Health and Medical Research Fund
Research Fellowship Scheme

Application Guidelines

1. OBJECTIVES

1.1 The Health and Medical Research Fund (HMRF) Research Fellowship Scheme aims to support researchers or professionals, particularly healthcare professionals (including but not limited to medical doctors), in their early to mid-career to enhance their skills in public health and health services research[1]. The funding support under the Research Fellowship Scheme is expected to help attract young healthcare professionals to join the research community as well as retain such talents at the early stage of their career, particularly in the area of public health policy and research.

1.2 Funding support will be provided for successful applicants to (a) attend overseas training programmes which can broaden their horizons and equip them with the knowledge and skills to become independent scientists/researchers; and (b) apply what they have learnt from the training programmes to conduct a small scale original research project with translational potential within short-to-medium timeframe. Pilot studies and proof of concept studies[2] will be considered.

2. FRAMEWORK

2.1 The Research Fellowship Scheme is operated on an annual basis and supports applications from researchers or professionals in their early to mid-career, who want to acquire training and conduct **research in public health (in particular public health policy) and health services** in order

[1] Health services research covers a broad area of clinical research on the prevalence, incidence, cause, prevention, treatment of human diseases, effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of healthcare services and policy. Clinical studies on the care and rehabilitation of patients are also included. Examples include clinical studies on major non-communicable diseases (NCD), modifiable lifestyle factors, primary care, chronic disease management and palliative care, elderly care and infectious diseases.

[2] Proof of Concept studies refer to the studies which aim to verify the practical potential of some concepts or theories. Examples of Proof of Concept studies include early testing of potential efficacy, safety or feasibility of a treatment.

to fill the gap among the fellowship schemes in Hong Kong. Basic science research[3] with low translational value or requiring long time for influencing health practice will not be considered.

2.2 To echo the Health Bureau's strategic direction to stepping up prevention and control of cancer and tackling non-communicable diseases (NCD), higher priority will be given to applications which relate to cancer research or address the following modifiable risk factors for NCD -

(a) Smoking;
(b) Alcohol drinking;
(c) Unhealthy diet; and
(d) Physical inactivity

2.3 Each application has to cover the following two components -

(a) An overseas training programme (regular programmes for higher academic qualification, e.g. Master or PhD degree will not be considered); and
(b) A small scale research project relating to the proposed training programme.

2.4 The training programme aims to train the Fellowship Applicant (FA) as a better scientist/researcher. It should be an **overseas attachment to a reputable institution for at least three months cumulatively** throughout the fellowship period. Clinical attachment that cannot improve the research capability of the FA will not be considered. The knowledge and/or skills acquired in the training programme should also be applied to the research project and be able to benefit public health and health services in Hong Kong.

2.5 A solid and detailed training plan is required. Details of the training programme including its purpose, duration, activities, relevance to the

[3] According to The Association of American Medical Colleges, "Basic research encompasses familiar scientific disciplines such as biochemistry, microbiology, physiology and pharmacology, and their interplay, and involves laboratory studies with cells cultures, animal studies or physiological experiments." "Typically, basic science research focuses on determining the causal mechanisms behind the functioning of the human body in health and illness, and utilizes hypothesis-driven experimental designs that can be specifically tested and revised."

research project and deliverables should be clearly stated in the Application Form. The FA is expected to apply the skills and knowledge obtained from the overseas training programme to complete the research project covered by his/her application.

2.6 The research project should offer an opportunity for the FA to apply knowledge and skills acquired in the training programme. It can be a small scale study with no more than three research objectives. Pilot or proof of concept studies will also be considered. Replication of previous overseas studies is not acceptable. Research projects aiming to develop methods/techniques/research platforms without evaluation of the tool in a clinical setting will not be considered. For example, an engineering project aiming to solely develop a medical device without evaluation of the accuracy, reliability and feasibility of the device on patients is considered ineligible.

2.7 The FA should state clearly how the fellowship application fits the objectives of the Research Fellowship Scheme; discuss the potential beneficiaries and impact of the proposed research to improve patient care and population health, influence clinical practice and/or health services management or inform health policy; and identify the barriers to achieve the said beneficiaries and impact.

3. ELIGIBILITY

3.1 FAs must be researchers or professionals in medical and health-related disciplines (including doctors, nurses and allied-health professionals) in their early or mid-career.

3.2 FAs should have no more than ten years' post-doctoral or post-qualification (e.g. medical or nursing degree) experience at the closing date of the application, whichever is less.

3.3 FAs must be full-time employees of the following administering institutions (AIs) at the time of application and based at the same AI throughout the fellowship period –

(a) Stream A: Tertiary institutions funded by the University Grants Committee; or
(b) Stream B: Designated teaching hospitals of the medical schools of The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) and The University of Hong Kong (HKU), i.e. Prince of Wales Hospital and Queen Mary Hospital.

3.4 Each FA must secure the support of a mentor, who is a full-time staff of the AI and undertakes to provide guidance to the FA to select the training programme and carry out the research project throughout the fellowship period. For Stream B, the mentor can be a full-time staff of the respective medical school of the CUHK and the HKU.

3.5 The AI must provide all necessary support such as laboratory service and access to equipment/central facilities to facilitate the FA to undertake their research projects.

4. GRANT APPLICATIONS

4.1 Each AI is allowed to nominate up to **eight** FAs in each application round except CUHK and HKU which are each allowed to nominate up to **ten** FAs in each application round.

4.2 Each FA is allowed to submit **one** application in each application round.

4.3 Each application should have one FA and not more than nine Co-applicants in the research project.

4.4 Resubmission of application declined in the previous application round(s) is not accepted.

4.5 Successful FA in a previous application round cannot submit a new application until his/her current fellowship has been completed.

5. SUBMISSION OF GRANT APPLICATIONS

5.1 Applications must be submitted via the electronic Grant Management System (eGMS) (https://rfs.healthbureau.gov.hk/eGMS/) by completing the electronic Application Form (e-Form) on or before the deadline of submission specified by the Research Fund Secretariat (the Secretariat). FAs, especially those who are new to the eGMS, are strongly advised to prepare their applications **well before the deadline of submission** to avoid unexpected situations. Explanatory Notes and Quick Guide for completing the e-Form can be found at **Annex** and **Appendix A** of the Explanatory Notes respectively.

5.2 Endorsement letter from Mentor and Nomination letter from President/Vice-Chancellor (for Stream A) or Hospital Chief Executive (for Stream B) shall be attached in the e-Form (Section 2 and Section 3 of PART I).

5.3 Applications that are incomplete, inconsistent with the submission requirements, or insufficiently detailed to peer review will not be processed and may result in administrative withdrawal. Applications which do not use the standard proposal template (Section 9 of PART H) will be treated as incomplete. The template for Section 9 of PART H can be downloaded from the Secretariat's website.

6. FINANCIAL/FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS

6.1 Each fellowship award is capped at HK$1,200,000 and lasts for a normal duration of two years (inclusive of both training and research components).

6.2 Up to HK$400,000 could be allocated to the overseas training programme, whereas up to HK$800,000 for the research project.

6.3 The fellowship is to be held at the AI and is **not transferable** throughout the course of the fellowship.

6.4 Expenditure of the fellowship must be at the benefits of the FA's professional development. Funding can be used to meet the costs of the following items -

(a) fees of the training course/attachment to acquire the specialised knowledge and enhance the skill set for conducting research;
(b) air passage (up to two round trips economy class), accommodation and subsistence allowance for overseas training according to the established procurement policy and standard of the relevant AI;
(c) procurement of equipment or consumables or recruitment of research staff for conducting the research project; and
(d) salary of the reliever at the rank of the FA or below to take over the **teaching duties** of the FA according to the salary rates set by the AI.

6.5 The fellowship does not support the salary of the FA, medical/insurance cover and fringe benefits of the reliever, and any staff' on-costs.

6.6 Funding cannot be solely used to support a particular item in paragraph 6.4. The AI has to absorb any expenses exceeding its standard rates in 6.4(b) and 6.4(d). Funding support for other allowable and unallowable items can be found in **Appendix B** of the Explanatory Notes.

6.7 Funding will be paid on a reimbursement basis upon submission of a claim form. Reimbursement of expenses will be paid up to the actual amount incurred in the approved budget items. The details of financial arrangements can be found in **Appendix C** of the Explanatory Notes.

7. REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

7.1 Applications will be assessed by the Research Fellowship Assessment Panel (RFAP) to shortlist FAs for an interview.

7.2 The assessment criteria include -

FA's capability (30%)

(a) Applicant's research potential and capability including Applicant's qualifications, track record in research and training;

Training proposal (35%)

(b) Importance of the training to health care development;

(c) Relevance of the training to the research proposal;

Research proposal (35%)

(d) Scientific merits of the research proposal; and

(e) Translational potential/value of the research proposal to public health or health services in Hong Kong.

7.3 Shortlisted FAs will be notified of the outcomes two weeks before the date of the interview.

7.4 The RFAP may at its absolute discretion invite international peer reviews of the applications.

7.5 **Sixteen** awards for Stream A and **four** awards for Stream B will be granted in each application round. However, depending on the quality and budget requirements of the applications, the RFAP reserves the absolute right to recommend more or fewer applications for funding under the two Streams in each round.

7.6 Subject to the quality of applications, out of the total twenty awards, at least four awards will be granted to applications that can address the four modifiable risk factors for NCD at a higher priority in paragraph 2.2, with one award in each area.

7.7 Funding recommendations by the RFAP will be submitted to the Research Council (RC) for approval. The decision of RC is final.

8. ANNOUNCEMENT OF RESULTS

8.1 The results of the applications will be announced normally within six months after the application deadline.

8.2 All FAs will be informed of the results made by the RC.

8.3 The award of a fellowship is conditional upon the enrolment of the proposed training.

8.4 Contractual agreement covering terms and conditions, payment, reporting, deliverables, etc., will be signed by the Government, the AI, and the FA.

8.5 Approval for new funding will not be granted if the FA has not submitted outstanding / overdue report(s) / evaluation questionnaire(s) for his/her other grant(s) supported by the HMRF.

9. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

9.1 The FA and the AI shall report the progress of the training on a regular basis. A training report shall be submitted within one month after completion of the training. The timing and frequency of submission shall refer to the terms and conditions of the contractual agreement.

9.2 The FA and the AI shall submit interim/progress reports of the research project on a regular basis. A final report and a dissemination report shall be submitted within six months of completion of the fellowship. Such reports must conform to guidelines that are issued from time to time by the RC. The timing and frequency of submission shall refer to the terms and conditions of the contractual agreement.

9.3 Unless specified, the AI shall submit an annual certified financial statement **within 2 months** following the first anniversary of the commencement date of the fellowship, and shall submit the audited account **within 6 months** after the end date, or **within 60 days** after the expiry or termination of the fellowship, whichever is earlier.

9.4 The FA is expected to deliver a HMRF Research Fellowship presentation on his/her achievements and project deliverables and share his/her learning experience after completion of the fellowship.

9.5 The FA shall complete at least two evaluation surveys to assess the outcomes and impacts of the completed project two and four years after completion of the project or at other timeline specified by the Secretariat.

9.6 If after due assessment, the FA is not considered to be making satisfactory progress, the RC reserves the right to discontinue the provision of financial support under the terms of the fellowship and may seek the return of any funds provided to date.

9.7 If any false, fictitious, under declaration, or fraudulent statements or claims are detected and subsequently substantiated after the fellowship is approved, the FA and the AI shall refund all grants received, and are liable for damages and losses incurred.

10. RESEARCH ETHICS/ SAFETY APPROVAL/ CONSENT FOR ACCESSING THIRD-PARTY DATA

10.1 Written clearance from recognised ethics committee/Institutional Review Board (IRB) and safety approval from a designated Safety Officer, or equivalent, must be obtained prior to the commencement of the research project. The primary responsibility for seeking relevant approvals rests with the FA.

10.2 Under Regulation 36B of the Pharmacy and Poisons Regulations (Cap.138A), for the purpose of conducting a clinical trial on human beings or medicinal tests on animals using pharmaceutical products, a Certificate for Clinical Trial/Medicinal Test issued by the Pharmacy and Poisons Board must be obtained prior to the commencement of the research project. According to Section 129 of the Chinese Medicine Ordinance (Cap. 549), for the purpose of facilitating the conduct of a clinical trial or medicinal test of any proprietary Chinese medicine, a Certificate for Clinical Trial and Medicinal test issued by the Chinese Medicines Board must be obtained prior to the commencement of the research project.

10.3 The FA should ensure that the protocol/scope approved by the relevant regulatory body/IRB is the same as that in his/her application approved by the RFAP.

10.4 The FA should ensure that consent for data access is obtained from the relevant authority before the commencement of the research project.

11. PRIVACY, CONFIDENTIALITY AND DATA PROTECTION

11.1 The FA and the AI are responsible for ensuring that the requirements of any data protection are fully observed. In particular, the FA shall ensure at all times that any personal data collected in the course of the project shall be securely held and handled and that the anonymity of persons to whom the data refer shall be preserved in any report or publication.

11.2 The FA and the AI shall adhere to the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance (Cap 486).

11.3 The personal data provided in the application will be used by the relevant parties for the purpose of assessing applications to the HMRF Research Fellowship Scheme. For successful applications, such data will also be used for project monitoring, research and statistical analysis, promotion, publicity and dissemination purposes as appropriate. Contents of the submitted application set out in PART G (except proposal details) and Sections 1 – 7 of PART H with the status of the project will be made available for public access once funding approval is offered.

11.4 FAs have the right to access and correct the personal data provided in accordance with sections 18 and 22 and Principle 6 of Schedule 1 of the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance (Cap 486). Their right of access includes the right to obtain a copy of their personal data provided in the Application Form.

11.5 Enquiries concerning the personal data collected by means of this Application Form, including access and corrections, should be addressed to -

Research Fund Secretariat
Research Office
Health Bureau
9/F, Rumsey Street Multi-storey Carpark Building
2 Rumsey Street, Sheung Wan
Hong Kong
Email address: rfs@healthbureau.gov.hk
Website: https://rfs.healthbureau.gov.hk

12. OTHERS

12.1 The research project proposed in the application should comprise the FA's original work. **Plagiarism is NOT tolerated.** The previously published work of others must be identified clearly as such by citing appropriate references. The FA may be asked to provide clarifications where any overlap between the contents of the submitted research proposal and other materials is suspected. FAs should **declare any duplicate funding** in the Application Form.

12.2 Fellowship shall commence **within six months** from the award approval date.

12.3 After an award is granted, all major changes to the training and the research plans require prior approval from the RFAP. (Note: Change of the scope or objectives of the research/training plan is not allowed.)

- End -

Annex

Health and Medical Research Fund

Explanatory Notes for completing Research Fellowship Scheme Application Form

IMPORTANT!

- **All Fellowship Applicants (FAs) MUST read these *Explanatory Notes* in conjunction with the *Application Guidelines for the Research Fellowship Scheme* before completing the Application Form (e-Form). Incomplete applications, applications not adhering to these notes, or insufficiently detailed proposals will not be processed and may result in administrative withdrawal.**
- **For general enquiries about completing the application, please contact the Research Fund Secretariat (the Secretariat) (email: rfs@healthbureau.gov.hk).**

GENERAL INFORMATION

1. All applications must be submitted via the electronic Grant Management System (eGMS) **(https://rfs.healthbureau.gov.hk/eGMS/)** by completing the e-Form on or before the deadline of submission specified by the Secretariat. FAs who are unfamiliar with the eGMS are strongly advised to prepare their applications well before the deadline for submission to avoid unexpected situations. FA will receive an acknowledgement email from the eGMS shortly after successful submission of the application.

2. The Quick Guide for completing the e-Form is available at **Appendix A**.

3. Each FA is allowed to submit ***one application***. Resubmission of application declined in the previous application round(s) is not accepted.

4. Each application should have one FA and not more than nine Co-Applicants in the research project.

5. FAs must be full-time employees of the following administering institutions (AIs) at the time of application and ***based at the same AI throughout the fellowship period*** –

   (a) Stream A: Tertiary institutions funded by the University Grants Committee; or

   (b) Stream B: Designated teaching hospitals of the medical schools of The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) and The University of Hong Kong (HKU), i.e. Prince of Wales Hospital and Queen Mary Hospital.

   The fellowship is to be held at the AI and is not transferable throughout the course of the fellowship.

6. Applications without the required signatures will be treated as incomplete application and will not be considered.

7. The FA should make sure that all Co-Applicants endorse the research proposal as the track record for the whole project team might be adversely affected if misconduct/fraud is found. All project team members should be well aware of their participation and roles and responsibilities in the project. Please refer to the *Management of Track Records of Applicants* at **Appendix D**.

8. The personal data provided in the Application Form will be used by the Research Council (RC), the Research Fellowship Assessment Panel and the Secretariat for the purpose of assessing applications to the Health and Medical Research Fund (HMRF) Research Fellowship Scheme. For successful applications, such data will also be used for project monitoring, research and statistical analysis, promotion, publicity and dissemination purposes as appropriate. Contents of

the submitted application set out in PART G (except proposal details) and Sections 1 to 7 of PART H with the status of the research project will be made available for public access once funding approval is offered.

RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP SCHEME APPLICATION FORM

PART A to PART D – Complete the personal particulars of the FA.

PART E – Please state clearly how the research plan and training plan fit the objectives of the Research Fellowship Scheme.

PART F – PROPOSED BUDGET

1. **Proposed research fellowship period**: The duration of fellowship support is two years covering two components: training and research. The expected start date is counted as the date on which the institution first incurs a cost for the fellowship award. The completion date should be entered based on the proposed duration of the fellowship. The start date of fellowship must be after the announcement of funding decisions. For example, applications submitted by the closing date of 31 January 2023 should not expect to start before 1 October 2023. The start date and end date of the training period should be within the fellowship period.

2. **Summary of financial support requested**: The FA is not required to complete Section 2 of PART F; the e-Form will automatically summarise the funding requested in Section 3 of PART F. Costs should be rounded to the nearest HK dollar. FAs should refer to "Items Allowable and Unallowable for Reimbursement" and "Financial Arrangements" at **Appendices B and C** for details. The total cost should not exceed HK$1,200,000 inclusive of research and training costs up to HK$800,00 and HK$400,000 respectively.

3. **Details of financial support requested**: All items must be fully justified as stated in **Appendix B**. Costs of work incurred ***before*** the commencement date or the writing-up of such work are ***not allowed***. Application should be based on ***actual prices***. Standard rates, if available, should be specified. No allowance should be made for inflation.

   3a. OVERSEAS TRAINING COST

   The training cost includes training/course fee. Air passage (up to two round trips economy class), accommodation expenses and subsistence allowance for overseas training will be covered. The total training costs should not exceed HK$400,000.

   3b. STAFF DETAILS

   Staff costs should be justified in terms of the level of expertise and workload required by the research project. Reliever must be at the rank of the FA or below to take over the **teaching duties** of the FA. The FA ***should consult their Finance Office about the pay scale and the appropriate pay point proposed***. In general, salary scales that apply to equivalent workers employed by the AI are acceptable. Funding may be requested for full-time (which may be for periods shorter than the duration of the grant) and part-time posts. For part-time staff, the effort on the Project must be at least 20%. Monthly contributions to the MPF should also be included and absorbed in the monthly salary instead of a standalone item. Staff benefits such as gratuity, bonus, severance payment, untaken leave of staff employed and medical insurance costs will not be supported.

   Information in this section should reflect salary costs for the entire project, based on the proposed salaries as at the date of the application and the estimated percentage on level of participation in the project. The ***actual*** costs for each financial year of the grant should be entered in "Staff

Costs" table.

3c. STAFF COSTS

Please provide an annual cost for each post identified in "Staff Details" above during the proposed fellowship period. ***Any insurance costs will not be supported***.

3d. OTHER EXPENSES

Other expenses include consumable or equipment items costing less than HK$10,000, conference (i.e. travel and subsistence), publication costs, reference materials, printing and stationery, etc. Only direct costs can be charged to the project grant. Unit cost should be provided as far as possible, e.g. incentive per participant, whole genome sequencing cost per sample. Indirect costs of the project will not be considered.

For incentives

The purchase of gifts, coupons, etc., as incentives/tokens of appreciation for study participants is allowed if it is well justified with valid reason(s). A governance system shall be in place to adequately monitor the disbursement of incentives to ensure accountability and traceability.

For purchase of services

Purchase of services from non-local institutions, such as consultancy for research, experimental work, Biosafety Level 3 (BSL-3)/P3 laboratory facilities, etc., is allowed if it is well justified with valid reason(s), which should include full justifications for not acquiring the resources/facilities in Hong Kong.

3e. EQUIPMENT

Only include items dedicated to the project and costing HK$10,000 and over. Unit price of items costing less than HK$10,000 should be included under "Other Expenses".

Purchase of particular types of equipment should be well justified by, but not limited to, the needs of the research and cost, performance and specifications. Tendering should be carried out according to the AI's procedures. The AI should pay attention to the transparency and fairness in the procurement process and follow its disposal procedures properly. Where the relevant guidelines are not in place, the institution should adopt the *Notes on Acquisition and Disposal of Equipment Items for Institutions without Established Guidelines*, which can be obtained from the Secretariat by email.

For computer equipment and software

FAs should provide valid justifications for purchase of software and computing equipment/facilities. Local departmental computing charges which can be assigned to the research project will be considered as an allowable cost, including stationery supplies and software licences. Expenses for computing equipment specific for the project, such as notebook computers, software, etc., will be covered. Central computing facilities remain the responsibility of the AI.

The purpose of any special software to be developed, e.g. commissioned in-house, or modifications of existing software should be detailed and the development time required given in hours or man-months.

If external resources are to be used, the estimated time required, a breakdown of the resources required, and the cost per unit of computing time/purchase of consultancy should be given.

Any computing consumable to be purchased should be itemised under "Other Expenses" with a breakdown of both quantity and price.

Should computing advice be sought, details of the persons/organisations to be consulted should be given.

PART G – OVERSEAS TRAINING PROPOSAL: To ensure consistency and fairness, FAs must strictly comply with the formatting requirements listed below. The training programme should be an **overseas attachment to a reputable institution for at least three months cumulatively throughout the fellowship period**. The Secretariat will not process applications that do not comply with these formatting requirements. In particular, insufficiently detailed proposals may result in administrative withdrawal.

Please complete the name of the programme, description of the programme and overseas mentor (if any), training institution/organisation, country (training place) and training period. The training period should be within the fellowship period.

The training proposal details should follow the format and cover the content described below:

Format

Word limit: Details of Overseas Training Proposal:
- Not more than **1,000 words in total** (for all items 1-4 under Content).
- Not more than **600 words for each item**.
(**Training proposal details exceeding the word limit will not be considered**.)

Content

(Please provide the following information of the training/attachment according to the *above format)*

1. **State the purpose and importance of the training to the betterment of (a) the FA as a better scientist/researcher and (b) the public health and health services in Hong Kong:** Describe the purpose of the training programme, including the background information of the training institution and overseas mentor (if any), and state why this is important to train the FA as a better scientist/researcher and to benefit the public health and health service in Hong Kong.

2. **Describe the training plan including its activities/content. State the expected deliverables of the training upon completion in point form**: Describe the activities/content and deliverables of the training programme.

3. **State the relevancy and how the specialised skills obtained from the training programme will be applied to the research project in PART H:** Describe how the training programme relates and applies to the research project proposed in the application.

4. **Justify the funding requirements for the training plan** (Please provide supporting documents such as course information in "Section 9(i) Additional Materials" of PART H, if appropriate): All requested items must be fully justified demonstrating the value of money. For proposed budget in Section 3a of PART F, please provide the details for overseas training, e.g., itinerary of travel, standard rates for subsistence allowance/accommodation.

PART H – RESEARCH PROPOSAL: To ensure consistency and fairness, FAs must strictly comply with the formatting requirements listed below. The Secretariat will not process applications that do not comply with these formatting requirements. In particular, insufficiently detailed proposals may be withdrawn. **The Research Fellowship Scheme aims to support research in public health (in particular public health policy) and health services research[1]. Pilot studies and proof of concept studies[2] will be considered. Basic science research[3] with low translational value or requiring long time for influencing health practice will not be considered.**

Content

1. **Project Title**: The project title should be concise but informative and self-explanatory. ***Limit to 25 words***.

2. **Abstract of project**: Presented ***in BMJ house style*** of ***not more than 250 words*** with the following headings: objectives; hypothesis to be tested; design and subjects; study instruments; interventions; main outcome measures; data analysis and expected results. For details, please refer to **https://www.bmj.com/about-bmj/resources-authors/house-style.**

3. **Keyword:** Please enter up to 10 keywords for the project.

4. **Potential application**: Please explain the likely benefit of the research to the health or health care in Hong Kong. Elaborate in ***not more than 500 words***. FA should describe in simple language the potential of the research findings to improve patient care, population health, influence clinical practice and/or health services management, or inform health policy in Hong Kong and elsewhere. What are the potential facilitators and barriers to this impact being achieved?

5. **Proposed project start and end dates**: The expected start date and completion date should be entered. The project period should be within the fellowship period.

6. **Ethics approval/safety approval/consent for accessing third-party data**: Please complete this section and Section 9(k).

7. **Applicants (Project Team)**: Research project should not have more than nine Co-Applicants. The email address of each applicant must be entered twice to minimise incorrect entries. The employment relationship between the FA and the AI should be made clear. If an applicant holds more than one post, e.g., one in University and one in Hospital or another Service or Unit, details of the position at the AI should be stated. All applicants are expected to be personally and actively engaged in the project.

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[1] Health services research covers a broad area of clinical research on the prevalence, incidence, cause, prevention, treatment of human diseases, effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of healthcare services and policy. Clinical studies on the care and rehabilitation of patients are also included. Examples include clinical studies on major non-communicable diseases (NCD), modifiable lifestyle factors, primary care, chronic disease management and palliative care, elderly care and infectious diseases.

[2] Proof of Concept studies refer to the studies which aim to verify the practical potential of some concepts or theories. Examples of Proof of Concept studies include early testing of potential efficacy, safety or feasibility of a treatment.

[3] According to The Association of American Medical Colleges, "Basic research encompasses familiar scientific disciplines such as biochemistry, microbiology, physiology and pharmacology, and their interplay, and involves laboratory studies with cells cultures, animal studies or physiological experiments." "Typically, basic science research focuses on determining the causal mechanisms behind the functioning of the human body in health and illness, and utilizes hypothesis-driven experimental designs that can be specifically tested and revised."

8. **HMRF, other support, similar or related proposals and track record**: All applicants listed in the Application Form Section 7 of PART H ***must declare*** whether any similar grant applications have been submitted (with or without funding decision) ***in the past three years from the closing deadline***, or will be submitted in the next six months to the HMRF or any of its preceding funding schemes, or any other funding agencies (local or overseas). Failure to make a declaration shall be subject to penalty as determined by the RC. Please refer to the Management of Track Records of Applicants at **Appendix D**.

Submission of research proposals previously rejected or not supported by the HMRF (except Research Fellowship Scheme) or other research funding agencies (local or overseas) may be considered. FAs should provide (i) all comments raised by the funding agencies; (ii) the responses to address these comments; (iii) the revised proposals with highlights of changes made; and (iv) detailed explanations and justifications if no change is made in the research proposal. Copies of the relevant documents should be attached. All applicants should advise the track record in respect of funding awarded, if any, by the HMRF or other funding agencies (local or overseas) in the past three years. If the application has been approved, indicate the status of research: on-going, completed, withdrawn, terminated, not yet started, etc.

Applicants should declare any duplicate funding in the e-Form. At any time before the announcement of the funding decision of the HMRF application, applicants are required to notify the Secretariat immediately about: (a) any other similar or related application submitted to other funding agencies in addition to those listed in the e-Form; and (b) the funding decision of any similar or related application once available. If the application has been approved, indicate the current status: on-going, completed, withdrawn, terminated, not yet started, etc.

9. **Proposed Research Project:**

Sections 9 (a) – (h) of the proposal, with the standard header "2022 Research Fellowship Open Call Proposal", should be attached as a PDF file to the e-Form. To ensure consistency and fairness, applicants must strictly comply with the formatting requirements listed below. Please download the proposal template at Secretariat's website. The Secretariat **will not process applications that do not comply with these formatting requirements**. In particular, insufficiently detailed proposals may be withdrawn.

Format

Word limit:	Section 9(a) – (d) of PART H inclusively. Not more than 4,000 words. Please provide the word count for Section 9(a) – (d) of PART H.
Margin:	Left at least **2.5cm**. Others at least **1.5cm**.
Font:	At least **10-point**. Preferably **Arial**.
Character spacing:	**Normal**
Line spacing:	At least **Single**.

Content

a. **Title:** Same as the project title in Section 1 of PART H.

b. **Introduction:** Explain the relevance of the proposal to the scope of the fund and summarise previous work in the field (including any by the applicants) drawing attention to gaps in present knowledge and citing key references.

c. **Aims and Hypotheses to be Tested**: State the aims and hypotheses, wherever possible,

as a list of questions to which answers will be sought.

d. **Plan of Investigation**: Give practical details of how answers will be obtained to the questions posed. This should include information on:

   (i) Subjects to be included in the study. Justification for sample size and power analysis to support the chosen sample size must be provided for all studies including pilot or proof of concept study.

   (ii) Methods to be employed, giving references where these are non-standard. Where new methods are being developed, arrangements for establishing validity and reliability should be described. Examples of non-standard questionnaires, tests etc. should accompany the application or their content be clearly indicated.

   (iii) Study design described in sufficient detail to allow assessment of workload and timetable and including experiments, observations to be made, randomisation method where relevant, and the use of controls.

   (iv) Data processing and analysis including outcome measures, means of validating records, and the type of statistical analysis to be carried out.

   (v) Potential pitfalls and contingency plans describing potential problem(s) that may be encountered during implementation of the study and providing a proactive strategy to continue the project if such problems are encountered.

e. **Existing Facilities**: Describe resources and facilities available for supervision, equipment, space, staffing, relevant departmental interests, and collaboration. Supplementary sponsorship must be fully justified. Applicants shall state clearly whether any supplementary support has been/will be received from other sources, including but not limited to monetary, investigational new drugs/devices, reagents, and consumables and rental of equipment.

f. **Justification of Requirements**: The case for staff should be justified in terms of expertise and workload required by the research. Reasons should be given for selecting particular types of equipment. ***Please refer to the allowable and unallowable items in Appendixes B and C***.

g. **Plan to Disseminate Research Findings to End Users:** Describe the ways in which the research results will be disseminated.

h. **Key References**: Include a maximum of 25 references in Vancouver style. Follow the "Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals" at www.icmje.org/index.html for referencing. If it is considered essential to cite work by the applicants that are ***in press*** for publication, please provide a copy in "Section 9(i). Additional Materials".

Section 9(i) – (k)

i. **Additional Materials**: Include figures/tables, study instruments, questionnaires, consent forms, study protocol, investigation guidelines, diagrams of equipment, etc. Figures and tables should be of sufficient size and use colour where applicable for easy reading. ***Not more than five figures and/or tables are allowed***. List the items that have been attached. All attachments should be in PDF format. The limit of the total file size is 13MB.

j. **Timetable of Work**: In the table provided, describe clearly the key milestones of the project, the date (i.e. months after project commencement) by which these key milestones are expected to be reached, and the resulting deliverable. An example is included for reference, which may be overwritten/deleted in the final submission. Include 3-5 key

milestones. These milestones will be used to determine the frequency of reporting progress to the Secretariat.

k. **Research Ethics/Safety Approval/Consent for accessing third-party data:** Select (○) the appropriate option button to confirm if approvals for the respective ethics, safety and consent for accessing third-party data has been obtained or is being sought from the proper authorities. Provision of ethical approvals and/or consent during the submission of applications is not required. FAs shall submit such approvals and/or consent **within 12 weeks** (or as specified by the Secretariat) after the announcement of funding decisions. If you are unable to provide such documentary evidence or information by the deadline stated, or the information is found to be incomplete or inaccurate, the processing of the application may be delayed or the application may be rejected. Letters of exemption for non-applicable regulatory committees are not required. For details regarding Independent Ethics Committee/Institutional Review Board (IEC/IRB), please refer to Section 3 of the following document published by the International Council for Harmonisation at **https://www.ich.org/page/efficacy-guidelines**.

Clinical Trials: Under Regulation 36B of the Pharmacy and Poisons Regulations (Cap.138A), for the purpose of conducting a clinical trial on human beings or medicinal tests on animals using pharmaceutical products, a Certificate for Clinical Trial/Medicinal Test issued by the Pharmacy and Poisons Board must be obtained prior to the commencement of the research project. According to Section 129 of the Chinese Medicine Ordinance (Cap. 549), for the purpose of facilitating the conduct of a clinical trial or medicinal test of any proprietary Chinese medicine, a Certificate for Clinical Trial and Medicinal test issued by the Chinese Medicines Board must be obtained prior to the commencement of the research project. FAs are strongly advised to confirm the need for the relevant certificate as early as practical (preferably before/during the submission of applications to the HMRF) to avoid delay in project commencement. If a relevant certificate is required, failure to present a valid certificate by a specified deadline, may result in the application being rejected. For further details, please refer to the relevant guidance notes available in the Department of Health's Drug Office's and the Chinese Medicine Regulatory Office's websites at https://www.drugoffice.gov.hk/eps/do/en/doc/guidelines_forms/Guidance_Notes_en_Version.pdf?v=xvweggsj and https://www.cmchk.org.hk/pcm/pdf/CT_Cert_GL_e.pdf respectively.

Hospital Authority (HA)'s Data Access: Approval from the Central Panel on Administrative Assessment of External Data Requests of HA is required for using HA data where applicable. Please visit http://www3.ha.org.hk/data/Provision/Index/ for details.

10. Report on previous research grants: Report all previous research grants supported by the HMRF or any of its preceding funding schemes held by all applicants (if applicable), including projects currently underway and completed research projects ***in the last three years from the closing deadline***.

If progress, interim, final or dissemination reports for other projects supported by the HMRF are overdue, specify the reasons and indicate when these reports will be submitted. Failure to submit the required reports on time will affect this and future grant applications.

Briefly summarise current perception of the significance of the work done, i.e. potential of the research findings to improve patient care, population health, influence clinical practice and/or health services management, or inform health policy in Hong Kong and elsewhere.

Please list full papers published or "in press" in refereed journals with titles, page numbers and co-authorships.

11. **Curriculum vitae (CV) and roles & responsibilities of all applicants:** Each applicant listed in Section 7 of PART H must provide his/her personal particulars and their specific role and responsibilities on this project. The FA must provide the date(s) of award of PhD and/or other degree(s) (date on degree certificate) and five most recent publications (including those submitted or in press). Other applicant(s) are required to list relevant publication(s) ***over the previous three years or five most recent publications***, whichever is the smaller.

12. **Signature**: The research proposal ***must*** be endorsed by all co-applicants. If co-applicant(s) is not an existing eGMS user, please register a co-applicant's account from eGMS login page. If the FA has attached co-applicant(s)' physical signature(s) (an email confirmation from co-applicant(s) is acceptable), the relevant electronic endorsement is not required (i.e. the eGMS will not send out notification email to the co-applicant(s) concerned for endorsement.). The limit of the file size is 1MB.

The FA should make sure that all co-applicants endorse the application as the track record for the whole project team might be adversely affected if misconduct/fraud is found. All project team members should be well aware of their participation and roles and responsibility in the project. The Management of Track Records of Applicants is available at **Appendix D**.

PART I – DECLARATION AND AUTHORISATION

To the best of FA's knowledge, the AI or any of the applicants listed in Section 7 of PART H, or any of the proposed personnel and sub-contractors/agencies to be engaged in the project, shall declare any actual or perceived conflict of interest, such as receiving any funding or assistance directly or indirectly from industries (including but not limited to tobacco related businesses, infant formula companies, or organisations funded by such businesses), or using the grant monies (budgeted under Sections 2 & 3 of PART F) to purchase products or services from the AI or any of the applicants listed in Section 7 of PART H, or any of the proposed personnel and sub-contractors / agencies to be engaged in the project. The Application Form ***must*** be endorsed by the FA, the mentor, the Head of Department, and authorised persons on behalf of the AI and Finance Office.

Mentor: Mentor must be a full-time staff of the AI. For Stream B, the mentor can be a full-time staff of the respective medical school of the CUHK and the HKU. He/She is required to state his/her support and role to the FA throughout the fellowship period. A copy of the CV and signature of the mentor should be attached as PDF file(s) to the e-Form. The limit of the total file size is 1MB.

AI: The e-Form must be endorsed by all applicants, (i) the Head of Department, (ii) the officer who will be responsible for administering the fellowship that may be awarded and (iii) the finance officer who will be responsible for overseeing/ administering the related finance matters, via eGMS..

The email address of the Head of Department must be entered twice to minimise incorrect entries. Please attach the nomination letter from the President/Vice-Chancellor (for Stream A)/Hospital Chief Executive (for Stream B) as a PDF file to the e-Form. The limit of the file size is 1.5MB.

APPENDIX A

Quick Guide for Completing the Electronic Application Form

(A) Minimum system requirements

To use the electronic Grant Management System (eGMS), your computer should meet these minimum system requirements -

1. Google Chrome[1] or Mozilla Firefox[2] or Safari 7+
2. Enable Transport Layer Security (TLS) version 1.2 in the browser
3. 1280 x 1024 Minimum Screen Resolution
4. Microsoft Office Word 2007 or above (for opening MS Word Offline Application Form)

[1] Recommended version for Google Chrome is 57 or above.

[2] Recommended version for Mozilla Firefox is 51 or above.

Operating system

1. Microsoft Windows 8.1/10
2. Apple Mac OS x 10.5 or above
3. Fedora Linux Core 7 or above

Transport Layer Security (TLS)

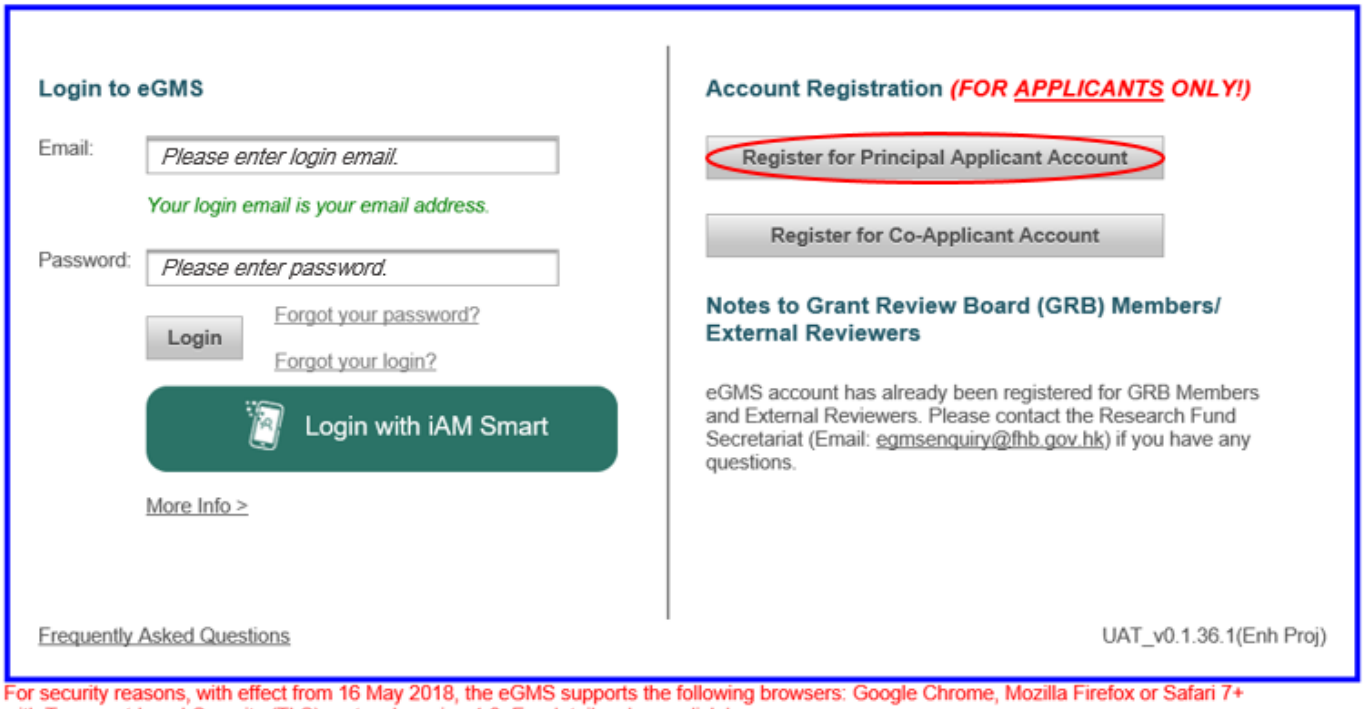
Since old Transport Layer Security (TLS) versions may cause security risks, we highly recommend eGMS users to enable TLS version 1.2 in their browsers. Please refer to the details in **Appendix A(i)**.

(B) Access to eGMS

1. Address: https://rfs.healthbureau.gov.hk/eGMS/

2. Login account: If you have not registered for a Principal Applicant (PA) account in the electronic Grant Management System (eGMS), please register on the login page of the eGMS (see below). You will then have to wait for approval from your Administering Institution (AI) for the creation of PA account.

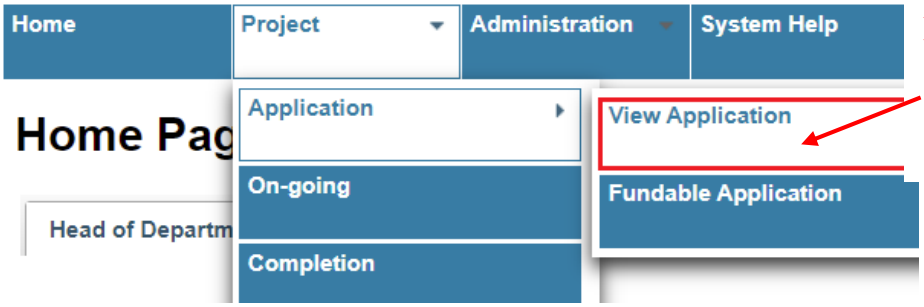
3. If co-applicant is not an existing eGMS user, he/she is encouraged to register a co-applicant account from the eGMS login page in advance. Their electronic endorsement of the proposal will be required after submission of the application by FA.



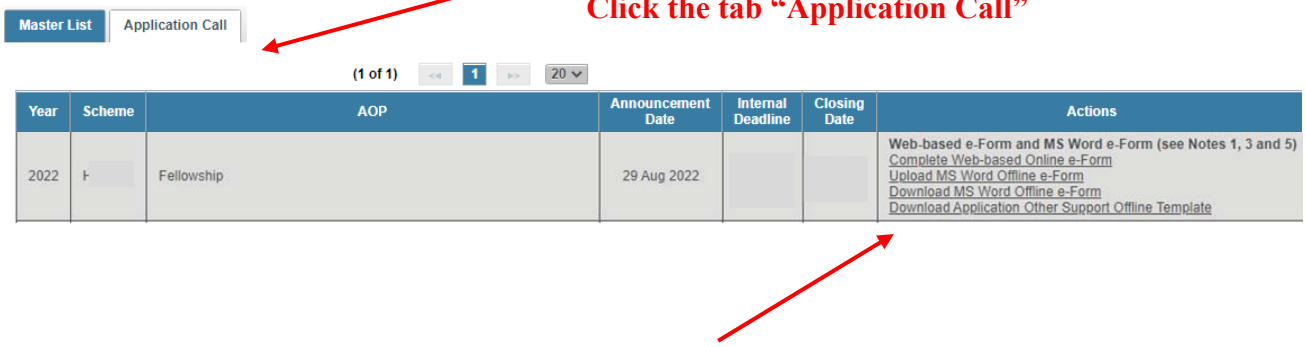
For security reasons, with effect from 16 May 2018, the eGMS supports the following browsers: Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox or Safari 7+ with Transport-Level-Security (TLS) protocol version 1.2. For details, please click here.

(C) Complete the Web-based Online e-Form

(i)
Click Project > Application > View Application



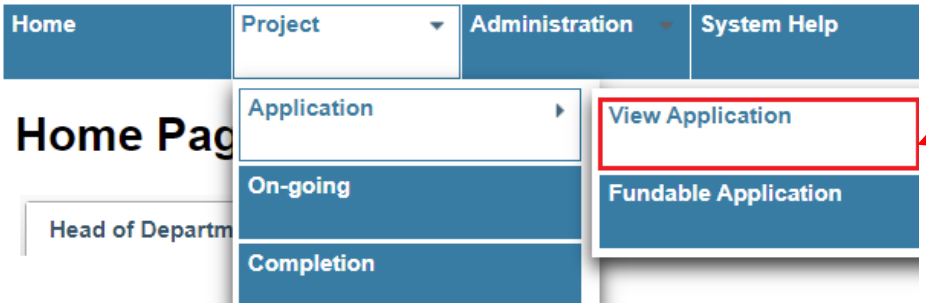
(ii)
Click the tab "Application Call"



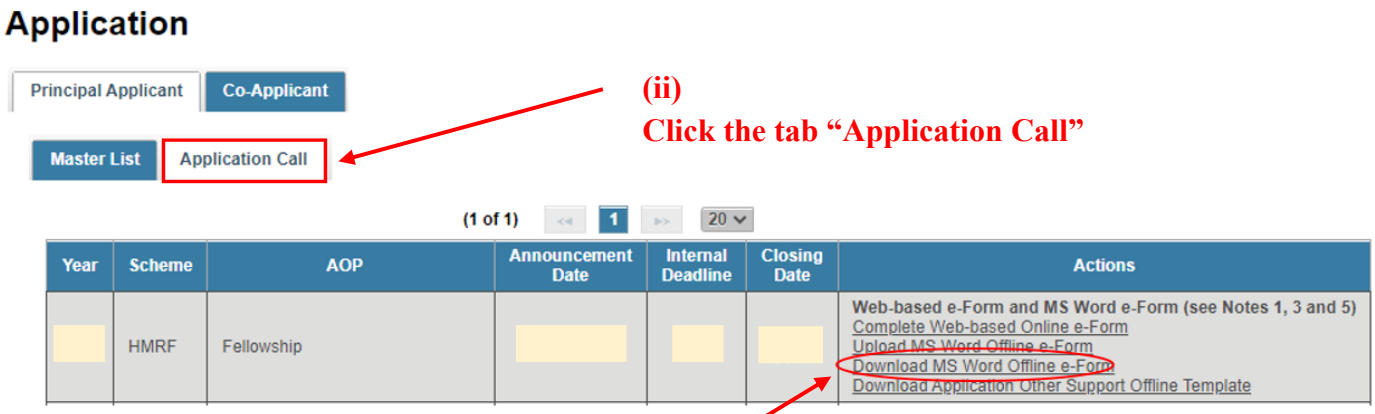
(iii)
Click "Complete Web-based Online e-Form"

(Note: If FA needs to complete the Application offline, please refer to Part D and E)

(D) Downloading the MS Word Offline Application Form



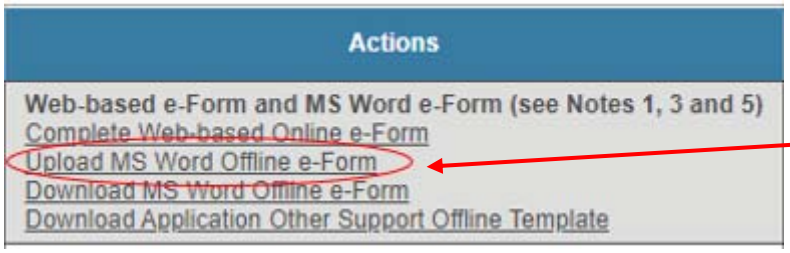
(i)
Click Project > Application > View Application



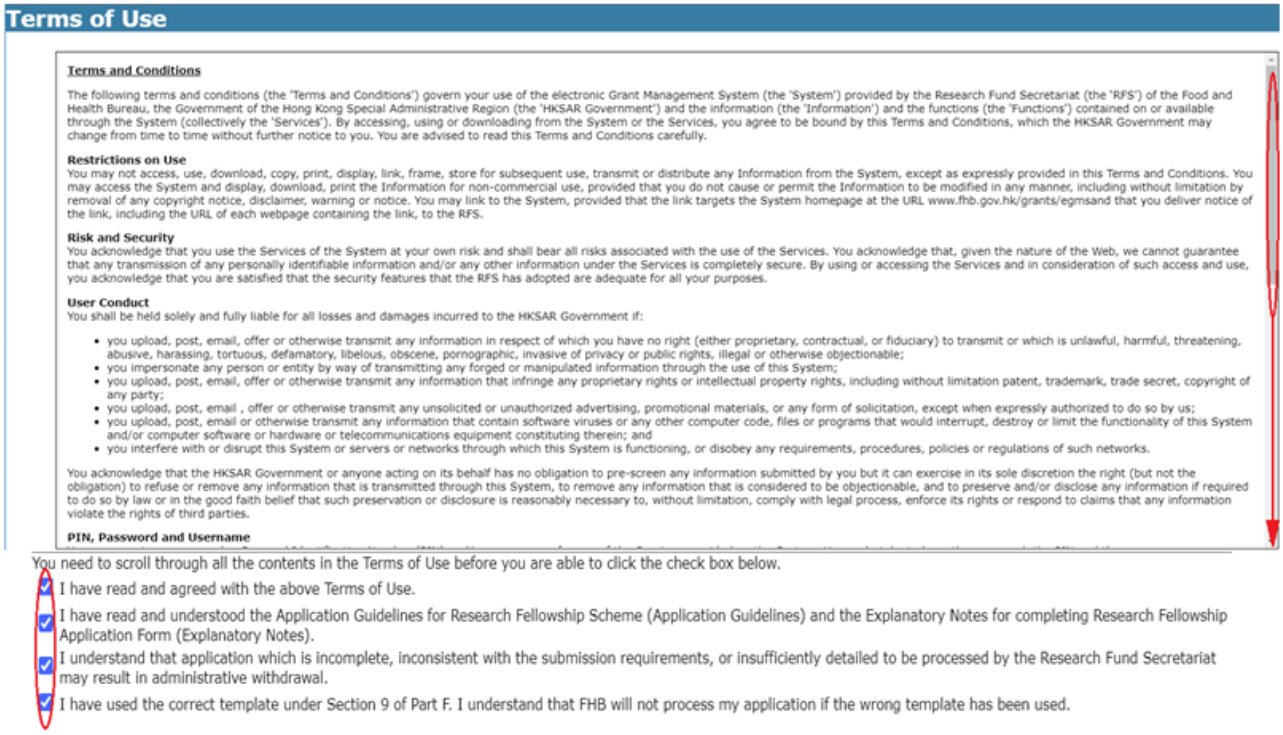
(ii)
Click the tab "Application Call"

(iii)
Click "Download MS Word Offline e-Form" to download the application form

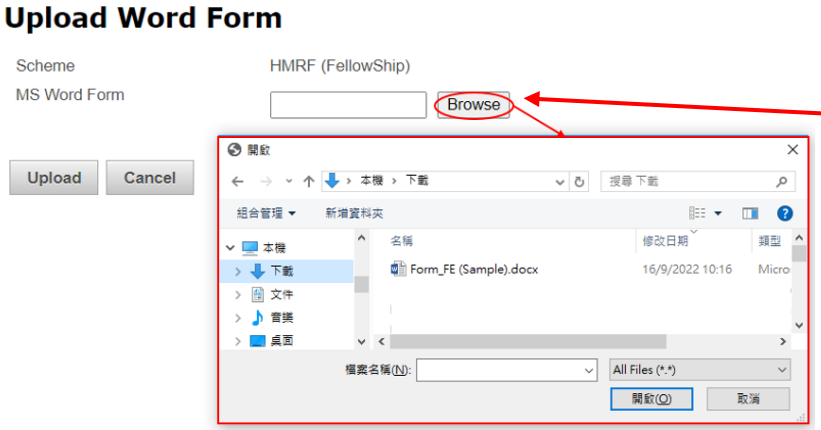
(E) Uploading the MS Word Offline Application Form



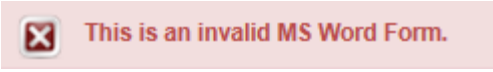
(i)
Click "Upload MS Word Offline e-Form" to upload the completed Offline e- Form



(ii)
Read the Terms of Use, tick the boxes and click "Continue"



(iii)
Click "Browse" and select the completed Offline e-Form



Note: only MS Word offline application form could be uploaded. Error message will pop up if incorrect file is attached.

(F) Need Help?

1. To complete the MS Word Offline Application Form, please refer to the Training Manual under “System Help” in eGMS for Completing MS Word Offline Application Form.

2. If some fields are not completed according to the format, error message box will be popped up when you click the “Submit” button in the application form. Please edit the application form again and re-submit.

3. For enquiry, please contact the Research Fund Secretariat:
   Email:
   egmsenquiry@healthbureau.gov.hk

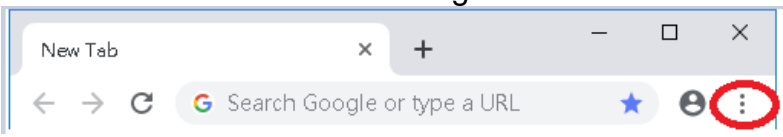
1. Google Chrome

(a) We recommended eGMS user to use version 57 or above. If you are using Google Chrome version 22 or above, TLS 1.1 is automatically supported. TLS 1.1 and 1.2 are automatically enabled from version 29 or above.

(b) To find out which version of google chrome you are using -

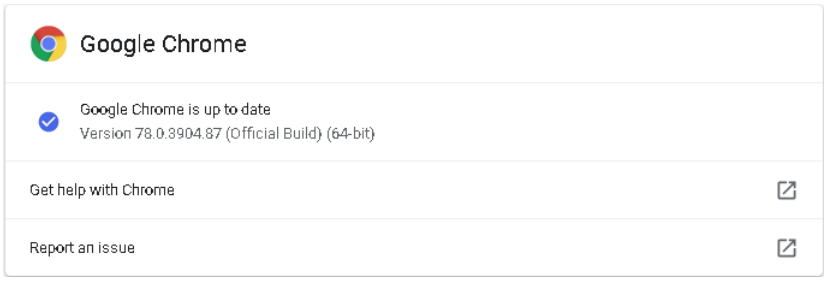
i. Open your Chrome browser.

ii. Click the “More” icon at the right corner of the address bar.



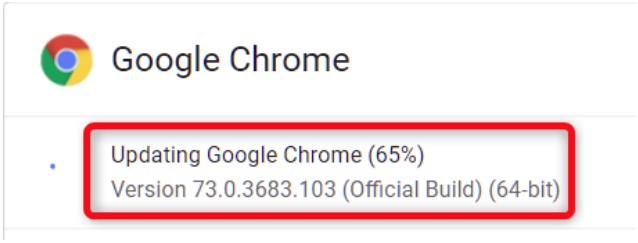
iii. At the bottom of the menu, click “Help”, then click “About Google Chrome”

iv. The version of Google Chrome will be shown



(c) To update Google Chrome:

i. Chrome will check for any updates and immediately download them when you open the About Google Chrome page



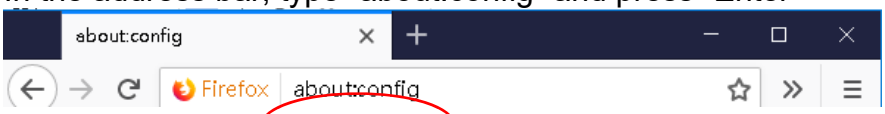
ii. Close your browser and restart Chrome to complete the updates

2. Mozilla Firefox

(a) Set the TLS version of the browser

i. Open Firefox browser

ii. In the address bar, type “about:config” and press “Enter”



iii. In the Search field, enter “tls”. Find and double-click the entry for “security.tls.version.max”

iv. Set the integer value to 2 to force a minimum protocol of TLS 1.1

v. Set the integer value to 4 to force a maximum protocol of TLS 1.3

偏好設定名稱	狀態	類型	值
devtools.remote.tls-handshake-timeout	預設值	整數	10000
gl.use-tls-is-current	預設值	整數	0
network.http.spdy.enforce-tls-profile	預設值	布林 (Boolean) 值	true
network.http.tls-handshake-timeout	預設值	整數	30
network.proxy.proxy_over_tls	預設值	布林 (Boolean) 值	true
security.tls.enable_0rtt_data	預設值	布林 (Boolean) 值	true
security.tls.enable_post_handshake_auth	預設值	布林 (Boolean) 值	false
security.tls.hello_downgrade_check	預設值	布林 (Boolean) 值	false
security.tls.insecure_fallback_hosts	預設值	字串	
security.tls.version.fallback-limit	預設值	整數	4
security.tls.version.max	預設值	整數	4
security.tls.version.min	已修改	整數	2

vi. Click “OK”

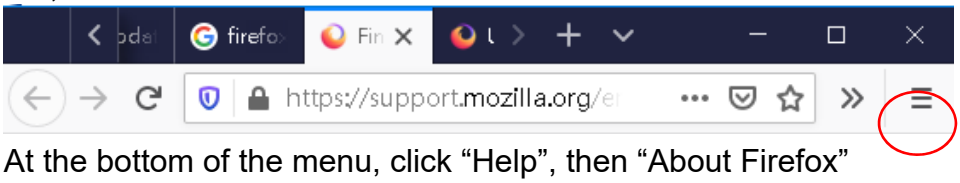
vii. Close your Firefox browser and restart your Firefox browser

viii. Recommended version 51 or above

(b) To find out which version of Firefox browser you are using:

i. Open your Firefox browser

ii. At the top of your Firefox browser, to the right of the address bar, click the “Menu” icon



iii. At the bottom of the menu, click “Help”, then “About Firefox”

iv. The version of Firefox browser will be shown

(Note: Updated version will be downloaded automatically)

v. Close your browser and restart Firefox browser to complete the update

3. Safari

There are no options for enabling SSL protocols. If you are using Safari version 7 or above, TLS 1.2 is automatically enabled.

APPENDIX B

ITEMS ALLOWABLE AND UNALLOWABLE FOR REIMBURSEMENT

1. Items Allowable

1.1 Training Costs

Funds can be requested to support the registration/tuition fees for the training/attachment. Up to two economy class roundtrips air passage by most direct route, accommodation expenses and subsistence allowance can be supported. The travel expenses and allowance should follow the AI's established procurement procedures and standard rates.

1.2 Staff Costs

Funds may be requested for the salaries of the reliever of the FA, research staff and other supporting staff. Reliever must be at the rank of the FA or below to take over the teaching duties of the FA. Staff cost (full or part-time) includes salary and mandatory provident fund of staff employed. For part-time staff, the part-time effort must meet at least the 20% threshold.

For instance, the Research Council is prepared to reimburse 20% of staff salary for a research or support staff provided that it is used for 20% of time on the project. When applying for reimbursement, the FA should specify the particular staff to which the costs relate and the percentage of time the staff spent on the project.

1.3 Facilities

1.3.1 Computer equipment, software and computing consumables

The FA should provide valid justifications for purchase of software and computing equipment/facilities. Local departmental computing charges which can be assigned to the research project will be considered as an allowable cost, including stationery supplies and software licences. Expenses for computing equipment specific for the project, such as notebook computers, software, etc., will be covered. Central computing facilities remain the responsibility of the AI.

1.3.2 Equipment

Maintenance costs, service contracts and spare parts for equipment not purchased specifically for the project but used for a significant portion of the project will be paid on a *pro rata* basis.

For example, a piece of equipment that is used 50% of the time for an approved project and 50% of the time for other purposes will be covered for half of the maintenance costs. When applying for maintenance costs, the FA should specify the piece of equipment to which the costs relate and the percentage of time the equipment will be in use on the project.

Equipment costing less than HK$10,000 should be applied for and charged under the heading "Other Expenses".

1.4 Administrative services

1.4.1 Cost of Audited Account

HK$5,000 per project for grant amount between HK$100,001 and HK$1,000,000.

HK$10,000 per project for grant amount over HK$1,000,000.

1.4.2 Administrative expenses

Costs such as printing, telephone, fax, postage, etc. are allowed where they are separately metered and can be attributed to a specific research project.

1.5 Others

1.5.1 Travel and subsistence

All reasonable costs associated with conference attendance relating to the research project are supported up to a maximum of HK$10,000 (e.g. registration, travel, accommodation, subsistence and preparation of materials).

The cost of local travel for research staff to attend clinics, training sites, patients' homes, etc., for purposes directly related to the research project are allowed.

1.5.2 Publication costs

The cost of publishing the results of research grant up to a maximum of HK$20,000 is allowed.

1.5.3 Reference materials

Purchase of essential reference materials, e.g. textbooks, downloads of articles, cost up to a maximum of HK$5,000 is allowed.

1.5.4 Incentives

The purchase of gifts, coupons, etc., as incentives/tokens of appreciation for study participants is allowed if it is well justified with valid reason(s). A governance system shall be in place to adequately monitor the disbursement of incentives to ensure accountability and traceability.

2. Items Unallowable

2.1 Employment of all applicants listed in Section 7 of PART H of the Application Form.

2.2 Employment of established academic and service staff (e.g. Assistant Professor and Post-doctoral Fellow) supported by other funds (e.g. University Grants Committee/ Research Grants Council).

2.3 General premises costs including -

- construction and maintenance of buildings
- land purchase/lease
- refurbishment/renovation/adaptation
- basic services and utilities (including heating, lighting and communications)
- lease/rent/rates
- insurance
- cleaning/pottering/security/safety

2.4 Cost of unspecified research work.

2.5 Cost of work incurred before the commencement of the project date, or the writing-up of such work.

2.6 Cost of literature surveys.

2.7 Remuneration of undergraduates (other than payment for vacation work under the existing award if such earnings are allowed by the AI).

2.8 Any costs associated with a research student supported by other funds (e.g. University Grants Committee/Research Grants Council).

2.9 Cost of the facilities of the AI to which the applicants and hired staff normally have free access.

2.10 Staff benefits such as gratuity, bonus, severance payment and untaken leave of staff employed.

2.11 All kinds of insurance costs, such as medical insurance, labour insurance, clinical trial insurance.

2.12 Costs for clearance/approvals/certificates from relevant ethics committees/IRBs and regulatory bodies.

2.13 Entertainment and overseas visits not directly related to the research project.

2.14 Advertising costs for recruitment of staff.

APPENDIX C

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

1. Approval of Fellowship

1.1 Approved fellowships are funded on actual basis with a pre-approved cash ceiling.

2. Payment of Fellowship Support

2.1 An annual certified financial statement must be submitted covering the 12-month period from the project commencement date. The AI shall submit an annual certified financial statement ***within 2 months*** following the first anniversary of the commencement date, and shall submit the audited account ***within 6 months*** after the end date or ***within 60 days*** after termination of the project, whichever is earlier.

2.2 Final claim for reimbursement of expenditures

Claims for reimbursement of expenditures may only cover **the period between the commencement date and end date** of the fellowship. A final reimbursement claim form shall be submitted together with the audited account and the final report.

APPENDIX D

Management of Track Records of Applicants[4]

(Effective from 1 November 2018)

(Remark: Principal Applicant refers to Fellowship Applicant in Research Fellowship Scheme)

Improprieties	Description	Gravity	Actions[5,6]
Scientific Misconduct[7]	Plagiarism, fraudulence, etc.	Serious	i. Disqualification in the related funding exercise; and ii. Debar[8] for 5 years
Double dipping not declared	Receiving grant from HMRF or any of its preceding funding schemes, or other funding agencies (local or overseas)	Heavy	i. Disqualification in the related funding exercise; and ii. Debar for 1 year
	Submission of grant applications or similar proposals to HMRF or any of its preceding funding schemes, or other funding agencies (local or overseas)	Light	Warning letter
Conflict of Interest not declared	The nominated reviewer(s) as a direct relative or a close personal contact with Principal Applicant (PA) or Co-applicant (Co-A)	Medium	Disqualification in the related funding exercise
	The PA has the following relationship(s) with the nominated reviewer in the past 3 years at the time of grant application – - research collaborator - mentor/student - work colleagues in the same department - employer/ employee/ business partner	Medium	Disqualification in the related funding exercise

4 *Unless otherwise determined, the principal applicant shall be held primarily responsible for the conduct of the project and any penalties imposed as a consequence of any misconduct or non-compliance.*

5 *The track record of the principal applicant who has committed any of the improprieties mentioned in this Annex shall be marked for and taken into account when considering of future grant applications for up to 5 years.*

6 *If the misconduct is reported after commencement of the study, assessment will be made to determine whether any of the approved amount should be returned to the Government.*

4 *Scientific misconduct means fabrication, falsification, plagiarism, or other practices that seriously deviate from those that are commonly accepted within the scientific community for proposing, conducting, or reporting research. It does not include honest error or honest differences in interpretations or judgements of data.*

8 *Debarment covers applying and receiving grants from the Health and Medical Research Fund in the capacity of principal applicant.*

Improprieties	Description	Gravity	Actions[5,6]
Conflict of Interest not declared	The Co-A has the following relationship(s) with the nominated reviewer in the past 3 years at the time of grant application – - research collaborator - mentor/student - work colleagues in the same department - employer/ employee/ business partner	Light	Warning letter
Non-compliance	No submission of final report by deadline without valid justification	Heavy	i. Withhold funding of the project or recovery of the grant ii. Debar for 2 years and until the final report is submitted, whichever is later
	Any of the following without valid justification – - Early termination - Incomplete project - Research work done before project commencement not declared	Heavy	i. Partial payment or recovery of grant ii. Debar for 2 years
	Final report graded “Unredeemable” or “Unacceptable”	Medium	i. Withhold 10% or 20% of the grant subject to the terms and conditions in the agreement