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. Incomplete applications, applications not adhering to these notes, or insufficiently detailed proposals will not be processed and may result in administrative withdrawal.**
- **For general queries about completing the application, please contact the Research Fund Secretariat (the Secretariat) (email: rfs@fhb.gov.hk or fax: 2102 2444).**

GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Each FA is allowed to submit ***one application***. Resubmission of application declined in the previous application round(s) is not accepted.
2. Each application should have one FA and not more than 9 Co-applicants in the research project.
3. FAs must be full-time employees of the tertiary institutions [i.e. the administering institutions (AI)] funded by the University Grants Committee at the time of application and ***based at the same AI throughout the fellowship period***. The fellowship is to be held at the AI and is not transferable throughout the course of the fellowship.
4. Applications without the required signatures will be treated as incomplete application and will not be considered.
5. 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 in **Appendix C** of the Explanatory Notes.
6. The personal data provided in the Application Form will be used by the Research Council, 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 and the status of 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 Resarch Fellowship Scheme.

PART F – PROPOSED BUDGET

1. **Proposed research fellowship period**: The duration of fellowship support is two consecutive 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. Start date of fellowship must be after the announcement of funding decisions. For example, applications submitted by the closing date of 16 November 2018 should not expect to start before 1 June 2019. The start date and end date of the training period should be within the fellowship period.

2. **Summary of financial support requested:** Costs should be rounded to the nearest HK dollar. The costs of disseminating results of the research should be included. FAs should refer to "Items Allowable and Unallowable for Reimbursement" and "Financial Arrangements" at **Appendices A and B** for details. The total cost should not exceed HK$1,200,000 inclusive of training costs up to HK$200,000.

3. **Details of financial support requested**: All items must be fully justified as stated in **Appendix A**. 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. TRAINING COSTS

   The training cost includes training/course fee. Air passage (one round trip and economy class), accommodation expenses and subsistence allowance for overseas training will be covered. The total training costs should not exceed HK$200,000.

   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 aggregated and averaged part-time effort must meet at least the 20% threshold. Monthly contributions to the MPF should also be included and absorbed in the monthly salary instead of stated alone item. Staff benefits such as gratuity, bonus, severance payment, untaken leave of staff employed and medical insurance costs will not be supported.

   Information on this page 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. 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 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.

For computer equipment and software

Advice should be sought from the Secretariat on the relevance and cost of computing equipment/facilities requested in proposed applications for funding. FAs should therefore list the make and model, quantity, price and annual maintenance costs of equipment along with any special features required, e.g. communications, graphics, etc. In cases where funding is sought for storage media or devices, an estimate in storage capacity (in megabytes) should also be provided.

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 – TRAINING 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.

Complete the name/description of the programme, training institution/organisation, training place, training period and duration. 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:	**Not more than 1,000 words**.
	Training proposal details exceeding the word limit will not be considered.
	Figures and tables must be appended separately and NOT embedded within the text.
Font:	At least **10-point**. Preferably **Arial**.
Character spacing:	**Normal**
Line spacing:	At least **Single**.

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 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 activities/content. State the expected deliverables of the training plan 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 the supporting documents such as course information if appropriate):** All requested items must be fully justified demonstrating value of money. For proposed budget in PART F, Section 3a, 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 at supporting research in public health (in particular public health policy) and health services, rather than basic science. Basic science research 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. **Not more than 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 **http://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 100 words**. Researchers should keep under continuous review the question whether the work has potential wider application, taking appropriate action in accordance with the AI's procedures for the protection and exploitation of research findings.

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**: If the approval and/or consent for accessing third party data has been received from the proper authorities, complete this section. If not, and if applicable, state the current progress of seeking the approval / consent in Section 9(k).

7. **Applicants**: Research project should not have more than 9 Co-Applicants. 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.

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 in the past three years, are currently submitted or will be submitted in the next six months to the HMRF (including investigator-initiated research projects, Health Care and Promotion Scheme), or any of its preceding funding schemes, or any other funding agencies (local or overseas). Submission of research proposals previously declined by the HMRF or other research funding agencies may be considered. FAs should provide (i) all comments raised by the funding agencies; (ii) the principal applicants' responses to address these comments; (iii) the revised proposals with highlights of changes made; and (iv) detailed explanation 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 (including investigator-initiated research projects, Health Care Promotion Scheme), or any of its preceding funding schemes, 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.

   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 Application Form; and (b) the funding decision of any similar or related application once available

9. Proposed Research Project Template:

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 PART H Section 1 above.

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. Where appropriate show a power analysis to support the chosen sample size.

(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.

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 at Appendix A**.

g. **Purpose and Potential**: Describe the underlying purpose of the project, and its possible implications for health and health care in Hong Kong. Where appropriate, describe plans for possible applications arising from the research. 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".

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.

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 boxes 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 the 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. Failure to do so will result in withdrawal of grant. Letters of exemption for non-applicable regulatory committees are not required.

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, a Clinical Trial Certificate/Medicinal Test Certificate issued by the Department of Health must be obtained prior to the commencement of the research project. FAs conducting clinical trials, in particular those involving the use of Chinese medicine, are strongly advised to confirm the need of a Clinical Trial Certificate/Medicinal Test Certificate from the Department of Health as early as practical (preferably before/during the submission of applications to the HMRF) to avoid delay in project commencement. If a Clinical Trial Certificate is required, failure to present a valid clinical trial certificate by a specified deadline will result in withdrawal of the grant.

10. Report on previous research grants: Report all previous research grants supported by the HMRF (including investigator-initiated research projects and Health Care and Promotion Scheme) 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**.

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 (e.g. apart from knowledge, conceptual or methodological advances, contribution, if any, to health care, medical practice, training, applicability/spin-off) and of the project's significance for your own, your assistants', and your colleagues' scientific development.

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 applicants. The FA should make sure that all Co-Applicants endorse on 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 C**.

PART I – DECLARATION AND AUTHORISATION

To the best of FA's knowledge, the AI or any of the applicants listed in Section 7 under 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). The Application Form **must** be endorsed by the FA, the mentor, President/Vice-Chancellor, 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. He/She is required to state his/her support and role to the FA throughout the fellowship period. A copy of the CV of the mentor should be attached to the application.

AI: A nomination letter from the President/Vice-Chancellor should be forwarded to the Secretariat in a sealed envelope together with the completed Application Form.

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. For overseas travel, one economy class roundtrip 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 aggregated and averaged 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, preparation of materials, etc.).

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, etc. is an allowable cost up to a maximum of HK$5,000.

1.5.4 Incentives

The purchase of gifts, coupons, etc., as incentives/tokens of appreciation for study participants is allowed if 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, Post-doctoral Fellow, etc.) 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 FA normally has 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 B

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 C

Management of Track Records of Applicants[1]

(Effective from 27 January 2017)

Improprieties	Description	Gravity	Actions[2,3]
Scientific Misconduct[4]	Plagiarism, fraudulence, etc.	Serious	i. Disqualification in the related funding exercise; and ii. Debar for five years
Double dipping not declared	Receiving grant from other funding agencies	Heavy	i. Disqualification in the related funding exercise; and ii. Debar for one year
	Submission of grant applications or similar proposals to other funding agencies	Light	Warning letter
Conflict of Interest not declared	Co-authorship, collaborator, advisor / advisee relationship with the nominated reviewer in the past three years at the time of grant application	Medium	Disqualification in the related funding exercise
	Co-authorship, collaborator, advisor / advisee relationship with the nominated reviewers in the past four years or more at the time of grant application	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 two years and until the final report is submitted
	Early termination or incomplete project without valid justification; or research work done before the project commencement not declared	Heavy	i. Partial payment or recovery of grant ii. Debar for two years
	Final report graded "Unredeemable" or "Unacceptable"	Medium	Withhold 10% or 20% of the final payment subject to the terms and conditions in the agreement

[1] *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.*

[2] *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 five years.*

[3] *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.*