



醫療衛生研究基金
Health and Medical
Research Fund

Briefing Session for **2025 Open Call for** **Research Fellowship Scheme**

Research Fund Secretariat
Research and Data Analytics Office
Health Bureau
November 2025

Outline

- Overview of the Scheme
- Eligibility and Requirement
- Review Process
- Points to Note
- Monitoring and Presentation

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Overview

of

the Scheme



Research Fellowship Scheme

| Administration | Establishment | Operation | Components |
|--|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Research Fund Secretariat, Health Bureau | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• August 2015 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Annual basis | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Training programme• Research project |

Objectives

Support researchers or professionals, particularly healthcare professionals, in their **early to mid-career** to enhance their skills in **public health and health services research**

Framework

Each application has to cover 2 components:

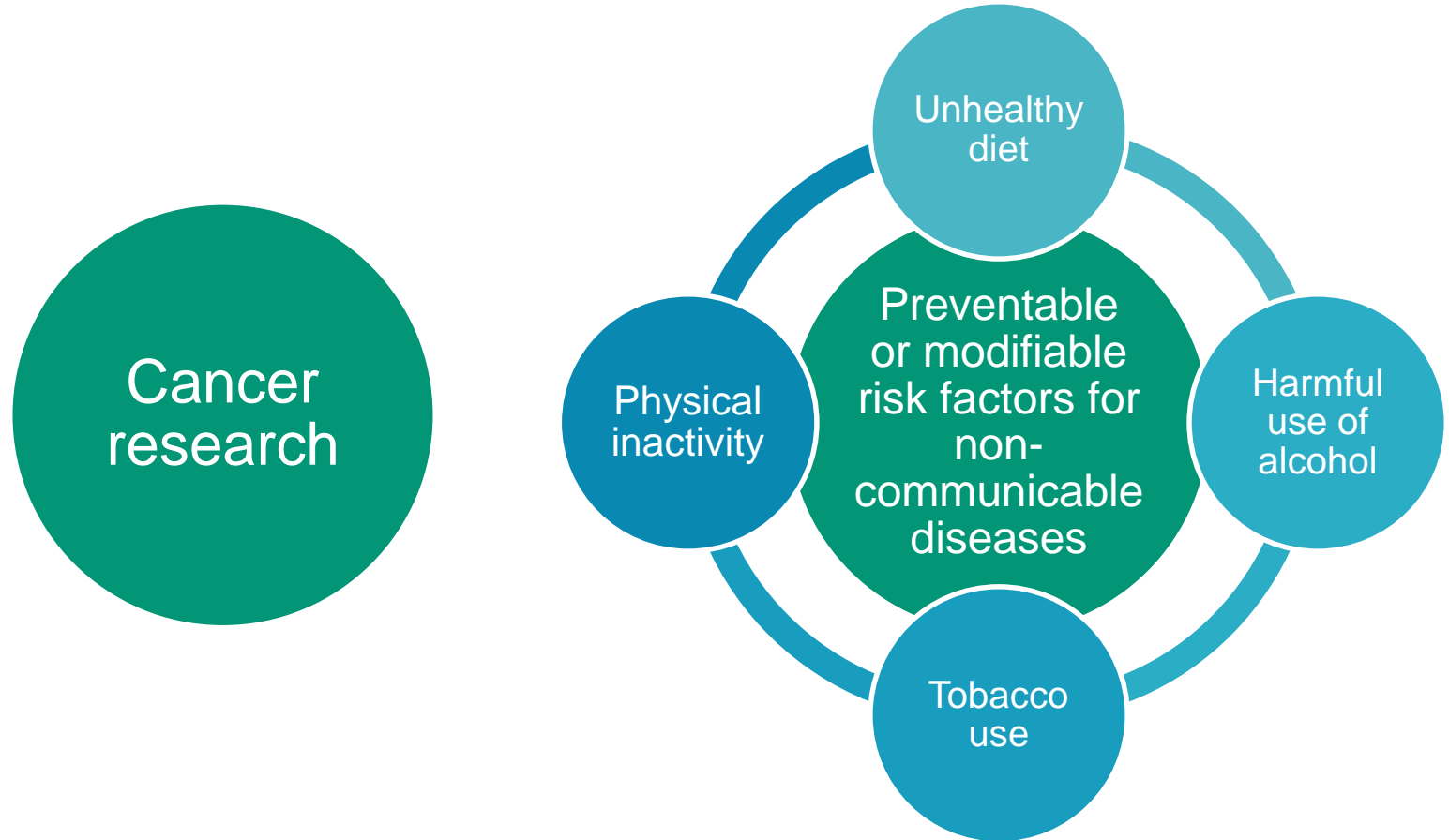
- **Training programme** – attach to a reputable institution outside HK for **≥ 3 months** cumulatively
- Online training will **NOT** be counted in the training period
- **Research project** – a small scale one with **≤ 3** research objectives
- Must be relating to the proposed training programme

Funding Scope

Supports applications on the following research projects -

- **Clinical research** including patient-oriented research, epidemiological and behavioural studies, outcomes research and health services research
- **Infectious diseases research with public health implications** from bench to bedside and at community level and with translational value
- Clinical research **based on Chinese medicine theory** or clinical research on Chinese medicine theory and methodology

Funding Priority



Grant Size

- **\$1.2 million** for up to **2 years**

Training programme

- \$0.4 million **maximum**

- Fees of the training course / attachment outside HK
- Air package (up to **2 round-trip** economy class)
- Accommodation & subsistence allowances

Research project

- \$0.8 million **maximum**

- Staff costs
(including salary for research staff and reliever to take over the teaching duties)
- Equipment & consumables

2

Eligibility

and

Requirement



Application Streams

Stream A (16 awards)

Tertiary institutions funded by the University Grants Committee

Stream B (4 awards)

Designated **teaching hospitals** of the medical schools of CUHK and HKU, i.e.

Prince of Wales Hospital and **Queen Mary Hospital**

Eligibility

Fellowship Applicant (FA)

- ✓ Researchers / Professionals in medical and health-related disciplines
- ✓ < 10 years' post-qualification experience
Post qualifications refer to bachelor / master / doctoral degree(s) or Fellow of the Hong Kong Academy of Medicine
- ✓ Full-time employees of the Administering Institutions (AIs)
- ✓ Based at same AI throughout the fellowship period
- ✓ Support from a Mentor
Full-time staff of the AI / the respective medical school of HKU & CUHK (Stream B)





NOT ELIGIBLE

❌ Previous awardees



- ❌ Being debarred from submitting applications to the HMRF or any other funding agencies (local or non-local) as at the closing deadline
- ❌ Resubmission of same/similar/related application that was not funded in the previous application round(s) of HMRF

Requirement – Training Programme Outside Hong Kong



- Train FA to become a better scientist/researcher
- Knowledge/skills should be relevant and applicable to the research project
- Training plan should include purpose, duration, activities, relevance to the research project and deliverables



- ✗ Clinical attachment that cannot improve FA's research capability
- ✗ Regular programmes for higher academic qualification (e.g. Master or PhD degree)

Requirement – Research Project



- **Clinical** research / Research on infectious diseases with **public health implications**
- Apply knowledge and skills obtained from the training programme to complete the research project
- Original with advancement in scientific knowledge
- Translational potential within short-to-medium timeframe
- Small-scale study with ≤ 3 research objectives



- ✗ Replication of previous studies outside Hong Kong
- ✗ Develop methods / techniques / research platforms without evaluation of the tool in a clinical setting

Examples - Outside Funding Scope

EXAMPLE

A pre-clinical study which aims to determine the treatment effect of a traditional Chinese medicine/herbal formula for a particular disease using mouse models.

Non-clinical
research

EXAMPLE

A study which aims to identify novel virus species by next-generation sequencing of samples collected from various animal sources, followed by bioinformatics analysis to investigate the virus evolution and the susceptibility of transmission to potential new hosts.

A viral evolutionary biology project; unlikely to identify new viruses that can infect human and cause public health threats

EXAMPLE

A study aims at examining a treatment strategy for a virus-associated cancer using an animal model.

Research topics focus on non-communicable diseases (NCD) caused by microorganisms
- NOT infectious disease research
- NOT a clinical research on NCD

Application with Unclear Local Relevance

EXAMPLE

A study aims to establish an early detection model of mental disorders in specific age groups using a dataset outside Hong Kong that contains regionally variable parameters such as genotypes, environmental and cultural factors, and social behaviours.

EXAMPLE

A study aims to examine the tumour microenvironment / gut microbiome of cancer patients before and after chemotherapy. All clinical samples were obtained from non-Chinese cancer patients outside Hong Kong.

No dataset / subjects from Hong Kong → unclear how the research findings will benefit patients' health and/or healthcare system in Hong Kong

Examples - Within/Outside the Funding Scope (Annex 1)

Within funding scope

- i. *Clinical research: mechanisms of human disease, therapeutic interventions, clinical trials, development of new technologies*

| No. | Research Area | Examples |
|-----|--|---|
| 1. | Clinical virology | <i>Clinical research: mechanisms of human disease</i> A combination of pre-clinical and clinical research to investigate responses and the associated cellular pathways among vaccinee infected subjects. The pre-clinical part is to conduct animal experimental functional role of a selected type of immune cell and evaluate treatment. Research conducted with human subjects involving prior to identify correlation with results generated from animal experiments. |
| 2. | Treatment | <i>Clinical research: therapeutic interventions/clinical trials</i> A prospective cohort study aiming to determine the safety and effectiveness of therapy regimen among patients with a particular medical condition. |
| 3. | Clinical study of Chinese Medicine formula | <i>Clinical research: therapeutic interventions/clinical trials</i> A study aiming to investigate the clinical efficacy and safety of a combination consisting of multiple Chinese herbal medicines on patients with a condition using a randomised placebo-controlled clinical trial. Research on the modulation of the oral and fecal microbiota of the determined by metagenomics. |

Outside funding scope

- i. *Basic / preclinical research on Chinese medicine*

| No. | Research Area | Remarks |
|-----|---|---|
| 1. | Biochemical study of medicinal plant extracts | <i>Non-clinical research</i> A pre-clinical study which aims to determine the treatment effect of a traditional Chinese medicine/herbal formula for a particular disease using mouse models. |

- ii. *Research on infectious diseases with low public health implication*

| No. | Research Area | Remarks |
|-----|-----------------------|---|
| 2. | Phylogenetic analysis | A study which aims to identify novel virus species by next-generation sequencing of samples collected from various animal sources, followed by bioinformatics analysis to investigate the virus evolution and the susceptibility of transmission to potential new hosts. This study is a viral evolutionary biology project, and is unlikely to identify new viruses that can infect human and cause public health threats. |

- iii. *Basic / pre-clinical research on non-communicable diseases (NCD) caused by microorganisms*

| No. | Research Area | Remarks |
|-----|--|---|
| 3. | Management of NCD caused by microorganisms | <i>Not infectious disease research and not a clinical research on NCD</i> A study aims at examining a treatment strategy for a virus-associated cancer using an animal model. Research topics that focus on NCD caused by microorganisms is not considered research on infectious diseases. Basic or pre-clinical studies on NCD will not be considered. |

3

Review

Process



Application Submitted via eGMS

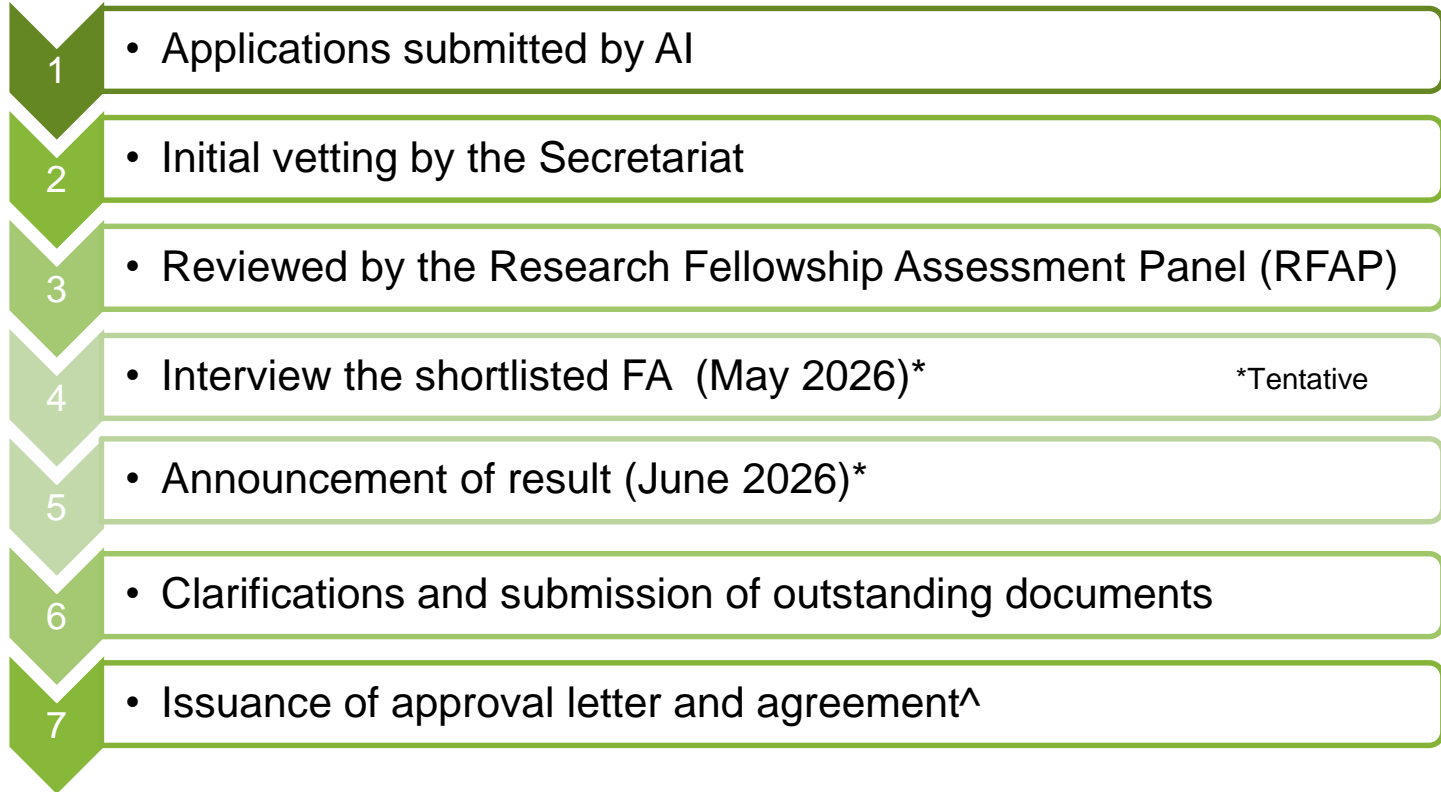
Complete the
e-form

- <https://rfs.healthbureau.gov.hk/eGMS/>

Attachments

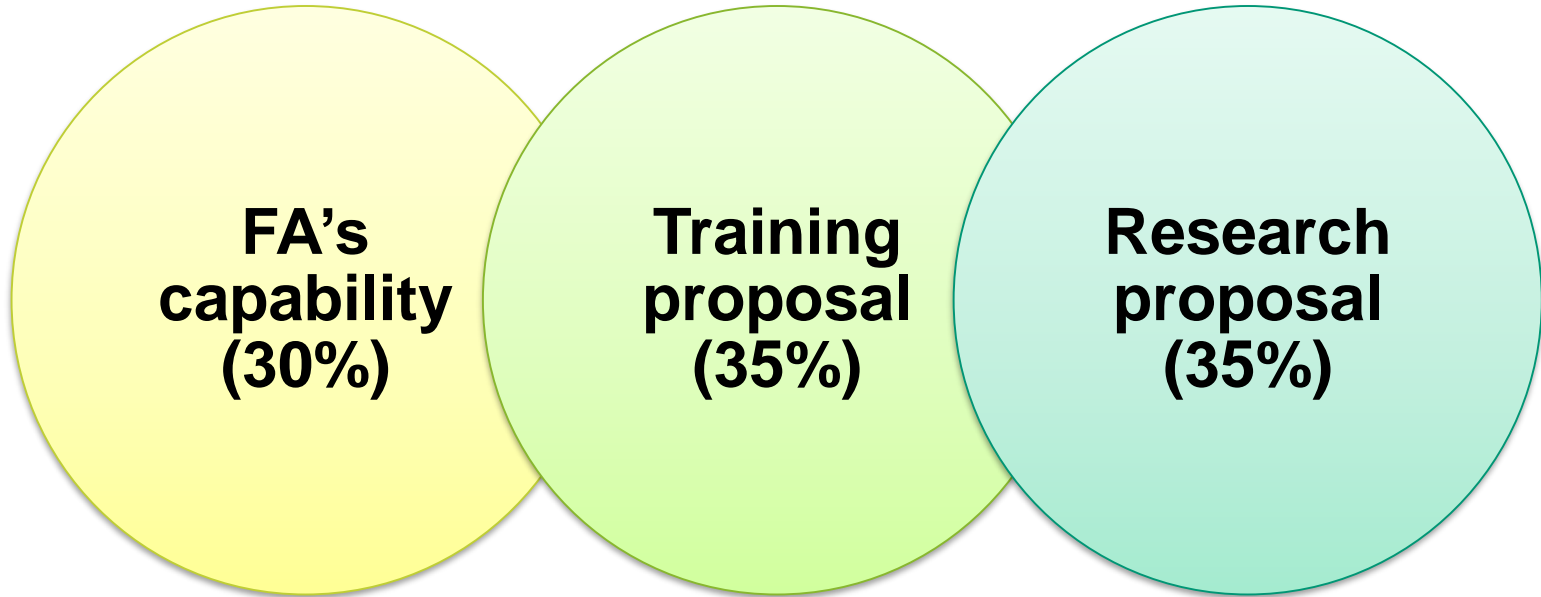
- Nomination letter from President/
Vice-Chancellor (for Stream A) /
Hospital Chief Executive (for Stream B)
- Mentor's endorsement and CV

Review Process



^ Fellowship should commence within **6 months** from the date of approval letter

Assessment Criteria



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Points

to

Note



Points to Note – Submission



eGMS
electronic Grant Management System

- Submission via AI in **eGMS** by [5 Jan 2026](#) (6:00 pm HKT)
- FA will receive acknowledgement email



Pay attention to AI's internal deadline, if any



Application with incomplete signatures/ electronic endorsement may not be considered



1 application per FA



Maximum 8 applications per AI,
except HKU and CUHK for up to 10 applications

Declaration of Similar and/or Related Proposals

FAs and all Co-As should declare –

In the application form

1. Same/similar/related proposals funded /recommended for support by HMRF in the past 3 years
2. Same/similar/related proposals not funded by other funding agencies in the past 3 years
3. Submitted current or similar/related proposal(s) to HMRF or other funding agencies and is pending funding decision
4. Intention to submit this or similar/related application to HMRF or other funding agencies in the next 6 months from the closing deadline

Declaration of Similar and/or Related Proposals

FAs and all Co-As should declare –

Upon receiving the decision email

- Any similar/related research work done or training conducted, on-going and to be done/conducted (since submission of the application) in relation to the application **before the proposed commencement date upon receiving the decision email**
- Such declaration does not necessarily mean that the proposal concerned will be **adversely affected**. Changes in the training and research proposal will be sent to RFAP for review and endorsement.
- Failure to make declaration may lead to application **not eligible** for further processing and shall be subject to **penalty**

Similar or Related Proposals (Annex 2)

- i. Broadly the same **project title or abstract/application summary** or both
 - ii. Overall aim and its **overarching goals/high-level objectives** are broadly the same
 - iii. Broadly the same **research questions**
 - iv. Broadly the same **resources** required to carry out the project
 - v. **Project Team members** [i.e. FA, Co-A(s) of the application are largely the same (even the roles are swappers), while the content of the application remains essentially the same].
-
- NOT an exhaustive list
 - If in doubt, declare any potentially similar or related proposals
 - The Research Council will make the final decision

Ethics / Third-party Data Access

Research Ethics / Safety Approval / Consent for Accessing Third-party Data

- Submit within **12 weeks** (or as specified by the Secretariat) from the date of decision email for the application
- Approval documents should bear the **same project title** as that in the application approved by the Research Council
- The **protocol/scope** must be the **same** as that in the application
- **HA Data Access** – requires approval from the Central Panel on Administrative Assessment of External Data Requests of HA

Certificate for Clinical Trial/Medicinal Test of pharmaceutical products; Certificate for Clinical Trial and Medicinal Test of proprietary Chinese medicines

- Confirm with Department of Health if required as early as practical

Points to Note – Outstanding Deliverables from HMRF-funded Projects

The grant may also be withdrawn if:

Outstanding/overdue:

- Report(s)
- Certified Financial Statement(s)
- Audited Accounts
- Outcome Evaluation Questionnaire(s)

not submitted within 6 months
from grant approval date

Management of Track Records of Applicants

w.e.f. 1 Nov 2024

Scientific Misconduct

- Plagiarism / Self-plagiarism
- Falsification / Fabrication
- Double dipping not declared
- Conflict of Interest not declared
- Non-disclosure of submission of similar/related proposals in the application
- Non-disclosure of similar/related research work in the application

Non-Compliance

- No submission of Final Report by deadline without valid justification
- Early termination without valid justification
- Incomplete project without valid justification
- Final report graded “Unredeemable” or “Unacceptable” or “Not accepted”

Level of Penalty & Penalty Actions

- Light / Medium / Heavy / Serious / Critical
- **Warning letter**
- **Disqualification** of related or all submitted applications
- **Debarment** from 1 to 5 years in all capacities in all funding schemes
- **Partial payment or recovery of grant**

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Monitoring

and

Presentation



Monitoring

Training report
(1 month after training)

Evaluation surveys
For outcomes and impacts at
2 and 4 years after completion

Commencement

Completion

**Interim report &
certified financial
report**
(every 12 months)

**Final report,
dissemination
report &
audited accounts**

After an award is granted, all major changes to the training and research plans require prior approval from the RFAP.

(Note: Change of objectives of the training plan and research proposal is not allowed.)

Outcome Evaluation Surveys

- 2nd and 4th year after project end date

- ❖ Knowledge generation
 - ❖ Capacity building
 - ❖ Policy or decision making
 - ❖ Changing behaviour or practice
 - ❖ Dissemination
-
- ✓ Assess the outcomes / achievements of individual projects for reporting to the Research Council
 - ✓ Select impactful projects for [presentation and receive awards at Health Research Symposium](#)
 - ✓ Further disseminate the findings by the Secretariat

Presentation and Publication

Achievements

**Project
Deliverables**

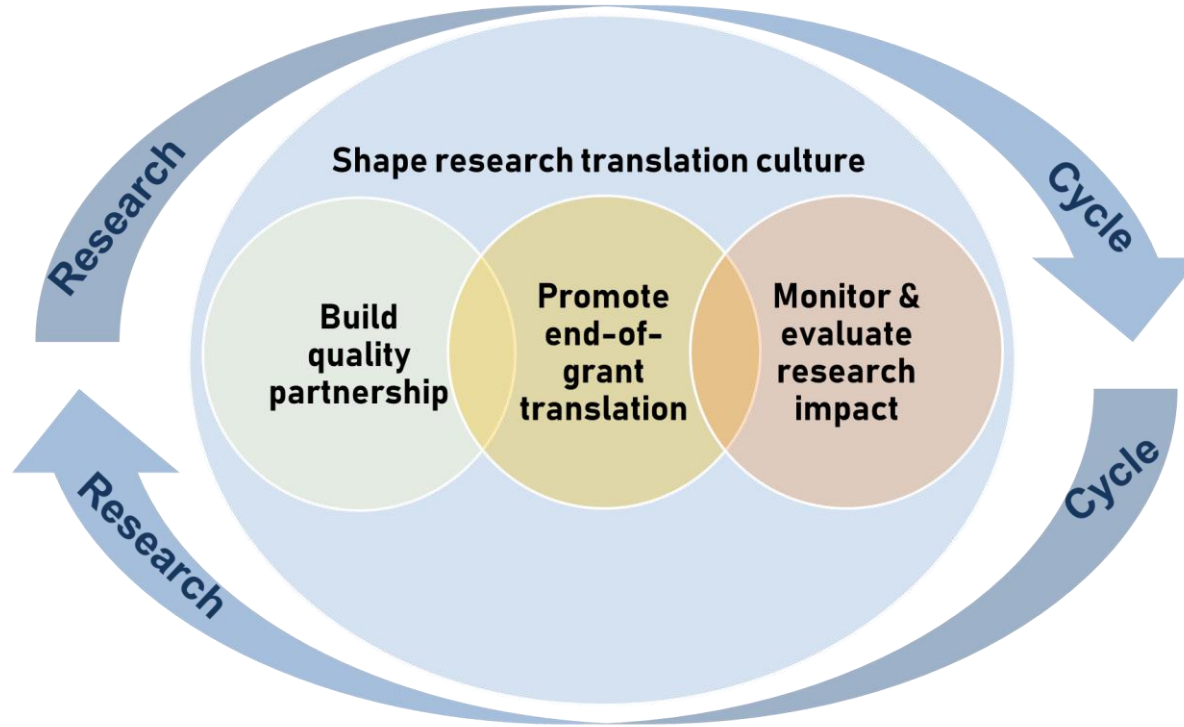
**Learning
Experience**



Research Translation Strategy of HMRF



Strategy Documents



Research funded by HMRF
is expected to generate
impact beyond academia

Researchers must
recognise their role in
research translation

Research translation
should be promoted
throughout research cycle

Research Translation

Covers the processes of synthesis, dissemination, exchange and application of research findings to improve individual and population health through

- informing further research, clinical practices, healthcare services, health policies;
- changing health behaviours; and
- strengthening healthcare systems.

Research Translation



Journal publication and conferences only?



Liaise with end-users of your research findings: before, during and after project (healthcare professionals? patients? community partners? general public)



Disseminate findings in format and channels suitable for your end-users, e.g. infographics, workshops, professional lectures, press conferences, newspaper, website, social media.

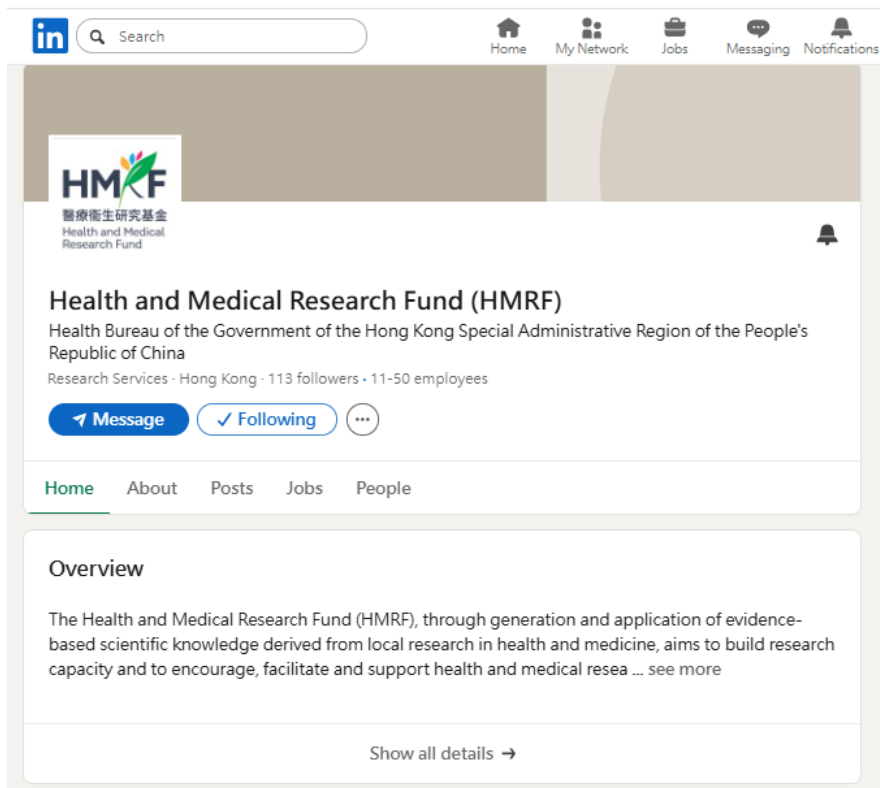
Research Translation



Drive the application/ adoption of your findings

| Established professional network | Adopted as guidelines | Adopted by community partners | Influenced clinical services | Adopted as public health practice |
|--|--|---|--|--|
| Fellowship recipient initiated an Asian anaphylaxis registry | Findings informed HK College of O&G's guideline on preferred test of cervical cancer screening | Novel service model in promoting HPV vaccination among MSM adopted by a NGO | Findings contributed to implementation of an active learning therapy service for amblyopia in Optometry Clinic | Sewage testing adopted as a surveillance tool by the Government in monitoring COVID-19 |

HMRF is now on LinkedIn



<https://www.linkedin.com/company/hmrf/>

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**THANK
YOU !**



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



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