year should normally have a budget within the HK\$200,000 limit.

6.2 Equipment

- 6.2.1 In general, funds will not be provided for the purchase of equipment; however, the purchase of equipment specifically required for the project may be allowed if such items are normally not available and deemed essential.
- 6.2.2 When an equipment item is requested, a detailed specification should be submitted with the grant application, together with a cost estimate. Equipment for all University-funded and UGC-funded teaching development projects must be acquired through the FO.
- 6.2.3 All equipment acquired should be registered by the FO.

6.3 Staffing

- 6.3.1 All supervisors are expected to be actively involved in the projects, and the recruitment of outside expertise, if proved to be indispensable and unavailable in-house, is expected to be a source of developmental opportunities for staff.
- 6.3.2 Funds may be provided for technical and administrative support such as research assistance or clerical assistance where appropriate. Applicants must outline the number of assistants necessary, specific duties within the project and the time required.
- 6.3.3 Support is generally provided at the lowest level (i.e. Research Assistant instead of Research Fellow). The SCTL should decide, on the merits of the case presented, on the level and number of support staff/years to be supported, which should be the minimum practicable.
- 6.3.4 The PPS should arrange for research/administrative staff to take permitted leave during the period of appointment. On completion of service, payment for leave not taken will be met from the project staffing budget. There is no compensation for such payments and it is the responsibility of the PPS to ensure that leave is cleared during the contractual period.
- 6.3.5 Expenses arising from recruitment and medical insurance for support staff will be debited against the project account concerned.

6.4 General Expenses and Supplies

Reasonable amounts should be budgeted for printing, research material, stationery, postage, fax and other consumables related to the project.

6.5 Transportation

Funds for travel locally will be considered when they form an integral part of the project, e.g. investigators' travel or transportation of subjects to site of project.

6.6 Conference Attendance

University TDGs do not include provisions for conference attendance for the purpose of promulgating project findings. Support for this activity should be sought from the Staff Development Funds.

7. Changes Associated with the Project

7.1 The PPS should apply to the Chairman of the SCTL using the specified form (<https://www.ln.edu.hk/CITAL/support-for-staff/tdgs#download>), via the CITAL, if major changes to the approved project are required, for example:

- (i) Deferral of completion date;
- (ii) Change in Principal Project Supervisor of project;
- (iii) Termination of project.

The PPS should apply for other major changes, for example, Change in title of project, to the Chairman of the SCTL in writing via the CITAL.

8. Monitoring of Project

8.1 All projects funded from the University internal TDG are subject to regular monitoring by the SCTL. There is a provision to withdraw funding from projects not making satisfactory progress or overrunning the agreed-on duration.

8.2 Interim Reports

All projects with a duration of more than one year will be required to submit an Interim Report at 2/3 of the project duration, e.g. the PPS will have to submit an Interim Report at month 16 for a 2-year project. Based on the progress in the Interim Report, the CITAL will undertake early monitoring if required.

8.3 Final Reports

8.3.1 The final report should be prepared by the PPS concerned in respect of the completed project. The PPS should copy the report to his or her line manager and submitted to the SCTL via the CITAL not later than 6 months after completion.

8.3.2 The report should include, among other relevant information, outputs of the project, a self-evaluation such as how far the objectives have been reached and how effective the project has been in enhancing teaching and learning as well as suggestions for further development, if any. In cases where the main output is research publications, copies of the publications will suffice; a narrative report will be required only where the output takes other forms. All other tangible results should also be listed.

8.3.3 Staff shall be required to present and/or publish papers and reports relating to their project findings in refereed journals or refereed conferences. Further dissemination of project results in the form of seminars and conference presentations is also required.

8.3.4 The SCTL will take the level of funding and the duration of the project into account when evaluating project report. The evaluation will also measure the effectiveness of the project based upon the outcomes against the goals stated in the original proposal. After evaluation, the SCTL will (a) approve, (b) approve with recommended changes or (c) not approve the final reports based on the following criteria which are related to Section 3.2 of the Policy and are equally weighted:

- (1) Project aims and outcomes have been effectively achieved according to schedule, as shown by realisation of planned deliverables;
- (2) Project evaluation has been conducted as planned and collected a set of empirical evidence to demonstrate project success and sustainability:
 - (i) Student achievement of learning outcomes has been enhanced;
 - (ii) Project outcomes (e.g. pedagogies, teaching and learning practices, resources) can apply to other disciplines and academic units;
- (3) Project results have been disseminated as planned;
- (4) Project funding granted has been spent as budgeted and there is no excessive balance.

If a TDG Final Project Report is not approved, the PPS is required to work with the CITAL to amend and resubmit.

9. TDG Requirements

Project supervisors are required to disseminate project findings and outputs of completed projects to other academic staff by conducting departmental seminars and by giving presentations or workshops/seminars organised by the CITAL during the annual TDG sharing sessions. Furthermore, PPSs are encouraged to give advice and support to potential TDG applicants.

10. Recruitment of Support Staff

- 10.1 All support staff appointments for the University and the UGC-funded teaching development projects must be processed by the Human Resources Office from which further information and the necessary documentation can be obtained.
- 10.2 PPSs are encouraged to recruit support staff locally, wherever possible. Recruitment of staff from overseas usually takes a much longer time to process and may affect the progress of projects.
- 10.3 Where it is possible to identify a qualified individual, the requirement for an external advertisement may be waived. However, an individual should not be employed before the recruitment procedure has been completed, as an appointment cannot be made retrospectively.

11. Ethical Approval

The PPS is required to complete a statement regarding the ethics of the project prior to submission of the application. The University reserves the right to reject a grant application or withdraw a grant on ethical grounds.

12. Conditions of Awards

- 12.1 All equipment purchased out of a teaching development grant remains the property of the University. On completion or abandonment of a project, all items could be kept with the PPS or transferred to the Department of the PPS or the CITAL or returned to FO. The Project Equipment Transfer/Disposal Form sets the detailed arrangements.
- 12.2 The University shall have no responsibility, financial or otherwise, for expenditure or other liabilities arising from the projects it supports, beyond the funding allocated from the University TDG for those projects.
- 12.3 The University reserves the right to suspend payment of funds in the event of unsatisfactory progress within the agreed-on time-scale.
- 12.4 The University reserves the right to withdraw support for particular projects by giving appropriate advance notice.

13. Intellectual Property

The University will have copyright of the project deliverables which may be in the form of teaching/learning materials, multi-media packages or computer software, etc.

14. Acknowledgement

- 14.1 The PPS is required to acknowledge in the application that he/she has read the Funding Policies and Procedures. Non-compliance, such as late submission of the interim/final report or failure to present/publish papers, may result in disqualification from future TDG application rounds.
- 14.2 Where appropriate, publications arising from the funded teaching development projects should always contain an acknowledgement of the financial support provided by the University, or other sponsor, by stating, e.g. “this project has benefited from financial support from the Teaching Development and Language Enhancement Grant allocated to Lingnan University, Hong Kong by the University Grants Committee, Hong Kong”.

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