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Survey invitation - Review of the Hong Kong Research Grants Council

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Thu, Jul 5, 2018 at 3:58 PM

To: Carsten Andreas HOLZ <socholz@ust.hk>

To the attention of **Dr HOLZ**
HKUST

As you may know, a review is currently under way of the operations of the Research Grants Council (RGC). The aim is to identify ways of improving the quality and effectiveness of the RGC's funding processes.

We are a [team of consultants](#) who have been commissioned to gather evidence from members of academic staff and other stakeholders. We are now getting in touch to ask you to complete a brief [survey](#) on your experiences and views on the RGC and the operation of its various funding schemes. A link is available below and the survey should take no more than 15 minutes to complete:

<https://www.surveymzmo.eu/s3/90081249/Hong-Kong-RGC-Review-Survey-of-Academics>

We are keen to gather views from as many members of staff as possible, so we do hope you will complete the survey – it will remain open until [13 August 2018](#). However, should you wish to be removed from our list, please [click here](#) and hit 'Send'.

Best regards,

[Name omitted]
Consultant

[Contact information omitted]
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Mon, Jul 16, 2018 at 6:43 AM

Hi,

I filled in the survey but am lacking a final space in the survey to add whatever I would like to add.

-- Having just unsuccessfully applied two years in a row with two perfectly good proposals, I am astounded that one reviewer's comments, that my project is all good but I could give more explanations, can sink my proposal. (All the other reviewers, in their comments, opted for the excellent or close to excellent value.) -- I can't prove that just one unqualified reviewer is sinking my proposals because I can't see the number evaluation that the reviewer gives my proposal, but that's the impression I get from the comments. To make my point clear.

(1) I am getting some reviewer comments that suggest to me that the reviewer is not a qualified reviewer. Everyone who reads through the comments of such a reviewer will likely agree with me.

(2) Any reviewer who arbitrarily gives a proposal a, say, 2-point ranking, automatically sinks the proposal, since that will bring the average rating to below 4 (unless every single other reviewer rates the project exactly 5).

The RGC seems to indiscriminately take an average of the ratings assigned by all reviewers, including by reviewers who don't seem to know what they are talking about, and then allocates funding correspondingly.

In a separate matter:

HKUST penalizes faculty who do not apply for a GRF every year, and it penalizes faculty who do not obtain a GRF every year.

I.e., HKUST penalizes faculty who are interested in doing good research instead of creating money flows to the Provost.

The majority of the proposals that I evaluate every year do not need any money. I assume other universities play the same game.

I.e., the impression arises that the UGC (with its side-kick(?)) RGC is simply a rather arbitrary money distribution machine with little interest in good research.

Best,
Carsten