
FACULTY OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Research Grant Guide

Internal and external funding for Faculty staff and research students, 2026/27

The Education University of Hong Kong
Prepared by the Faculty Research Office
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Figures in this guide are indicative planning figures maintained by the Faculty Research Office. Scheme rules, ceilings and deadlines are set by the funder and by the University Research and Development Office, and those published sources always take precedence.

1. Scope of this guide

This guide explains how research funding is applied for, awarded and administered within the Faculty. It covers the external schemes that Faculty staff most often apply to, the internal schemes the Faculty operates from its own budget, and the support available at each stage from first idea to final report.

It is written for academic staff, including those in their first appointment, and for research postgraduate students applying for support in their own name. It does not replace the funder guidance notes, which should always be read in full before an application is drafted.

2. External schemes

The largest source of competitive funding for education research in Hong Kong is the Research Grants Council. The Faculty also applies to bureau and trust schemes where the research question is applied and the results are intended to change practice quickly.

General Research Fund (GRF)	The principal scheme for established investigators. One application per investigator per round. Internal deadline is six weeks before the Council deadline.
Early Career Scheme (ECS)	For investigators within their first three years of a substantive appointment who have not previously held a GRF award as principal investigator.
Collaborative Research Fund	For multi-investigator projects, usually across departments or institutions. Requires a letter of institutional support, arranged through the Research Office.
Public Policy Research	For studies with a direct policy audience. Applications require a short dissemination plan naming the intended policy readership.
Quality Education Fund	For school-based development and evaluation work carried out with a named partner school or kindergarten.

Institutional sign-off

Every external application is submitted by the University, not by the individual investigator. A complete draft, including the budget, must reach the Faculty Research Office by the internal deadline so that costings can be checked and the institutional signature obtained. Applications that miss the internal deadline cannot be guaranteed submission.

3. Internal Faculty schemes

The Faculty operates three internal schemes from its own budget. Internal awards are intended to generate the pilot data and the collaborations that make a competitive external application credible, and applicants are expected to say which external scheme the work is being prepared for.

Seed Grant	Up to HK\$80,000 over twelve months, for pilot work leading to an external application. Two rounds a year.
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Early Career Support Grant	Up to HK\$120,000 over eighteen months, for staff in their first three years, with a mentor named in the application.
Impact and Knowledge Transfer Grant	Up to HK\$60,000, for turning completed research into materials, training or guidance usable by schools and community partners.

Assessment

Internal applications are assessed by a Faculty panel against four criteria of equal weight: the quality of the research question, the fit between question and method, the credibility of the plan and budget, and the likelihood that the work leads to an external application or to demonstrable use in practice. Panel feedback is returned to every applicant, successful or not.

4. The application calendar

September	GRF and ECS internal deadline. Proposal writing clinics run weekly through the month.
October	Seed Grant round 1 opens. Costing surgeries by appointment.
December	Seed Grant round 1 outcome. Collaborative Research Fund expressions of interest.
February	Impact and Knowledge Transfer Grant round. Early Career Support Grant round opens.
April	Seed Grant round 2 opens. Annual progress reports due for all internal awards.
June	Internal award outcomes confirmed. Planning meetings for the following GRF round.

5. Preparing a proposal

- Start from the question, not the method. Reviewers look first for a question that is worth answering and that has not already been answered.
- State plainly what would count as an answer, and what result would disconfirm your expectation.
- Name the participants, the sites and the access route. An application that assumes school access without evidence of it is the most common reason for a low feasibility score.
- Show the analysis. A sampling frame and an analysis plan carry more weight than a longer literature review.
- Book a reading. The Research Office arranges an internal read by a colleague outside your department at least three weeks before the internal deadline.

6. Budgets and costing

Budgets are prepared with the Faculty Research Office using the current University rates. Only costs that arise because the project is carried out may be charged to a grant. Staff time already funded by the

University establishment is not an eligible cost on most schemes.

Research staff	Costed at the appropriate point of the research assistant or postdoctoral scale, plus statutory contributions.
Participant costs	Honoraria, travel reimbursement and replacement teaching costs for participating schools, at the published rates.
Transcription and translation	Charged per recorded hour. A written quotation is required for amounts above HK\$20,000.
Equipment	Items above HK\$10,000 require a justification note. Equipment remains the property of the University.
Dissemination	Conference attendance directly presenting the funded work, and open access article charges.

7. Ethics, data and integrity

Ethical approval is obtained before data collection begins, not before the grant is awarded, but the application must describe how consent, withdrawal and data protection will be handled. Studies in schools must explain how consent is sought from parents and how a pupil may decline without disadvantage.

A data management plan is required for every funded project. It names where data is stored, who has access, how long it is kept and what is deposited at the end of the project. Personal data is held on University systems only, and is separated from identifiers as soon as the study design allows.

8. After the award

- An award is set up as a project account within four weeks of the funder letter. Spending before the account opens is at the applicant own risk.
- A variation to the budget of more than fifteen per cent between headings requires the approval of the Research Office.
- Progress reports are due annually on the anniversary of the award, and a final report within three months of the project end date.
- Publications arising from a funded project must acknowledge the funder and be recorded on the University research information system.
- Unspent balances are returned to the funder, or to the Faculty in the case of internal awards, and cannot be carried into an unrelated project.

9. Contacts

Faculty Research Office	Block B, 3/F, 10 Lo Ping Road, Tai Po. Telephone (852) 2948 7169.
Grant applications and costing	feh@eduhk.hk
Human Research Ethics Committee	Applications through the online ethics system; secretariat via the Faculty Research Office.

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