

**Lingnan University**  
**Guidelines and Procedures for the**  
**Research Postgraduate Student Conference/Field Trip Sponsorships**

**I. General Information**

**Purpose**

1. The University deems it important for providing support to research postgraduate students in academic activities, mainly conference attendance and conducting field trips, to nurture their academic and/or professional growth. Conference attendance is an important part of their educational experience and professional development. It may also be necessary for them to conduct field trips for their research studies.
2. The Sponsorships are provided to support the major cost for students to participate in international conferences inside and outside Hong Kong, and conduct field trips outside Hong Kong.
3. Exceptionally, academic activities such as classes in summer schools, workshops, trainings and seminars may also be supported on condition that they are necessary for the study of the student. Approval is subject to strong recommendations from the Supervisor(s) and the Head of Department/Unit concerned making a case that the activity in question is beneficial to the student's specific research programme with Lingnan as opposed to being beneficial only in a broader sense.

**Eligibility and Priority**

4. All MPhil/PhD students, either full-time or part-time, who are not taking leave of absence, are eligible to apply. The conference/field trip/academic activity shall take place during the study period of the student.
5. Notwithstanding the above, for participating in conferences, the sponsorships normally only support students who have completed at least one full year of MPhil/PhD study by the date of the conference. An application from a student applying at an earlier stage in his/her studies (i.e. a Year 1 student) requires a strong statement demonstrating the link of the conference with his/her study and the benefits expected from attending the conference or presenting at the conference, apart from strong recommendations from his/her Supervisor and Head of Department/Unit concerned.
6. Sponsorships will be granted on a competitive basis and the award of which is

subject to availability of fund. Students should note that such funding is not an entitlement.

### **Value**

7. The funding limit for supporting conferences, field trips and/or other exceptionally approved academic activities is HK\$19,000 for an MPhil student and HK\$25,000 for a regular PhD student during his/her entire period of study at Lingnan.
8. For a PhD Fellowship awardee, an annual sponsorship will be provided by the Research Grants Council (RGC) for a maximum period of three years, and the rate for 2023-24 is HK\$13,800 (subject to annual review). For an awardee with a normative study period of four years, the University will offer the same level of sponsorship for his/her fourth year of study.

### **Applications**

9. The School of Graduate Studies (GS) will invite applications four times a year as detailed below:

<u>Allocation</u>	<u>Closing date</u>	<u>Conference/Field Trip/Academic Activity Period</u>
1 <sup>st</sup> Exercise	September 1	during October to February
2 <sup>nd</sup> Exercise	December 1	during January to May
3 <sup>rd</sup> Exercise	March 1	during April to August
4 <sup>th</sup> Exercise	June 1	during July to November

10. Advance applications are acceptable, i.e. students may submit applications for conference/field trip/academic activities that are held after the specified period of the allocation exercise, provided that the necessary supporting documents/materials are available.
11. Students should submit an application form with support of his/her Supervisor and the Head of Department/Unit concerned and send to the GS as early as possible before the start of the conference/field trip/academic activity. Late applications will not normally be considered.

### **Approval**

12. The applications will be considered and approved, where appropriate, by the Postgraduate Studies Committee (PSC).

### **Conditions**

13. Award of the sponsorship is subject to the applicant's submission of a brief report of not less than 200 words to the PSC with the endorsement of the Supervisor

concerned.

14. The sponsorship approved only applies to the specific conference/field trip/academic activity and cannot be used for other purposes.

### **Claims for Reimbursement**

15. Applicants should submit within one month from the end date of the conference/field trip/academic activity to the GS the original copy of relevant receipts, and the brief report endorsed by the Supervisor. Please refer to Sections II to IV for additional supporting documents, if any, required for reimbursement for applications concerning conferences, field trips, and academic activities respectively.

## **II. Applications for Conference Participation**

16. Priority will be given to applicants who will present a paper or poster at a conference. The paper/poster to be presented should be related to his/her MPhil/PhD research programme conducted at Lingnan by the applicant who is the author or one of the authors. Participation in ways other than presentation, e.g. discussantship, doctoral workshop, conference attendance, etc., will also be considered. As the sponsorship aims to encourage active participation in a conference, an application for attendance only will be considered when it has got strong recommendations of the Supervisor and Head of Department/Unit concerned.
17. For participation in international conferences held outside Hong Kong, the cost of travel, accommodation, conference registration fee and fee for joining conference-related activities/events as arranged by the organisers are supported. In case of approval, the sponsorship will be granted based on the budget prepared by the applicant. For international conferences held in Hong Kong, the sponsorship will provide the same coverage of support as those held outside Hong Kong except that any costs relating to local transport to/from the conference venue and accommodation will not be covered. The applicant shall prepare the budget which shall be indicated in the application.
18. Funding for joint authors of any presentation at a conference is provided on the basis of one-paper-one-sponsorship. It is permissible that the same paper gets sponsorship from the staff conference grant scheme.
19. Students should fill in an application form (shown in Appendix 1) and send the completed application form together with the following supporting documents to

his/her Supervisor.

- a) a copy of the conference pamphlet or the call for papers;
- b) proof of registration fee, if any;
- c) a copy of invitation/letter of acceptance, if any; and
- d) an abstract/the paper submitted or to be submitted\*.

*\*not applicable for attendance only application*

Note: Applicants may not be able to provide an acceptance notification at the time of application submission. In that case, they may submit the required letter of acceptance at a later date. The PSC may consider awarding a conference sponsorship subject to actual presentation of the paper by the applicant.

20. Selection of proposals will be based on the following criteria:
  - a) the stature of the conference;
  - b) the recommendation of the Supervisor/Head of Department/Unit concerned;
  - c) whether the applicant will present the paper orally or not;
  - d) relevance of the conference to the applicant's research programme; and
  - e) the previous conference sponsorship gained, if any.
  
21. Award of the conference sponsorship is subject to paper presentation and submission of a copy of the paper presented (where applicable) after the conference as well as submission of a brief conference report (shown in Appendix 2). The University reserves the right to suspend payment of funds if, in the eyes of the PSC, the paper written is unsatisfactory.
  
22. Reimbursement of expenses for attending conferences will be paid up to the amount approved or the actual expenses (conference-related only) incurred on the following items, whichever is the lesser:
  - a) one return passage (i.e. air/bus/train/ferry) to the country/city where the conference is held (*at economy class but no restriction on selection of service provider; students to purchase their own tickets*);
  - b) accommodation expenses (*based on a 3-star hotel rate; covering the conference period and a day before and after*);
  - c) conference registration/membership fee;
  - d) fee for joining conference-related activities/events as arranged by the organiser; and
  - e) general expenses directly related to the writing up of the abstract/paper (e.g. expenses on dataset, publication editing, photocopying, transcription, translation, etc.).

Note: Items a and b are restricted to participation in conferences held outside Hong Kong only. For item b, if specific accommodation arrangements/packages are arranged

by the conference organiser for participants, e.g. a hotel with rating of above 3 stars, special “stay and dine” room package, etc., reimbursement of the total expenses for such specific accommodation arrangements can be granted. Relevant documentation or information pertaining to the organiser’s specific accommodation arrangements should be provided together with the original copy of receipts.

### **III. Applications for Conducting Field Trip**

23. Major cost of the field trips, viz. the cost of travel and accommodation, and general expenses directly related to research/field work are covered.
24. An applicant should fill in the application form (shown in Appendix 1) giving justification on the following:
  - a) the need to conduct the field trip;
  - b) aims/objectives of the field trip;
  - c) a detailed plan for the proposed activities; and
  - d) a budget on travel and accommodation costs, and general expenses directly related to the conduct of research/field work during the field trip that may be incurred.

Note: Return passage should be at economy class but there is no restriction on selection of service provider; students to purchase their own tickets. For accommodation in a hotel, the budget shall be based on a 3-star hotel rate, covering the field trip period specified.

25. The applications will be considered and approved, where appropriate, by the PSC Chairman taking into account such factors as the necessity/importance of conducting the field trip and the recommendations of the Supervisor and Head of Department/Unit concerned.
26. Award of the field trip sponsorship is subject to submission of a brief report on the field trip (shown in Appendix 2). The content of the brief report may vary depending on the purpose of the field trip. It may cover such items as the actual activities, whether the aims/objectives of the field trip are achieved, how the outcome/product of the field trip will be used, difficulties/problems encountered, etc. The University reserves the right to suspend payment of funds if, in the eyes of the PSC, the report is unsatisfactory.
27. Reimbursement of expenses for conducting field trip will be paid up to the amount awarded or the actual expenses (field trip-related only) incurred on the following items, whichever is the lesser:
  - a) return passage to the destination(s) of the field trip and local travelling expenses by public transport (i.e. travelling within approved cities of the

- visiting country, travelling across countries if field trip approved to more than one destination);
- b) accommodation expenses; and
  - c) general expenses directly related to the conduct of research/field work during the field trip (e.g. expenses on dataset, publication editing, photocopying, transcription, translation, etc.) but not expenses related to meals or purchasing of general consumables.

#### **IV. Applications for Other Academic Activities**

- 28. As mentioned in paragraph 3 above, the sponsorships may also support MPhil/PhD students to undertake academic activities on an exceptional basis.
- 29. An applicant should submit an application form (shown in Appendix 1) giving details as follows, showing strong recommendations from his/her Supervisor and the Head of Department/Unit concerned:
  - a) the need to conduct the academic activity;
  - b) details of the activity, such as aims/objectives, brief content, offering organisation, dates, venue(s), etc.;
  - c) the estimated/possible expenses that may be incurred; and
  - d) expected benefits.
- 30. The application will be considered and approved, where appropriate, by the PSC taking into account the following:
  - a) the relevance of the academic activity to the student's research studies;
  - b) the expected benefits balancing against the cost involved; and
  - c) recommendations from the Supervisor and the Head of Department/Unit concerned.
- 31. Award of the sponsorship for academic activity is subject to submission of a brief report (shown in Appendix 2). It shall cover such items as the actual activities, whether the aims/objectives of the activity are achieved, what benefits are gained and how it contribute to the student's study, difficulties/problems encountered (if any), etc. The University reserves the right to suspend payment of funds if, in the eyes of the PSC, the report is unsatisfactory.
- 32. Reimbursement of expenses for academic activities will be paid up to the amount awarded or the actual expenses incurred on the following items, whichever is the lesser:
  - a) return passage to the destination(s) of the academic activities and local travelling expenses by public transport (i.e. travelling within approved cities of

the visiting country, travelling across countries if the academic activity approved involves venues of more than one destinations);

- b) accommodation expenses; and
- c) registration/tuition fee for academic activities such as summer schools, workshops, training and seminars, etc., or fee/expenses for activities that are organised by the organiser for participants (e.g. visiting of museums or gallery during the summer school, etc.), but not fee for meals or purchasing of general consumables.

Note: Return passage should be at economy class but there is no restriction on selection of service provider; students to purchase their own tickets. For accommodation in a hotel, the budget shall be based on a 3-star hotel rate, covering the academic activity period and a day before and after.

Note to Hong Kong PhD Fellowship Scheme Awardees:

The release of the conference/research related allowance to the Hong Kong PhD Fellowship Scheme awardees is subject to the prevailing practice and policy of the University. Therefore, students concerned are requested to observe the guidelines and procedures of this conference/field trip sponsorships scheme.

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(with effect from the academic year of 2023-24)

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