The British Council East Asia Assessment Research Grants 2014

Aimed at those working in research into English language assessment, the British Council East Asia Assessment Research Grant recognises achievement and innovation within the field of language assessment in East Asia and forms part of the British Council’s extensive support of research activities across the world.

The EA research grant aims to make funding available for various research projects to be conducted in Greater China, Japan and Korea. This year, we invite educational institutions and suitably qualified individuals to apply for funding to undertake applied research projects in relation to the British Council assessment product Aptis.

Focus of the British Council East Asia Assessment Research Grant 2014

The research grant committee is interested in supporting researchers to conduct quality research under the headings below. This year we would particularly encourage applications for research studies which fit within these broad areas.

Grants of up to £5,000 will be awarded to successful applicants.

Region: Country-specific or cross border / collaborative research between Greater China, Japan and Korea is encouraged.

Research Product: Aptis

- Please visit www.britishcouncil.org/Aptis for product information
- Read about the development theory behind Aptis in the Aptis Test Development Approach written by Barry O’Sullivan:
  - Aptis Test Development Approach
- Aptis Formal Trials Feedback Report

Research areas of interest

- Issues related to the test-taking process/test result analysis for test-takers with L1 Chinese Mandarin/Cantonese, Japanese, Korean.
- Test use issues. For example:
  - Studies on the use of Aptis for purposes of:
    - entry and exit testing
    - filtering students for other exams
    - language audits
    - identifying training needs
- Test comparison studies. For example:
  - Study on the relationships between similar skill sections on an existing test and Aptis
  - Comparison study on Aptis used in education institutes in different regions
- Test localisation issues. For example:
  - Studies on test-takers’ feedback/evaluation
  - Studies on test-users’ feedback/evaluation
**Research panel**: All research proposals will be evaluated by the British Council's global and East Asia Assessment Research Committee comprising representatives of the research partners as well as other academic research experts in the field of applied linguistics and language testing.

**Who will evaluate the proposals?**

Proposals will be peer-reviewed by a panel of international experts in assessment and applied linguistics, who will work with the British Council research team. Applications will be reviewed on a confidential basis and the decision of the reviewers will be final.

**Evaluation criteria**

The following factors will be taken into consideration when evaluating proposals:

Does the proposal adequately **contextualise** the proposed project?

Does the **proposal address a topic that is relevant to the theme of this year's round**?

Is the research relevant and of interest to the regions of Greater China, Japan and Korea?

Does the proposal clearly outline the **aims** of the project?

Does the proposal offer a clearly stated **rationale** for the study?

Does the proposal clearly outline the **methodology** (design, participants, instruments, procedures)?

Are the **details of the methodology** sufficiently well defined to allow for a meaningful judgement on their value?

Is the methodology likely to be **feasible**? (e.g. number of participants, accessibility of participants etc.)

Are the **research questions** clearly stated?

Is the **assistance required** likely to be reasonable and deliverable?

Have the authors considered **ethical approval**?

Is there a detailed **budget** breakdown provided?

Does the budget represent **good value for money**?

Does the project offer a noteworthy **contribution to the validation of Aptis**?

Does the project offer a **unique contribution to validation** methodology?

Is the project likely to result in a paper of **publishable** (web or book chapter) quality?

Is the **project likely to add value to Aptis**?

**Deliverables**

The Assessment Research Grant recipient will submit three project documents:

1. Interim report. This is due six months after the start date (to be negotiated with award recipient) and will briefly outline progress on the project to date.

2. Final Report. This is due 12 months after the start date and should be presented as a formal report in publishable form.

3. A two to three page summary of the research and its findings. This is due with the Final Report and will appeal to readers with little technical knowledge, while still informing the expert reader.

**Access to Aptis test materials or score data**

It will be possible for researchers to access test materials and/or score data where this is required to complete the research project. This is typically (though not always) retired material and will be provided subject to the researcher signing a standard
confidentiality agreement.

As part of the grant, the British Council is willing to subsidise Aptis tests required for the research project.

**Research ethics and confidentiality**

All applications should follow the necessary ethical clearance and confidentiality codes as required by your university/institution/organisation and/or region. All applications should take account of the standards for best practice described in publicly available professional guidelines for assessment. In particular account should be taken of ILTA Guidelines for Practice, EALTA Guidelines for Good Practice, and the Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing.

**The application process**

The applicant will present an original proposal based on one of the areas of interest identified above. The application will contain an outline of the budget and a project plan (see the application form and guidelines for additional information). The text of the proposal should not exceed approximately 2,000 words (including references).

Proposals must be presented on the form provided. Applicants should submit their completed project proposal form by email attachment to the British Council at arag_EA@britishcouncil.org.cn. You will receive a confirmation email when the proposal has reached the British Council. This should happen within three days of sending the proposal.

**Key Dates**

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>31 Mar 2014</td>
<td>Deadline for submission of proposals</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apr 2014</td>
<td>Review of proposals by the Research Committee and partners</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 2014</td>
<td>Applicants notified of the Committee’s decision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec 2014</td>
<td>Mid-term review by the Research Committee and partners</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 2015</td>
<td>Final Submission of Research Findings</td>
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For information about the grant, visit: http://www.britishcouncil.org.cn/newdirections/research2.html

If additional information about the assessment research grants and research awards is required, contact the British Council prior to application at arag_EA@britishcouncil.org.cn or ELT@britishcouncil.org.cn

For information about other research awards, please visit http://www.britishcouncil.org/aptis/research