

## LRPGG Social Lab Competition Guidelines

### 1. Objective

The competition aims to foster a culture of research and innovation among NTU students on topics related to social management, technology governance, and sustainable development within the context of Singapore and China, with the possibility of extending the research to ASEAN if necessary.

### 2. The benefits of participation

Participation provides opportunities for gaining recognition and first-hand research experience and working with experienced researchers, as well as showcasing their work at reputable conferences and publishing research papers in archived journals.

### 3. Eligibility

The competition is open to any current undergraduate or postgraduate student enrolled at NTU with an interest in the aforementioned research areas. Applicants may compete individually or in teams of up to three members.

### 4. Submission of Research Proposal

Applicants are required to submit a research proposal of **no more than 1000 words**, outlining their proposed research topic, research objectives, methodology, research schedule, budget, expected outcomes, etc. The proposal must be written in English and previously unpublished original work. The research proposal should focus on one of the following research topics:

**a) Public health and policy, ageing and eldercare policies, strengthening of social fabrics at the time of globalization, etc.**

**b) Technology governance, AI and ethics, Fintech and policy regulation, etc.**

**c) Economic recovery and sustainable development, etc.**

\*Email your research proposal to [lienfellowship@ntu.edu.sg](mailto:lienfellowship@ntu.edu.sg).

### 5. Timeline

To ensure a smooth and efficient competition process, it is crucial for all applicants to strictly adhere to the provided deadlines. The competition will be officially launched on **June 1, 2023**, marking the beginning of an exciting journey. The registration and research proposal submission deadline are set for **July 15, 2023**, allowing applicants one and a half months to prepare and submit their proposals after the competition announcement. It is important to note that late submissions will not be entertained, as they may disrupt the evaluation process and the fairness of the competition. LRPGG reserves the right to cancel any application that is not submitted by the specified closing date. After the thorough evaluation process, the winners of the competition will be announced on **August 1, 2023**, marking a significant milestone in this research endeavour. Following the announcement, the project execution phase will take place from **August to October**. Winners will have ample time to conduct their research projects and bring their proposals to life. The final report submission deadline is set for **November 30, 2023**. It is essential for winners to complete and submit their final reports within this timeframe to

showcase their achievements and contribute to the success of the competition. To further celebrate the accomplishments of the winners and promote knowledge exchange, a conference will be held in **mid-December**. This conference will provide a valuable platform for winners to present their project results, share insights, and foster collaboration among participants.

#### **Updates**

- Recognizing the significance of providing sufficient time for interested students to submit their proposals, LRPGG has decided to extend the proposal submission deadline to **July 31, 2023**. In alignment with the revised timeline, the announcement of the competition winners will now take place on **August 15, 2023**.

\*To ensure fairness and acknowledge the efforts of early applicants, proposals submitted by the original deadline will be evaluated as planned, ensuring a prompt review process. These applicants will have the advantage of having their proposals assessed early, allowing them to potentially receive their awards on the initially scheduled date.

#### 6. Code of Conduct and Research Ethics

Applicants must adhere to a code of conduct and research ethics established by NTU's Research Integrity and Ethics Office ([RIEO](#)). It encompasses the prevention of plagiarism and academic dishonesty, the conduct of research in a responsible and honest manner, protecting human subjects, maintaining confidentiality, etc. To ensure that the completed research proposals and final reports are free of plagiarism, it is mandatory for applicants or winners to perform an originality check through **iThenticate**, an originality checking tool subscribed by NTU ([Click here](#) for **iThenticate** account registration). Violation of the code of conduct and research ethics could result in disqualification from the competition and may have further consequences based on the severity of the violation.

#### 7. Shortlisting of Applicants

Based on the following criteria, a panel of judges will evaluate all submitted proposals and select a shortlist of applicants:

- The relevance of the research topics
- The relevance of the research to Singapore-China collaborations in the aforementioned research areas
- The contribution of the research to LRPGG's efforts to promote mutual learning between Singapore and China on effective policies and practices.
- The feasibility and practicality of the proposed methodology, analytical techniques, and research design
- Originality and creativity, and the coherence and clarity of the proposal
- Research project budget

Finalists will be invited to present their proposals to the judges in person or via video conferencing.

## 8. Presentation of Proposal

Finalists will be given a maximum of 20 minutes to present their proposal, which will be followed by a 10-minute question-and-answer session with the judges. The presentation should cover the following aspects:

- a) Introduction and background of the research topic
- b) Research questions and objectives
- c) Significance of the research
- d) Methodology and research design
- e) Expected outcomes and impact
- f) Limitations of the research

## 9. Research execution

All winners are required to execute their proposed research projects diligently within the designated three-month timeframe. Maintaining regular communication with the LRPGG coordinators is essential for any assistance needed during the research period. We encourage winners to actively engage with the review committee, seek constructive feedback, and utilize the available resources provided by LRPGG to ensure the success of their research project. Although we acknowledge that unforeseen challenges may arise, it is important to note that research projects must be completed within the specified time frame. In exceptional circumstances where an extension is absolutely necessary, winners may request an extension through the LRPGG coordinator. However, it is essential that such requests are accompanied by a compelling justification outlining the reasons for the extension. LRPGG will carefully evaluate each request on a case-by-case basis, ensuring that fairness and the integrity of the competition are maintained.

## 10. Award

LRPGG will award up to S\$3,000 per research project to the winners. The allocated funds may be used for manpower, consumables, travel expenses, and other costs associated with the research project.

### a) Funding stages

- LRPGG will disburse the approved funding in three stages, with \$1,000 awarded for each successful assessment. This is to ensure winners meet certain milestones before receiving further funding.
- Disbursement will be made according to the LRPGG's assessment of:
  - 1<sup>st</sup> stage - Primary research outputs (including questionnaires, datasets, interview transcripts, etc.)
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> stage - Detailed progress report on the research project, along with all receipts and supporting documents
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> stage - Final report approved by review committees
- Failure to meet the assessment criteria leads to penalties, which encourage winners to stay on track and submit high-quality work. In the event of competition winners fail the assessments, they may be subject to the following penalties:

- Reduction in funding amount
- Delay in funding disbursement
- Disqualification from the competition
- Funding that has been disbursed but was not used upon the completion of the research project must be returned to LRPGG.

b) Funding terms

- The research fund should be used exclusively for the following purposes:
  - Fieldwork-related transport costs
  - Respondent incentives or tokens
  - Cost of photocopying survey questionnaires, survey consent form and other fieldwork materials
  - Cost of printing and binding the final report for submission to LRPGG
  - Any necessary research-related items
- Expenses not covered by the research fund include:
  - Travel expenses for overseas research
  - Telecom expenses
  - Equipment or hardware purchases
  - Software or license purchases
  - Meeting refreshments

11. Procedures for research project termination or withdrawal from the competition

In the LRPGG social lab competition, it is crucial that all research projects are conducted ethically and in accordance with the competition rules. However, unforeseen circumstances may arise which necessitate the termination of the research project or the awardee's withdrawal decision. Such decisions should be made with careful consideration of the potential impact on LRPGG, and the relevant parties involved. LRPGG has therefore established clear procedures for terminating research projects or withdrawing from the competition, which must be followed by all participants. By following these procedures, we hope to ensure that termination or withdrawal decisions are made responsibly and rationally.

a) Project Termination

A research project may be terminated by LRPGG for any reason deemed appropriate at any stage of the competition, including but not limited to ethical violations, non-compliance with terms and conditions, or misconduct. In such cases, the following procedures will apply:

- I. Notification of Termination: A written notice of termination will be sent to the winners of the research project along with the valid reason(s) for termination.
- II. Suspension of Award: All award funds will be suspended upon termination notification. The winners of the research project will no longer be eligible for remaining award funds.
- III. Investigation: The winners of the research project are required to submit to LRPGG all documentation, data, and research materials related to the project. LRPGG will

conduct a thorough investigation into any allegations of ethical violations, non-compliance with terms and conditions, or misconduct. The investigation will require full cooperation from all individuals associated with the research project.

- IV. Consequences: LRPGG may take legal action against winners or any other team members involved if there are ethical violations, non-compliance with terms and conditions, or misconduct discovered during the investigation. Additionally, the winners may be banned from participating in future LRPGG competitions or initiatives.

b) Withdrawal Procedures

In rare cases such as health related challenges or team member limitations etc., winners of the LRPGG Social Lab Competition may need to withdraw from the competition before completing the proposed research project. It is important for the winners to be aware of the possible consequences if they withdraw from the competition before completing the research project, including:

- Loss of eligibility for future LRPGG competitions
- Negative impact on reputation: As the competition is designed to encourage research excellence, and withdrawal may suggest a lack of commitment or inability to complete the project.

Hence, withdrawal from the competition should be initiated only after careful consideration. The following procedures are established for withdrawing from the competition:

- I. Winners who wish to withdraw from the competition must communicate with the LRPGG coordinator and their supervisor(s) to discuss their reasons for withdrawal and explore possible options (e.g., changing team members, altering the scope of work, etc.) for completing the research project.
- II. If there are no other available options for completing the research project, the winners may initiate a request for withdrawal from the competition. Withdrawal requests must be made in writing to the LRPGG coordinator and a clear and compelling justification for withdrawal must be provided.
- III. The request for withdrawal must be reviewed and approved by the LRPGG coordinator and the relevant affected parties.
- IV. After final approval, the LRPGG coordinator will terminate the research project and award funds. The reasons for withdrawal from the competition will be documented by LRPGG for future reference.
- V. Any unused funds must be returned to LRPGG promptly, and any research data or outputs produced during the competition must be submitted to LRPGG.

12. Submission of the final report

After the three-month research period, the winners are required to submit a final report to LRPGG, summarizing their research findings and conclusions, as well as details on how the approved funding was utilised. The report should be within **7k - 8k** word limit, including references. The report must be well-written, structured, and include proper citations of all sources used during the research. The report will undergo a review process by the LRPGG

review committee, and the winners may be requested to make changes based on the review feedback. Upon submission of the final report, the winners will be invited to present their research findings at LRPGG seminars or conferences.

13. Rewards

The winner may receive rewards such as monetary incentives, publication of their work in reputable academic journals, invitations to academic conferences, and opportunities to collaborate with experts in the field.

14. Intellectual Property

All data used in research must be derived from open and legitimate sources without infringement of copyright. Research proposals submitted to LRPGG are not subject to any intellectual property claims. The ownership of the research, including its data and results, will, however, remain with LRPGG following completion of the research. LRPGG will be entitled to publish or disseminate research findings and data for academic and promotional purposes.

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