



Carsten Holz <carstenholz@gmail.com>

GRF/ECS

SHSS Office of the Dean <shssdean@ust.hk> Fri, Jul 31, 2020 3:46 PM

Reply-To: SHSS Office of the Dean <shssdean@ust.hk>

To: [School faculty]

Dear colleagues,

As we head in towards GRF/ECS writing time, I wanted to write to share a few logistic bits and pieces about expectations and the process.

Official announcement

We expect RO to send out the official announcement with further details in the near future. In the meantime, I attach here LAST YEAR'S checklist from RO to give some indication of the general budget lines and a reminder of the main documents expected.

Sharing session

In addition to the 'official' workshops on grants which RO will plan, we will organise a sharing session where colleagues will share their own experiences (good and bad!) I will in touch about this in the near future.

Consultants and readers

In common with previous years, we will help to arrange for **academic consultants** to review grant proposals. This year we will also have a pilot initiative to engage a consultant to support in **general grant writing and scientific communication**. This consultant will work with faculty at earlier stages of their writing. Please could you contact me if you would be interested in engaging either (or both) of these types of consultants.

Various members of the School (including myself and the Division Heads) will be engaged as 'readers' for grant proposals and will offer support and guidance. However, in order to do this we need to get the proposal in well before the internal deadline (please see the timeframe below).

Timeframe

August: Start thinking about the proposed projects; apply to me for consultant support for general grant writing and scientific communication; sharing session

Early September: Request academic consultant and begin engagement with them

Late September: If you require internal readers, ensure to submit to them well in advance of final internal deadline

Mid-October: Internal deadline to submit to RO

Expectations

It is the expectation of the School that all eligible faculty members will apply for GRF/ECS (even if they have been successful in the past year or two).

The importance of the GRF exercise for the funding of the University and, more particularly, the School cannot be overemphasised. Furthermore, the new RPG system means it is even more imperative to write PG students into grants if we are to have a vibrant graduate community.

This is not about ‘getting a grant for the School’ as some entity external to ourselves. It is about having the resources for us all, *collectively*, to perform world-class research.

Finally, faculty are reminded that according to the new School policy, part of the definition of ‘research active’ is that faculty should have ‘*Applied for at least one external grant (GRF, residential fellowship, etc.) within the past three years for SOSC and within the past five years for HUMA*’.

Best wishes,
[Associate Dean]



Carsten Holz
<carstenholz@gmail.com>

GRF/ECS

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Fri, Jul 31, 2020

To: [SHSS Office of the Dean, School faculty]

Bcc: [President]

Dear [Associate Dean],

You mention " according to the new School policy, part of the definition of 'research active' is that faculty should have '*Applied for at least one external grant (GRF, residential fellowship, etc.) within the past three years for SOSC and within the past five years for HUMA*'. "

Please share the policy -- a written document specifying the policy.

The draft minutes of the 29Apr2020 School Board meeting mention " Defining "research active" faculty: the definition and criteria for a research active faculty had been discussed by the Divisions and approved by HSS ExCo." but as far as I can tell, the policy has never been shared. -- I received an email from [Division head] back on 22 November 2019 "canvassing" faculty feedback on behalf of [Dean] to a particular definition of "research inactive." Feedback occurred and disappeared.

I guess after "consulting the masses," the Great Helmsmen then issue internal documents, not meant for the masses who'll be kept under control through allusions/threats.

My contract is with a professional organization, a university. A policy is relevant for me (applies to me) only if it has been shared with me, in writing, or if I have been informed of it and been given access to it in some other way (such as online).

If your policy comes with threats ("if you do not do X, then you will be hanged, drawn and quartered") I need to be informed of that, too.

Do I really need to point this out at a *university?*

Best,
Carsten

RE: Need to define research inactive faculty

Carsten Holz <carstenholz@gmail.com>

Tue, Nov 26, 2019

To: [Division head]

Bcc: [School faculty]

I object to the exercise of defining "research inactive" to begin with.

I object to "canvassing" faculty opinion on the definition of "research inactive" without specifying why one needs to define "research inactive," and what the consequences of being "research inactive" are (and who decides the consequences).

I object to asking faculty to respond within 1.5 work days unless it is a routine, unimportant matter.

Regarding the 3 criteria you list:

(1) Publications: In economics, a 3-year horizon may not be enough.

And maybe not only in economics.

As far as I understand, our colleague He Wenkai would have failed this criterion several years in a row.

What would you have done in Wenkai's case? Would you have fired him?

(2) GRF publications: I most strongly object to #2. Being a researcher has nothing to do with making money for SHYY Wei (to give to other people).

Please provide evidence of a positive correlation between making money and research. In my own experience, it is a **negative** correlation. Having to deal with making money distracts from my research.

You can be a Nobel Prize winner (in economics, at least) without ever having received a single grant.

If SHSS establishes such a ridiculous requirement, I will feel free to put in an equally ridiculous GRF application to meet your GRF requirement. You may wish to establish pre-submission censorship criteria within HKUST for GRF applications.

-- Come to think of it, I could propose a GRF "How to Rapidly Depreciate a University's Only Asset (the Faculty) and Run the University into the Ground."

(3) Conference: I guess if you require faculty to make money (and SHYY Wei can't take it all away), you'll also need to require them to spend it. Fortunately, there is plenty of vacation trips masquerading as conferences. -- It's not my favorite.

The requirements you propose reduce the scope for academic research by only allowing that type of research and behavior that suits the dictator controlling the institution. The requirements are alien to academia, they are against freedom of research, and ultimately constitute censorship of research methods / approaches. They reduce the

scope for research and eliminate diversity.

I judge your endeavor to be 'complete idiocy,' comprehensible to me only as intentional destruction of academia.

To me, this endeavor disqualifies those who pursue it from leadership positions at an academic institution.

If you absolutely need to *measure* research, you have the RAE information.

Carsten

<http://carstenholz.people.ust.hk/>

-- This email may be freely shared.

-- This email is bcc'ed to everyone listed under SOSOC and HUMA on HKUST's Faculty Profiles list. (I don't know who is on your staff list and I can't use it in a *gmail* 'reply all'.)