

**HKUST-UNSW Global Research Impact Program & Global Knowledge Network Awards**  
**Request for Proposals and Guidelines for Applicants**  
**Deadline for Applications: 31 March 2026**

**Purpose**

The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST) and The University of New South Wales (UNSW) have identified each other as strategic partners to foster deep collaboration in research and education. The HKUST-UNSW Global Research Impact Program and Global Knowledge Network Awards have been established to facilitate and support joint initiatives that will strengthen the two universities' strategic priorities as well as develop multi-disciplinary cutting-edge research to create academic and societal impact. We invite proposals from researchers in all disciplines at HKUST and UNSW.

Applicants are encouraged to submit funding proposals for innovative and sustainable programs built around collaborative research linking HKUST and UNSW. Proposals should be sustainable in the long-term with a plan for engagement that includes leveraging external funding and publication outputs.

In this round, up to four (4) proposals will be funded (each with two Principal Investigators; one from HKUST and one from UNSW). Each successful proposal may receive up to the equivalent of HKD 40,000 from HKUST and AUD 8,000 from UNSW for a total of approximately HKD 80,000/AUD 16,000 for the joint project.

**1. Eligibility**

- 1.1. Applications are open to any HKUST-eligible Principal Investigator and UNSW-eligible Principal Investigator. Priority will be given to collaborations involving Early Career Researchers.
- 1.2. Graduate students, post-docs, and research assistants/associates are not eligible to apply as Principal Investigators.

**2. Duration**

Funding is available from 1 May 2026 until 30 April 2027.

**3. Important Dates**

Applications open	1 February 2026
Applications close	31 March 2026 (20:59 HKT / 23:59 AEDT)
Successful applicants notified	By 30 April 2026
Latest date for projects to start	1 May 2026
Mid-term progress review	31 October 2026
Latest date for projects to end	30 April 2027
Final reports due	31 May 2027

#### 4. Eligible Grant Activities/Costs

Activity/Cost	HKUST	UNSW
Travel expenses: Airfare (only travel on economy class is allowed) and other travel expenses (e.g., train, rental car, lodging, meals)	eligible	eligible
Cost for hosting seminars/conferences or workshops	eligible	eligible
Accommodation and subsistence	eligible	eligible
Conference registration (related to collaborative research)	eligible	eligible
Consumable materials and supplies	eligible	eligible
Publications and printing (related to collaborative research)	eligible	not eligible
Hiring graduate students to assist in research project	eligible	not eligible
General teaching or instructional programs	not eligible	not eligible
Salaries or salary supplementation for faculty or staff: salaries and associated fringe-benefit costs for tenured and tenure-track faculty (including effort for faculty in soft-money positions), teaching buyout, staff and post-doc salary)	not eligible	not eligible
Postgraduate Studentship (PGS)	not eligible	not eligible
Stipend payments to non-HKUST, non-UNSW individuals	not eligible	not eligible
Student scholarships	not eligible	not eligible
Venue/space rental fee if event held on campus	not eligible	not eligible
Mobile phone cards	not eligible	not eligible
Entertainment costs	not eligible	not eligible
Computers, including laptops (excluding access to high-performance computers or other specialized applications that are justified by the project) and basic computing facilities such as printers, word processing and other standard software	not eligible	not eligible
Indirect cost (non-required for this grant)	not eligible	not eligible

#### 5. Submission Requirements

All proposals must address the selection criteria (see point 6 below) and include the following elements:

- Project title (255 characters max)
- Project abstract (150 words max)
- Project keywords (30 words max)
- Details of team involved and the role and contribution of each member
- Project timelineProject budget
- CVs of the Principal Investigators (2 pages max)

#### 6. Selection Criteria

6.1. Criteria do not have weightings. Proposals are assessed holistically. Each proposal will be assessed according to the selection criteria described below.

Selection Criteria	Description
Complementary Strengths & Strategic Alignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear evidence of commitment, relevant expertise, and complementary strengths between UNSW and HKUST team members.</li> <li>• Balanced roles and contributions from both institutions.</li> <li>• Alignment with UNSW's <a href="#">Progress for All Strategy   UNSW Sydney</a> - Policy, Education, Research &amp; Translation Excellence</li> </ul>

Impact Potential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Articulated academic or translational impact of the proposed work.</li> <li>• Potential for addressing social, environmental, technological or policy challenges.</li> <li>• Contribution to UNSW and HKUST institutional reputation and global engagement priority.</li> </ul>
Outputs & Mutual Value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarity and feasibility of planned outcomes: e.g. PhD mobility, joint publications, external funding, or civic/industry engagement.</li> <li>• Evidence of value-add to both UNSW and HKUST.</li> <li>• Inclusion of Early to Mid-Career Academics.</li> </ul>
Scalability & Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential to lead to long-term collaboration (e.g. joint centres, future grants, PhD pathways).</li> <li>• Plans for maintaining engagement post-seed grant collaboration.</li> <li>• Prospects for follow-on institutional or external funding.</li> </ul>
Project Plan Feasibility & Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Realistic design of activities and milestones.</li> <li>• Clear roles and timeline across both institutions.</li> <li>• Budget is reasonable, justified, and aligned with proposed outputs.</li> </ul>

## 7. Expected Outcomes

It is expected that the selected proposal will result in the following outcomes:

Category	Outcome
Research quality and influence	The research: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- will advance knowledge in the field which addresses an issue of importance</li> <li>- may result in fundamental outcomes</li> <li>- is innovative in concept</li> <li>- will use well-established approaches to good effect</li> </ul>
Publications	At least one (1) referred publication in a nationally/internationally recognized scholarly journal
External funding	At least one (1) local/national/international competitive grant submission
Training & education	Supervision and mentoring of visiting PhD students/postdoctoral researchers/junior scholars
Joint workshop	Organise at least one (1) joint workshop at either institution

## 8. Assessment Process

Award selection will be made by a joint committee formed by members of both universities, which reserves final authority over the selection of projects, taking into account university and faculty strategic priorities, and the availability of funds.

## 9. Application Submission

9.1. All applications must be jointly submitted by a Principal Investigator from HKUST and a Principal Investigator from UNSW.

9.2. All applications must be submitted online via the [online HKUST-UNSW Global Research Impact Program & Global Knowledge Network Awards 2026 – Application Form](#).

Please prepare the following documents before submission:

- CVs of the two Principal Investigators (2 pages max)

9.3. Only complete submissions will be considered.

9.4. Late applications will not be considered.

## **10. Notification of Application Outcomes**

Successful applicants will receive a letter of award outlining the process to accept the award. Feedback on individual applications will not be provided.

## **11. Change of Investigator**

Applicants should contact the Program Coordinator at each institution. Such changes will need to be approved and documented.

## **12. Extensions**

Under exceptional circumstances, extensions will be approved for a maximum period of six months. Applicants seeking an extension must submit a revised budget and timeline of activities to the Program Coordinators for approval.

## **13. Forfeiture of Grants**

Grants not spent by **30 April 2027** must be returned so that unspent balances can be re-allocated.

## **14. Financial and Reporting Obligations**

The funding should only be used for the approved project and in accordance with the proposal and the budget plan. It must not be used for any other purposes, and prior approval is needed for any variation in the budget items. Requests for variations from original proposals must be submitted to both universities.

Awardees must adhere to the purchasing guidelines of the respective universities.

Recipients must submit a mid-term progress review **by 31 October 2026** and a final report by **30 April 2027**. Failure to submit a completed report will result in all members of the project team being ineligible to submit future funding applications.

The activation of research funding accounts is not tied to ethics/other approvals being obtained. It is the responsibility of Principal Investigators to ensure that no work requiring approval is commenced until such approvals are in place.

## **15. Marketing and Communications**

Recipients may be contacted by HKUST and UNSW for the purposes of promoting their successful funding application and informing others of their research. Materials such as photos, videos, and news stories that provide an update on the project's progress and which can be shared more widely are also welcomed. Both universities may occasionally request brief project updates to support awareness of the partnership.

## **16. Publications**

Any publications (e.g., abstracts, articles) or dissemination (e.g., public presentations) arising from activities supported by the awards should acknowledge assistance received from the awards. Copies or notifications should be submitted to the Office of the Vice-President for Research and Development at HKUST and the

Associate Vice-President of Global Research and Innovation at UNSW. The standard acknowledgment is “HKUST–UNSW Global Research and Impact Program and Global Knowledge Network Awards”.

**For further information,** please contact the Program Coordinators:

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