

The University of Hong Kong
Arts Technology Lab
Seed Funding Scheme for Staff (2026-28)
Guidelines & Policy

1. OVERVIEW

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|------------------------------------|--|
| Funding scheme | Seed Funding Scheme for Staff of Arts Technology Lab, Faculty of Arts |
| Funding body | Arts Technology Lab (ATL), Faculty of Arts |
| Call for application | All year round |
| Objective | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support innovative, interdisciplinary research projects that bridge the gap between arts, humanities, and technology. 2. Empower professoriate and academic-related staff to explore pioneering pilot studies with institutional support. 3. Facilitate the development of prototypes or preliminary data to contribute to research publications, long-term project incubation, and future large-scale external grant applications (e.g., GRF, ECS, or RGC). |
| Deadline of receipt of application | March 15, 2026 |
| Status | Open for application all year round |
| Project Period covered | From July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2028 (2 years) |
| Eligibility | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary PI: Must be full-time professoriate or academic-related staff within the Faculty of Arts, HKU. • Co-Investigators: May include staff from other HKU faculties, provided the Primary PI is from the Faculty of Arts. • Participation: A staff member may serve as Primary PI for only one active project at a time. To encourage a wider distribution of resources, previous PIs may only re-apply for the ATL Seed Fund at least 2 years after the successful completion and closure of their prior funded project |
| Funding amount | Total: HK\$100,000 (maximum) |
| Application | Please complete the application form and financial budget and |

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|-------------------------|---|
| procedure | submit them to atlab@hku.hk |
| Reimbursement procedure | All project-related administrative procedures—including procurement, staff recruitment, honorarium payments, and reimbursement claims—must be initiated and processed by the Primary PI’s home Department or School |
| Submission and enquiry | Ms. Anny Hui of Arts Technology Lab Email: atask@hku.hk Phone: 3917 0659 Office: Room 4.40, 4/F, Run Run Shaw Tower |

2. TIMELINE

The scheme operates on a **24-month (2-year) project lifecycle**. Applications are accepted year-round, with one primary selection cut-off:

| Milestone | Cycle (FY Start) |
|--|--------------------------|
| Project Start Date | July 1 (Year 1) |
| Annual Progress Report | July 15 (Year 2) |
| Project End Date | June 30 (Year 3) |
| Final & Financial Report (Final Deadline) | By September 30 (Year 3) |

3. ELIGIBILITY

- **Primary PI:** Must be full-time professoriate or academic-related staff within the **Faculty of Arts, HKU**.
- **Co-Investigators:** May include staff from other HKU faculties, provided the Primary PI is from the Faculty of Arts.
- **Participation:** A staff member may serve as Primary PI for only one active project at a time. To encourage a wider distribution of resources, previous PIs may only re-apply for the ATL Seed Fund at least 2 years after the successful completion and closure of their prior funded project
- **Termination of Candidature:** Where PIs leave the University before the completion of the project, the project account will be terminated immediately. All unspent funds will revert to the Arts Tech Lab Seed Fund.
- **Eligibility upon Departure:** Applicants who are leaving the University shall not be

eligible for the award of travel support if the travel takes place after their last day of study or registration/candidature with the University.

4. BUDGETARY AND ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

4.1 Administrative Responsibility

- **Processing Authority:** All project-related administrative procedures—including **procurement, staff recruitment, honorarium payments, and reimbursement claims**—must be initiated and processed by the **Primary PI's home Department or School**. This award is subject to the University's financial regulations, including the *Regulations Governing University Research Grants* and *Departmental Financial Administration (DFA)* guidelines.
- **Reimbursement Policy:** All reimbursements can only be processed **after the completion** of the trip, purchase, item, or task. Pre-payment claims or advances are generally not supported.

4.2 Procurement and Quotations

For a single payment with estimated value higher than HK\$30,000 but not exceeding HK\$200,000, competitive quotations should be obtained from at least TWO (2) suppliers in the sourcing process. All procurement must follow the University's central purchasing policies. Applicants are required to work closely with their respective School, Department, or Unit Offices to ensure all administrative and financial procedures are followed accordingly.

Evidence of these quotations must be kept on file. The ATL Seed Fund Committee or Finance Team may request this evidence during the Annual Progress Report review at Month 12 or the Final Research Report at Month 24 to ensure the university's fiscal policies were met.

4.3 Approved Usage & Expenditure Control

Grants can only be spent on items approved by the Arts Tech Seed Fund Committee.

- **Expenditure Limits & Budget Virement:** Grants must only be spent on items approved by the Committee, and spending on each item must not exceed the approved amount. Any new budget items not covered in the original proposal or requests to move funds between budget categories (virement) must seek prior written approval from the Committee

(Administrating Authority). Any money left over at the end of the project must be returned to the Faculty.

- **Staffing Cost:** Covers salaries for dedicated research support personnel (e.g., Research Assistants or Research Support Assistants). **Exclusions:** Funding cannot be used for teaching relief and supplementation of salaries for existing staff members
- **Honorarium for Invited Speakers:** For invited speakers (CVs required).
 - Eligibility: Honoraria cannot be paid to HKU staff.
 - Online seminar: HK\$2,000
 - In-person seminar: HK\$7,500 (Asia); HK\$15,000 (Rest of the World) (Rates include travel/accommodation.)
 - *Note: If the invited speaker prefers payment via Telegraphic Transfer (TT), the applicant must budget an additional HK\$400 for the bank fee.*
- **Critical Friends (Manuscript Reviewers):** Applicants should follow Faculty guidelines for ‘critical friends’ regarding the review of research outputs:
 - **Paper Manuscript:** HK\$2,340 (equivalent to US\$300) for commenting on a paper manuscript.
 - **Book Manuscript:** HK\$7,800 (equivalent to US\$1,000) for commenting on a book manuscript.
 - *Note: Reviewers cannot be HKU staff.*
- **Research Equipment:** Supporting essential research equipment. Excludes personal electronic devices (cell phones) and standard office equipment (computers, servers, laptop computers, printers, scanners and standard/software license/dataset) unless strong justifications are provided.
- **General Expenses:** Covers consumables directly related to the research, such as Service costs, translation, or datasets. Excludes stationery, journal subscriptions, and professional membership fees. **Note: Conference attendances are not supported.**

4.4 TRAVEL SUPPORT REGULATIONS

Specific regulations for international academic field trips or research-related data collection:

- **Airfare:** Reimbursement is confined to the cheapest return economy class airfare by the most direct route or by another route if this is less than the cost of the cheapest direct flight. The funding recipient wishing to stop over en route to the destination, or wishing to use an indirect route, must provide to the University’s Finance and Enterprises Office **two quotations from two different travel agencies** for the cheapest direct airfare to

destination. This will be used for the purpose of assessing the travel costs which may be set against the funding support.

- **Transportation Costs:** Includes public means of transport between home/University and the Hong Kong international airport; inter-city transportation.
- **Subsistence Allowance:** This allowance covers the costs of accommodation, transportation, and meals incurred during business travel. Claims are subject to FEO per diem rates for expenses covering one day before the proposed activity start date, and one day after the proposed activity end date (please refer to the FEO intranet for details).
The path of viewing the rates of subsistence allowance: HKU Portal > FEO intranet link (https://intraweb.hku.hk/reserved_2/finance/index.html#) > Staff (shown on the header) > Other Financial Information including subsistence allowance > Rates of Subsistence Allowance > For Duty Trips Outside Hong Kong
- **Insurance:** Recipients qualify for travel insurance under the University's Corporate Business Travel programme. For details, please refer to HKU Portal > Finances & Expenses > FEO Intranet Homepage > Staff > Insurance.
- **Non-reimbursable Travel Cancellations:** Funding recipients who are subsequently unable to make the trip due to change of personal circumstances (except for medical reasons) or visa delay/denial will not be reimbursed for any pre-paid registration/enrolment fees or other associated cancellation charges.

4.5 Funding Conjunction & Double Benefits

- **Double-claiming Prohibited:** The award can be used in conjunction with funding from any other internal or external sources for the same project. However, **double-claiming is strictly prohibited**. Applicants cannot claim reimbursement for the same individual expense item (e.g., the same airfare ticket or piece of equipment) if they are already covered by another award or grant.
- **Funding Disclosure:** If you have other funding sources for the same project, you must submit all relevant supporting documents to the ATL for review. This ensures compliance with regulations regarding funding conjunction and top-up coverage.

4.6 Reimbursement Submission & Tracking

- **FoA Finance Countersign:** Every claim must be counter-signed by the Faculty of Arts Finance Team to ensure the expenditure aligns with both ATL and University financial policies.
- **Cumulative Expenditure Monitoring:**

Applicants are required to provide a clear financial summary with each reimbursement or payment submission to ensure the project remains within the approved budget. This summary must include the exact amount of the **current claim**, the **cumulative total spent to date** (inclusive of the current request), and the **remaining balance** of the approved grant.

To maintain administrative consistency and facilitate the verification process, all applicants **must use the "Appendix I: Project Expenditure Tracking & Countersign Form"** for this purpose. This form serves as the official record for the Faculty of Arts Finance Team to review and countersign. The template for this form can be found in Appendix I on pages 8 and 9 of the Guideline and Policy for Seed Funding for Teachers

5. INVENTORY AND EQUIPMENT POLICY

- **Ownership:** Equipment and other items purchased with University funds remain the property of the University. The University reserves the right to re-deploy the equipment upon project completion.
- **Inventory Tracking:** Items will be entered on the equipment inventory of the Schools/ Departments/ Unit Offices. Upon completion of the project, applicants are responsible for returning all inventoried items to their respective School, Department, or Unit Office for record-keeping and potential re-deployment.
- **Library Accessions:** Books, journals, and publications acquired from this funding will be accessions to the **University Libraries**.

6. COMPLIANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- **Acknowledgement:** The “Arts-Tech Seed Funding Scheme, Faculty of Arts” must be formally acknowledged in all publicity materials, publications, and outputs.
- **Ethics Approval:** Necessary ethics (HREC) and safety approvals must be obtained **before** project commencement.

7. REPORTING AND EXTENSIONS

- **Progress Reports:** PIs are required to submit one Annual Progress Report at the end of the first year (Month 12). Submission deadline is set for **July 15**, as specified in the Section 2 Timeline.
- **Final & Financial Report:** A final research report and a detailed financial report (Actual Expenditure Statement) must be submitted **within 3 months of the Project End Date**.
- **Non-submission Policy:** Failure to submit reports by the specified deadlines will be documented and taken into account during the assessment of future funding applications.

- **Extensions:** Requests for project extensions must be made in writing to the Committee **before** the original Project End Date. Applicants must provide a strong justification and a revised budget for the remaining funds. All extensions are subject to review and approval; expenses incurred beyond the final (or extended) completion date will not be allowed.

8. CONTACT INFORMATION

Arts Technology Lab (ATL), Faculty of Arts

- **Contact point:** Ms Anny Hui
- **Email:** atlask@hku.hk
- **Location:** Room 4.40, 4/F, Run Run Shaw Tower, Centennial Campus, HKU

Appendix I:

ATL Seed Funding Scheme for Staff – Expenditure Tracking & Countersign Form

Instructions: This form must be completed and attached to every reimbursement claim or payment request. It ensures that the current expenditure is categorized correctly and that the total project spending remains within the approved amount limit (HK\$100,000 max)

Note to Applicants: The Primary PI (Teacher) and the Home Unit Admin Staff are responsible for completing Sections A through D (Items 1 & 2) before submitting the form to the Faculty of Arts Finance Team for the final countersign

Section A: Project Information *(To be completed by the Applicant)*

Primary PI: _____

School/Department/Unit: _____

Project Title: _____

Approved Budget: HK\$

Section B: Current Reimbursement / Payment Request *(To be completed by the Applicant/Admin Staff)*

Please categorize the current expense according to the budget categories and approved amounts in your original award letter. Applicants may add additional rows to the tables below if more space is required.

| Budget Category | [A] Approved Amount (HK\$) | [B] Previously Spent (Accumulated) | [C] Current Claim Amount (HK\$) | [D] New Accumulated Total [B + C] |
|--------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Staffing | | | | |
| Research Equipment | | | | |
| General Expenses | | | | |
| Research Materials | | | | |
| Business Travel | | | | |
| Honoraria | | | | |
| Other Expenses | | | | |

| | | | | |
|-------|--|--|--|--|
| TOTAL | | | | |
|-------|--|--|--|--|

Section C: Cumulative Financial Status *(To be completed by the Applicant/Admin Staff)*

To be verified by the Faculty of Arts Finance Team before countersigning.

| | |
|--|------|
| Total Accumulated Expenditure (Excluding current claim): | HK\$ |
| Amount of Current Claim (from Section B above): | HK\$ |
| New Cumulative Total (Total spent to date): (B) | HK\$ |
| Remaining Budget Balance (Approved amount minus B): | HK\$ |

Section D: Declarations and Authorizations

(1) PI Declaration (To be completed by the Teacher):

I certify that the expenses listed above were incurred solely for the research purposes of the ATL Seed Fund project and comply with the University's financial regulations and the Scheme's Guidelines.

- **Name of Primary PI (in Block Letters):** _____
- **Signature of Primary PI:** _____ **Date:** _____

(2) Verification ((To be completed by Home Unit Admin Staff):

Verified that the expenditure is in accordance with the project's original proposal and departmental records.

- **Responsible Staff Name (Full Name):** _____
- **Designation:** _____
- **Signature & Chop:** _____ **Date:** _____

(3) Countersign (To be completed by Faculty of Arts Finance Team):

Approved for processing. Cumulative expenditure remains within the approved amount (HK\$100,000 max) grant ceiling.

- **Name of Finance Officer (Full Name):** _____
- **Signature:** _____ **Date:** _____

Submission Note: After completion of this form, please email the signed copy to atlask@hku.hk along with all relevant reimbursement supporting documents (e.g., original receipts, invoices, or staffing contracts). Thank you