

VIEW COMMENTS FROM EXTERNAL REVIEWER

Project Number : 16603621

Project Title : Academic Freedom at the Hong Kong University of Science & Technology

PI Name : Prof Holz, Carsten A.

Section A : Detailed Comments**1. Please comment on the objective(s) of the proposal, and whether the research agenda adequately addresses the objective(s)?**

Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments:

While academic freedom is definitely an important issue for higher education studies and research around the world, including Hong Kong where the issue is rather a bit under-researched, it would be more appropriate for PI to explain why HKUST is chosen for this proposed research. In what sense HKUST is representative to illustrate the situation of academic freedom in Hong Kong? It is also stated that HKU and CUHK, subject to the availability of information, can also be compared with HKUST. Why these two universities but not the other UGC-funded institutions to be considered also? Also, PI mentioned that not much variation between the three institutions to be expected even with such a comparison to be conducted. In what sense it is true? What can be learnt from this research on academic freedom in HKUST? How HKUST academics' views of academic freedom would representative the rest of the Hong Kong higher education system? Will this proposed research probe into political or/and managerial factors that affecting the changing academics' perception of academic freedom? How is this proposed research on academic freedom in Hong Kong different from the previous research on the same topic? Perhaps PI can provide more details regarding these queries.

2. Please comment on the Research Design and Methodology.

Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments:

It is stated that a survey will be conducted to examine faculty members' perspectives of academic freedom, but the information on how the surveys to be carried out and how many academics in the university to be covered is missing. Moreover, it is not so sure whether under what condition HKU and CUHK will also be included in the proposed research without knowing how the data collection to be carried out in both institutions, once if a comparative study is to be conducted.

3. Please comment on the feasibility of the proposed research.

Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments:

Based on the information stated in the research proposal so far, it is not known if this research could be carried out unless more details on research design and methodology are available.

4. What do you consider to be the most original or innovative aspect of the proposed research? What advances would the research result bring about to the related field if the proposed research is successful?**Comments:**

The proposed research on academic freedom in Hong Kong is rather timely with regard to most recent changes in the socio-political circumstances in Hong Kong. If planned and worked out properly, this research may provide insights on enriching our understanding about the latest situation of academics' perspectives on academic freedom, whether they have changed or not over a certain period of time.

5. Please comment on the reasonableness of the proposed budget and manpower planning and project duration.**Comments:**

Because of the lack of information of what kind of surveys to be conducted in the research, it is rather hard to judge if the employment of a research assistant for a mere six months would be enough for a project to be lasted for three years. PI should check the correct salary for hiring a research assistant if it is really HK\$28,000 per month? Concerning HK\$20,000 for conference-related expenses, PI should indicate what sort of conferences to be attended and for what purposes (for PI indicated Journal is the only way of disseminating the research findings [see page 7]). The project duration may also depend on how the data collection to be conducted so a timespan of 2-3 years seems to be reasonable.

6. Overall Comments

Overall Comment : Perhaps PI can provide more details on what to plan for research plan and methodology.

Strength: Academic freedom is definitely an important issue for higher education studies and research around the world, including Hong Kong where the issue is rather a bit under-researched. This research may provide insights on enriching our understanding about the latest situation of academics' perspectives on academic freedom, whether they have changed or not over a certain period of time.

Weaknesses: Please refer to comments above.

Suggested improvements: Please refer to comments above.

Section B : Summary of Assessment**The project :**

Scientific/scholarly merit	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Duration Proposed	Too Long	Appropriate	Too Short		
	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		
Impact of Research	High	Moderate	Low	None	
	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	

The principal investigator :

Ability to undertake the proposal	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Track record in field	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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