

Celebrating and fostering research excellence in Hong Kong

As a world-class city and a regional education hub, Hong Kong is internationally renowned for its outstanding track record in conducting research of the highest caliber. Over the years, the city's thriving research scene has been continuously nurtured by the University Grants Committee (UGC) and its Research Grants Council (RGC) through research funding and fellowship schemes.



▲ Professor Yuk-shan WONG, Chairman of RGC, delivered a speech at the 2021/22 RGC Award Presentation Ceremony

The Humanities and Social Sciences Prestigious Fellowship Scheme (HSSPFS), launched in 2012/13, aims at granting extended time-off and supporting funds to the outstanding investigators in the humanities and social sciences disciplines from UGC-funded universities to enable them to focus on research work and writing. Each year, following a highly competitive and rigorous selection process, up to 10 investigators are awarded fellowship with a maximum of HK\$1 million each. Each awardee will receive support for a period of 12 months in the manner of relief from teaching and administrative duties as well as research funding support.

UGC 大學教育資助委員會
University Grants Committee

To further strengthen the research capacity and nurture promising research talents in Hong Kong, the RGC has recently introduced the coveted Senior Research Fellow Scheme (SRFS) and Research Fellow Scheme (RFS). With the dual objectives of facilitating the endeavours of illustrious researchers across all disciplines from UGC-funded universities as well as developing and retaining the next generation of Hong Kong research community members, the two schemes operate on a yearly basis to provide awardees with sustained financial support and relief from teaching and administrative duties for a period of 60 months.

In each round, 10 SRFS awardees at full Professor rank are conferred the title 'RGC Senior Research Fellow', with each of their supporting university receiving a fellowship grant of around HK\$7.8 million, while 10 RFS awardees at Associate Professor rank are conferred the title 'RGC Research Fellow', with each of their supporting university receiving a fellowship grant of around HK\$5.2 million. Through the two schemes, academics can fully dedicate themselves to research and mentoring young researchers, thus bolstering Hong Kong's competitiveness and development for research excellence.



Professor David Carless

Improving learning processes

One of the recipients of the HSSPFS award this year is Professor David Carless, Faculty of Education, The University of Hong Kong (HKU). His project, 'Feedback Literacy for Lifelong Learning: New Pathways for Research and Practice', will examine how feedback processes are implemented in higher education to facilitate effective learning.

"I am grateful to the RGC for honoring me with this award," Carless states. "I am very pleased because it is a great recognition of my research effort."

Carless is deeply appreciative of the extended time-off for collecting data and writing up quality outputs. "Additionally, it provides me with the space to think deeper and conceptualise my project more rigorously in order to produce insightful research."

With the support of the HSSPFS, Carless' research will create a significant impact within the academic community by helping educators manage feedback processes better and improve student learning at the university level. At the same time, the project may have broader impacts on society as feedback is crucial for self-improvement and supporting the development of good human relationships.

"People all benefit from feedback literacy because we all need to be able to interact, build relationships and negotiate feedback with people in our daily lives," Carless explains. "And so I hope that over the medium term, we can gradually transform the reputation of feedback and develop an encouraging, critical and supportive feedback atmosphere that would be helpful in many walks of life."

Reflecting on his career in research in Hong Kong, Carless expresses his pleasure working in an environment where research and education are valued. He is also optimistic about the future of research in Hong Kong. "I think the prospects for doing high quality research here are promising because of the encouraging support we have from the university, the UGC and the government."