



INTRODUCTION TO THE HEALTH AND MEDICAL RESEARCH FUND

Dr Richard COLLINS
Chief Scientific Reviewer (Research Office)
Food and Health Bureau

**Briefing cum Grant Skills Training Workshop for
the 2019 Open Call for Investigator-initiated Projects**

OUTLINE

- Overview of the Health and Medical Research Fund (HMRF)
- Areas of Projects & Thematic Priorities
- Peer Review Process
- Application and Timeline



OVERVIEW OF HMRF

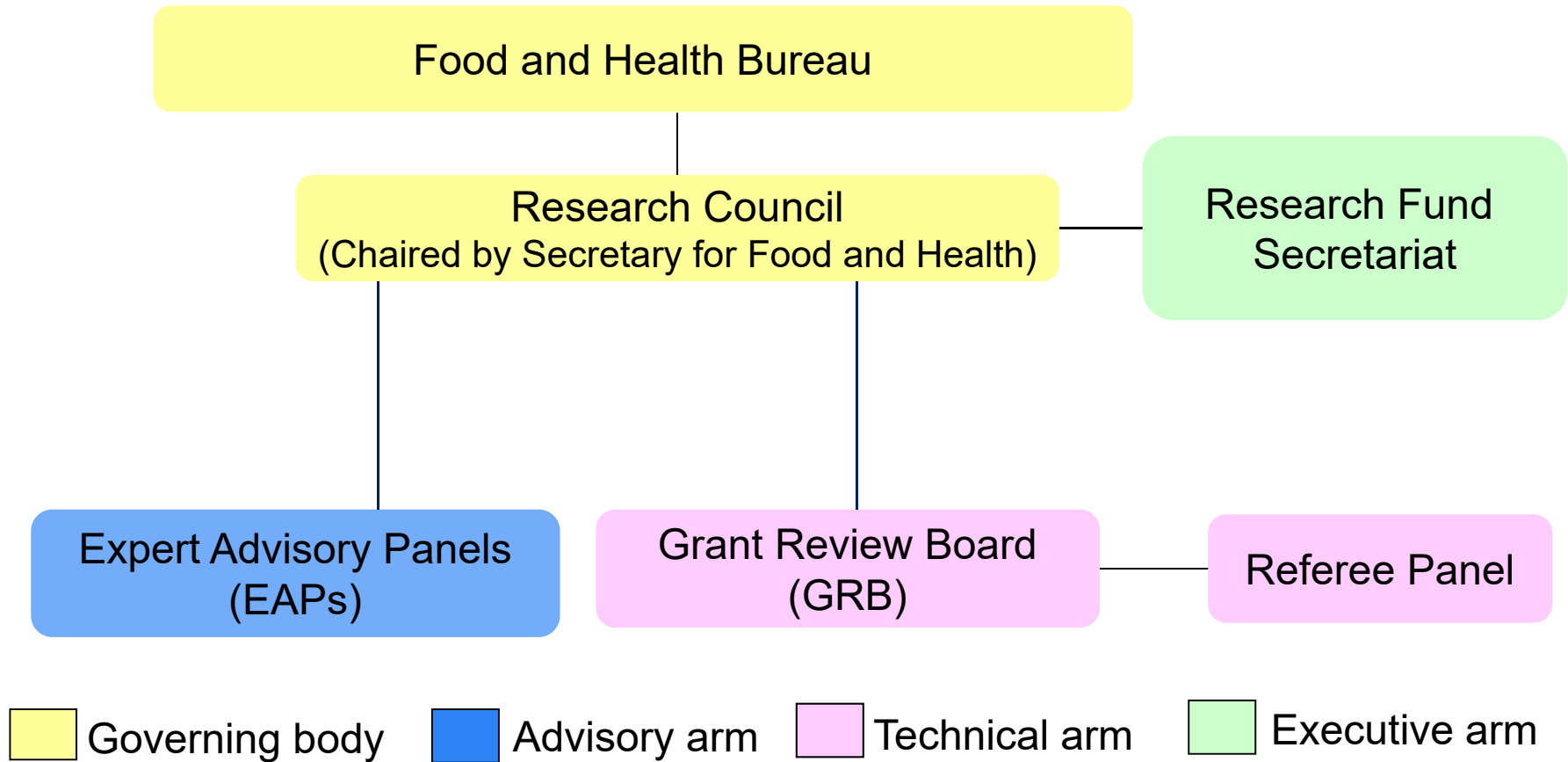
OVERVIEW OF HMRF

- Administered by the Food and Health Bureau (FHB)
- Established in Dec 2011
 - Seven annual open calls (2012 - 2018)
- Incorporates activities of previous FHB funds, i.e.
 - Health and Health Services Research Fund
 - Research Fund for the Control of Infectious Diseases
 - Health Care and Promotion Fund

MISSION OF HMRF

- To build research capacity...
- ...through the generation and application of evidence-based scientific knowledge in health and medicine to encourage, facilitate, and support health and medical research to:
 - Inform health policies
 - Improve population health
 - Strengthen the health system
 - Enhance healthcare practices
 - Advance standard and quality of care
 - Promote clinical excellence

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE





AREAS OF PROJECTS AND THEMATIC PRIORITIES

AREAS OF PROJECTS

- Public Health, Human Health and Health Services Research
- Infectious Diseases Research
- Advanced Medical Research
- Health Promotion

PUBLIC HEALTH, HUMAN HEALTH AND HEALTH SERVICES RESEARCH

- Examine the **cause, treatment and prevention** of the full range of diseases and conditions that affect **human health** and the impact of the organisation, financing and management of **healthcare services** on the delivery, quality, cost, access to, and outcomes of such services

INFECTIOUS DISEASES RESEARCH

- Focus on infectious diseases which are prevalent in Hong Kong and neighbouring regions or areas in which the Hong Kong academic community has a competitive edge

ADVANCED MEDICAL RESEARCH

- Involves the development and use of new techniques, technologies and treatment paradigms to improve human health.
- Focus on translational value
- Among the many possible areas of advanced medical research potentially supported by HMRF, research proposals that address the following are encouraged –
 - Clinical genetics
 - Clinical trials
 - Neuroscience
 - Paediatrics

HEALTH PROMOTION

- Include a coordinated set of activities that help people adopt **healthier lifestyles** by enhancing awareness, changing adverse health behaviours or creating a conducive environment that supports good health practices

2019 HMRF OPEN CALL – THEMATIC PRIORITIES

- **List of thematic priorities** can be downloaded from Secretariat's website at <https://rfs.fhb.gov.hk>
- **Priority** for funding will be given to applications addressing the [thematic priorities](#)
- Thematic priorities are **reviewed every year** by Expert Advisory Panels and endorsed by Research Council

THEMATIC PRIORITIES 2019

Infectious Diseases	Change since 2018
Theme 1 Respiratory pathogens	Promote research and innovation for improved and novel diagnostics, vaccines and treatments against influenza
	Promote operational research for influenza prevention, control and programme delivery
	Promote research to better understand the virus characteristics and host factors that drive the impact of influenza
	Epidemiology, novel diagnosis and treatment of atypical (non-TB) mycobacterial infection
Theme 2 Antimicrobial resistance	Novel approaches to decolonise patients carrying multiple drug-resistant organisms including antimicrobial therapy and/or faecal transplantation

THEMATIC PRIORITIES 2019

Infectious Diseases	Change since 2018
Theme 3 Vector-borne diseases	Epidemiology of vectors, reservoirs and human infection of vector-borne diseases
	Novel therapeutic strategies for vector-borne diseases
	Examine the epidemiology of rodent-related hepatitis E infection for better understanding on its local prevalence, associated risk factors and the route of transmission
Theme 4 HIV/AIDS	Immune mechanisms underlying HIV/AIDS pathogenesis
	Novel vaccine for eliciting protective immune responses
	Innovative small molecule and immunotherapeutic drugs (including antibody drugs)
	Therapeutic interventions to cure HIV infection or latency eradication

THEMATIC PRIORITIES 2019

Primary healthcare and NCD

Change since 2018

Health and health services research on major NCD including cancer, diabetes mellitus, **chronic diseases of cardiovascular system**, chronic respiratory diseases, **cerebrovascular diseases**, and chronic musculoskeletal disorders and their associated risk factors including unhealthy diet, physical inactivity, tobacco use, harmful use of alcohol, and **psychosocial problems**

Effectiveness of interventions to tackle NCD and their **risk** factors

Health and health services research tackling problems of an ageing population including sarcopenia and frailty, and promotion of healthy ageing

THEMATIC PRIORITIES 2019

Cancer

Change since 2018

Development of novel diagnostic tools; new treatment modalities including **advanced surgical techniques**, systemic therapy and radiotherapy to reduce mortality and morbidity

Implementation Science

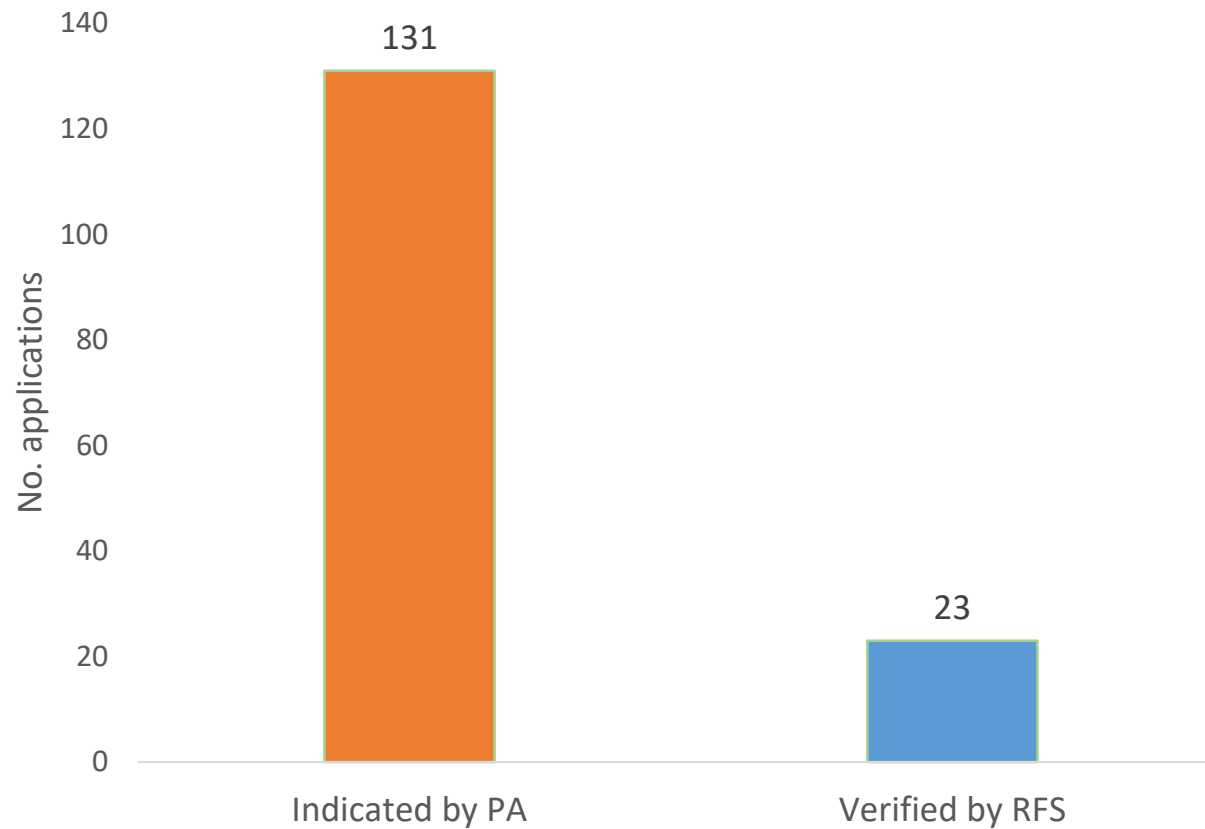
Change since 2018

To develop strategies for **contextualising** clinical and practice-based evidence for implementation of clinical health service and community based practice

To conduct **formative and process** evaluation for improving implementation outcomes

IMPLEMENTATION SCIENCE

2018 HMRF Open Call



Please pay close attention to the definition of “implementation science”

IMPLEMENTATION SCIENCE

Definition of “implementation science” used in HMRF

- Implementation science is a methodological approach that is *applicable to any of the research areas* under the HMRF
- Broadly speaking, the term implementation research describes the **scientific study** of the **processes used in the implementation of initiatives** as well as the contextual factors that affect these processes

IMPLEMENTATION SCIENCE

2019 HMRF Open Call – Thematic Priorities

E-01	Strategies to implement health promotion, prevention, screening, early detection, and diagnostic interventions, as well as effective treatments, clinical procedures, or guidelines in existing care systems
E-02	To develop strategies for contextualising clinical and practice-based evidence for implementation of clinical health service and community based practice
E-03	To conduct formative and process evaluation for improving implementation outcomes
E-04	Implementation of multiple evidence-based practices within community or health services settings to meet the needs of complex patients and diverse systems of care

IMPLEMENTATION SCIENCE

Examples of implementation science research proposals in each HMRF Areas of Projects

HHS	Implementation of an internationally standardised framework for dysphagia diet modification in Hong Kong
ID	The implementation of HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) in Hong Kong: an acceptability study
AMR	Efficacy and safety of genotyping-guided drug use in the management of inflammatory bowel disease
HP	Implementing a train-the-trainer, mobile-assisted mindfulness programme to improve the mental and physical well-being of people with dementia

POINTS TO NOTE

- Routine public health or clinical services that are provided by the Government or government funded agencies will normally not be considered for support
- Applicants are strongly recommended to consult and/or collaborate with field experts (e.g. Hospital Authority clinicians) to improve the feasibility of research proposals, in particular clinical studies and those involving human subjects



PEER REVIEW PROCESS

PEER REVIEW PROCESS

- 1st: Referee Panel (6500+)
 - Renowned experts in their fields
 - Usually 2 External Reviewers (ERs) per application

- 2nd: Grant Review Board (GRB)
 - More than 200 local senior health professionals and academics
 - Independent review and panel discussion

The RC will invite non-local experts to participate in the second-tier peer review.

1ST Tier Peer Review

- Two external reviewers (ER) per application
- Work independently
- Standardised assessment criteria
- ERs assign an overall rating (1-4)
 - 4: recommended for support
 - 3: recommended for support (subject to clarification / amendment)
 - 2: not recommended for support at present (resubmission possible)
 - 1: not supported
- Applications receiving single or double low rating (1 or 2) will normally not be eligible for second-tier peer review

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA (HEALTH AND MEDICAL RESEARCH PROJECTS)

- Originality
- Relevance to the fund and thematic priorities
- Significance of the research questions
- Quality of scientific content
- Credibility of design and methods
- Applicability to local context
- Translational potential / value

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA (HEALTH PROMOTION PROJECTS)

- Potential impact in response to the health needs of the target local community
- **Scientific evidence** of effectiveness of the proposed health promotion activities
- Innovation
- **Relevance to thematic priorities**
- Feasibility of the proposal
- Evaluation plan of programme effectiveness
- **Cross-sector collaboration**, in particular collaboration between non-governmental organisations and tertiary institutions
- Impact and **sustainability** of the programme
- Potential to build community capacity in health promotion

2nd Tier Peer Review

- Senior health professionals and academics
- Includes **Non-Local Experts** from overseas
- Meet in person to discuss applications
- Two reviewers (Speakers) per application
 - Work independently
 - Standardised assessment criteria
 - Speakers assign an overall rating (1-4)
- Final overall rating / funding recommendation (1-4) decided by **consensus**
- Overall open call success rate **~25%** (195/793) in 2018
 - Comparable with other funding schemes
 - RGC GRF 2019/20 Medicine, dentistry and health:
100/389=26%

RESULTS OF GRANT APPLICATIONS

- Decision letter in March (6-7 months after application deadline)
- Recommended for support
 - **Subject to satisfactory response** to the ERs'+ GRB's comments within 3 weeks
 - Ethics approval / safety clearance/ consent for accessing data for third party data (*to be submitted within 12 weeks from the date of grant approval letter unless specified*)
 - For clinical trials, Department of Health **Clinical Trial Certificate / Medicinal Test Certificate** is required (suggest applying **as early as practical**, preferably during the submission of application to the HMRF) to avoid delay in project commencement
- Not recommended for support at present
 - Resubmission possible in next open call
- Not supported



APPLICATION AND TIMELINE

GRANT SIZE & ELIGIBILITY

➤ Grant

- \$1.5 million for up to 3 years
 - Larger size / longer duration may be supported at the discretion of the GRB
 - Smaller pilot studies are encouraged
- One application only (either research or health promotion project) by each PA

ELIGIBILITY

- Invite applications from locally-based tertiary institutions, hospitals, medical schools, non-governmental organisations or other appropriate centres, units or services
- PA must be based in a Hong Kong organisation throughout the project period and employed by the Administering Institution (AI) at time of submitting the application
 - Inform us immediately if plan to leave the AI after submission of application. Failure to do so will result in disqualification of the application

SUBMISSION OF APPLICATION

- Through **eGMS** by 30 September 2020 (18:00 HKT)
- Pay attention to AI's **internal deadline**, if any
- Application with incomplete signatures may not be considered
- Application without **reference code of thematic priority** may be treated as an incomplete application and may not be considered
- PA will receive the acknowledgement email from the Secretariat if the application is successfully submitted

eGMS – ONLINE SUBMISSION



Welcome to the electronic Grant Management System (eGMS) of the Research Fund Secretariat of the Food and Health Bureau, HKSAR.

This is an online platform for managing the funding applications administered by the Research Fund Secretariat. The system supports electronic submission of proposals, on-line management of approved projects and dissemination of project results.

All grant applications must be submitted via this system starting from the launch of eGMS in December 2014. By setting up one single eGMS account, you can submit multiple grant applications for funding administered by the Research Office of the Food and Health Bureau.

Login to eGMS

Email:

Your login email is your email address.

Password:

[Forgot your password?](#)
[Forgot your login?](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions](#)

Account Registration *(FOR APPLICANTS ONLY!)*

Notes to Grant Review Board (GRB) Members/ External Reviewers

eGMS account has already been opened for GRB Members and External Reviewers. Please contact the Research Fund Secretariat (Email: egmsenquiry@fhb.gov.hk) if you have any questions.

v2.60(Soft Launch)

Non-PA users can contact the Research Office (Email: egmsenquiry@fhb.gov.hk) for registration of an eGMS account or add the PA role to your existing eGMS account.

[Frequently Asked Questions](#) v2.10(Soft Launch)

Recommended browsers: Microsoft Internet Explorer 8, 9 and 10 or Firefox 20+ or Chrome 32+ (32-bit only)

SECTION 13 PROPOSAL

- Proposed **research** project: Sections 13 (a) – (h) of the research proposal, with the standard header **2019 HMRF Open Call Proposal** should be attached as a PDF file to the e-Form
- The proposal template can be downloaded from <https://rfs.fhb.gov.hk>

Grant Applications

Investigator-initiated Projects

- Electronic Application Form (e-Form): Available in [eGMS](#)
(Path in eGMS: Project > Application > Application Call > Web-based Online e-Form)
- [Quick Guide for Completing the electronic Application Form](#) (PDF File 223K) updated
- [Proposed Research Project \(Section 13\(a\)-\(h\)\)](#) (Word File 33K) updated
- [Proposed Health Promotion Project \(Section 13\(a\)-\(h\)\)](#) (Word File 30K) updated

SECTION 13 PROPOSAL

- Proposed **health promotion** project: Sections (a) – (h) of the proposal, with the standard header

2019 HMRF Open Call Proposal - Health Promotion

should be attached as a PDF file to the e-Form

- The proposal template can be downloaded from <https://rfs.fhb.gov.hk>

Grant Applications

Investigator-initiated Projects

- Electronic Application Form (e-Form): Available in [eGMS](#)
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- [Proposed Health Promotion Project \(Section 13\(a\)-\(h\)\)](#) (Word File 30K) updated

REGULATORY / ETHICS APPROVAL / CONSENT FOR ACCESSING THIRD-PARTY DATA

- Submit ethics/safety/regulatory approvals/consent for accessing third-party data within **12 weeks (or as specified by the Secretariat)** after the announcement of funding decisions
- For clinical trials, confirm with Department of Health if a **Clinical Trial Certificate/Medicinal Test Certificate** is required **as early as practical** (preferably during the submission of application to the HMRF) to avoid delay in project commencement
- Ensure that the protocol/scope approved by the relevant regulatory body/IRB is the **same** as that approved by HMRF

STAFF COST - POST-DOCTORAL FELLOWS/ RESEARCH STUDENTS

- Shall work on the approved HMRF project
- Shall not be PA or Co-A of the HMRF project concerned
- Shall not be double funded by other sources
- Can support part-time in proportion to the amount of research work on the approved HMRF project
- Ensure the appointment under the approved HMRF project will not breach the terms / restrictions / undertaking of the proposed staff signed with other parties (e.g. University Grants Committee/Research Grants Council).

SIMILAR STUDIES AND OTHER FUNDING

- Should declare any duplicate funding in the grant application forms
- Shall notify the Secretariat immediately
 - Any other similar or related application submitted to other funding agencies in addition to those listed in the Electronic Application Form
 - The funding decision of any other similar or related applications once available

11a. (i) Have any of the applicants listed in Section 9 submitted this or a similar research proposal to the HMRF or any of its preceding funding schemes, or other funding agencies (local or overseas) in the past 3 years? YES NO

Attention: In this section include all previously submitted similar proposals in the past 3 years, i.e. proposals rejected or not supported by HMRF or other funding agencies. Please attach a copy of the previous application, the reviewers' comments (if any), a point-by-point response to the reviewers' comments, and/or a description of the differences or changes made between the previous and the current proposal. Failure to provide sufficiently detailed information may adversely affect the assessment of your proposal.

If yes, please provide the following details:-

For proposal(s) pending a funding decision, please complete Section 11a. (ii) below.

No.	Project Title	Name of Applicant(s)	Project Ref No.	Funding Agency	Funding Decision / Rating
1					
	Previous application		The review panel's feedback (if any)		

Please use the box below to respond point-by-point to the reviewers' comments (if any), and/or highlight the major changes that have been incorporated into this application. Applications declined for any reason by the HMRF or other funding agencies will be accepted only if the reasons for the rejection have been described in detail and a point-by-point response is provided describing how these issues have been addressed.

11a. (ii) Do any of the applicants listed in Section 9 intend to submit this or a similar research proposal to the HMRF or other funding agencies (local or overseas) in the next 6 months? YES

Attention: At any time before the announcement of the funding decision of this application, applicants are required to notify the Research Fund Secretariat immediately about: (a) any other similar or related application submitted to other funding agencies in addition to those listed below; and (b) the funding decision once available.

If yes, please provide the following details:-

No.	Project Title	Name of Applicant(s)	Project Ref No.	Funding Agency	Expected Date of Decision (dd/mm/yyyy)
1					

Please give a summary of the similarities and differences between this application and the proposal to be submitted (400 words max)

RESUBMISSION

- Applications **not supported in a previous application round** of HMRF investigator-initiated research projects / Health Care and Promotion Scheme (HCPS) under the following circumstances should be submitted under the category of “**Resubmission**”-
 - Application rated “**2**” which has been **substantially revised** to address all reviewers’ comments in a structured and consistent manner

RESUBMISSION

- Applications **rejected in a previous application round** of HMRF investigator-initiated research projects (i.e. **no grading** or **rated “1”**) or declined by the HCPS and/or Research Fellowship Scheme, or other funding agencies (local or overseas) must be submitted as a **new** application with **extensive changes** or improvements made **with full justifications**

RESUBMISSION

- To be assessed on the **continued relevance** of the application with respect to knowledge gap, policy needs, translational value and **prevailing thematic priorities** at the time of resubmission
- Having satisfactorily addressed previous comments is **not a guarantee** of funding

APPLICATION TIMELINE 2019/20

Date	Items
31 Mar 2020 (18:00 HKT)	Closing date
Oct / Nov 2020	Decision letters issued <ul style="list-style-type: none">• to respond to the comments of External Reviewers (ERs) and/or Grant Board (GRB) within 3 weeks
Nov / Dec 2020	Review of responses to satisfactorily address comments made by the ERs GRB
Jan - Mar 2021	Final approval letter and agreement after resolving all outstanding issues including budget clarification and ethics approval



APPLICATION TIMELINE 2019/20 (REVISED)

Date	Items
30 Sep 2020 (18:00 HKT)	Closing date
Mar 2021	Decision letters issued <ul style="list-style-type: none">• PA to respond to the comments of External Reviewers (ERs) and/or Grant Review Board (GRB) within 3 weeks
Apr 2021	Review of PAs' responses to satisfactorily address comments made by the ERs and/or GRB
May - Jul 2021	Final approval letter and agreement after resolving all outstanding issues including budget clarification and ethics approval

FURTHER INFORMATION

<https://rfs.fhb.gov.hk/>



食物及衛生局
Food and Health Bureau

ENGLISH | 繁體版 | 简体版 | 



Research Fund Secretariat
Food and Health Bureau
9/F, Rumsey Street
Multi-Storey Car Park Bldg
2 Rumsey Street
Sheung Wan
Hong Kong

Enquiry emails:

rfs@fhb.gov.hk (General)

egmsenquiry@fhb.gov.hk (eGMS)

THANK YOU

