HMRF

Health and Medical Research Fund

(formerly Research Fund for the Control of Infectious Diseases/ Health and Health Services Research Fund))

Guidance Notes -
Interim, Final and Dissemination Report

This booklet describes the procedures that should be followed when reporting findings to the Research Council.

Please submit reports to:

Research Fund Secretariat
Research Office
Health Bureau
9/F, Rumsey Street Multi-storey Carpark Building
2 Rumsey Street, Sheung Wan
Hong Kong

June 2022

I. Purpose and Aims

1.1 The submission of interim, final and dissemination reports enables the Research Council (Council) to:

- Assess whether the work was carried out in accordance with the approved proposal
- Evaluate the quality of the research
- Maintain a track record of investigators' compliance with the standard conditions of research grants
- Quantify research output
- Provide public access to research findings

1.2 All reports must be submitted by the deadlines specified in the Agreement and conform to the guidelines provided in these Notes. If the reports are not accepted by the Grant Review Board (GRB), principal applicants are obliged to revise them accordingly and submit their response in compliance with the deadlines set in the GRB feedback.

1.3 Failure to submit these reports, or to revise and resubmit if required, by the specified deadlines will mean that the project is incomplete. Further actions that may be taken by the Research Fund Secretariat under these circumstances include: 1) withholding the final payment (20% for a Full Grant, 10% for a Mini-Grant) of the approved amount until the reports are submitted and accepted, 2) recovering the reimbursed amount from the administering institution, and 3) marking the track record of the principal applicant, which will adversely affect future grant applications to funds administered by the Health Bureau.

II. Requirements and Procedures

2.1 Interim Reports

Interim reports are required for Full Grant projects only. An interim report should be submitted within 2 months of the first anniversary of the project commencement date.

Interim reports are used to monitor the progress of the projects, flag difficulties encountered, identify areas where the principal applicants may need support and to monitor the expenditure. Interim reports will not be graded but will be studied by the GRB.

An interim report template is appended in Appendix A and can be downloaded from https://rfs.healthbureau.gov.hk**.**

2.2 Final Reports

Final reports are required for both Full Grant and Mini-Grant projects. A final report must be submitted, together with a dissemination report, within 6 months for Full Grants and 3 months for Mini-Grants of the project end date.

5 hard copies and 1 soft copy (CD-ROM preferably in MS Word format) of the final report and dissemination report should be submitted. Hard copies should not be bound. Soft copies of all graphics should be included as

Power Point, Excel, TIFF Bitmap (.tif), windows meta file (wmf), or graphical interface (gif) formats to facilitate their inclusion into other documents for dissemination.

Final reports should be written according to internationally recognised standard reporting guidelines. For example, if you are submitting a report on

- randomised clinical trials, please follow the CONSORT guideline
- a systematic review or meta-analysis of randomised trials and other evaluation studies please follow the PRISMA guidelines
- a meta-analysis of observational studies please follow the MOOSE guidelines
- a study of diagnostic accuracy please follow the STARD guidelines
- an observational study please follow the STROBE guidelines
- a health economics study, please follow the CHEERS statement.
- a clinical guidelines paper you are encouraged to follow the GRADE guidance for grading evidence
- a pre-clinical/animal study, you are encouraged to follow the ARRIVE guidelines

For studies where no international standard reporting guidelines are available, please use the standard format appended in Appendix B which can be downloaded from https://rfs.healthbureau.gov.hk.

The final report should be approximately 5,000 words (1.5 lines spacing, font size not smaller than Times New Roman 12 point) in length. It must be concise and provide the assessors with sufficient information to evaluate the work. Minimum information for the final report should comprise the following:

i. Title Page (Project Title, Reference No., Investigators, Administering Institution, Date of Submission)

ii. Summary

A summary of not more than 300 words should be included with information according to the following categories:

Background
Aims and Objectives
Study Design
Methods
Results
Conclusions
Implications (for health care services, health care delivery, health policy in Hong Kong)

iii. Main Body of the Report

The main body of the report should be written in a style similar to that of a journal article. Submitted reports should be on par with those submitted to refereed journals. For the main report, the text, tables and figures should be included according to the following format:

Introduction
Aims and Objectives
Study design
Materials and Methods
Results
Discussion
Limitations
Conclusions
Implications / Relevance (for health care services, health care delivery, health policy in Hong Kong)
Dissemination
Publications
Bibliography
List of Research Workers
Appendix

Introduction: The background / setting of the study should be described clearly. A briefly stated but representative literature review should be included in the introduction as well as the rationale for proceeding with the field of investigation.

Aims and Objectives: The study aims, objectives and research questions should be stated briefly and any deviation or variation from those described in the approved grant proposal should be justified.

Materials and Methods: For biomedical studies, include a brief description of the patient samples, cell lines, model systems, and experimental methods and techniques used. For other types of study use the most relevant guidelines as described in Section 2.2. Describe in detail any novel methods or techniques used. A detailed explanation is required for any variation in materials and methods from that described in the approved grant proposal.

Results: The results obtained by the investigators should be summarised indicating to what extent the original aims have been fulfilled. The results section can contain both graphics and tables. Summary tables and graphics are most appropriate. Do not include detailed listings or other computer printouts.

Discussion: The implications of the results should be discussed with reference to the stated aims and objectives.

Conclusion: The researchers should state precisely the conclusions drawn from the study.

Limitations: Please include the following items in discussing limitations of your study a) reliability of the findings, b) critique of the methods, and c) future gaps of knowledge to be filled.

Implications: The acquisition of new knowledge should be highlighted with particular comments on any implications or applications there may be which could improve health care. The researchers should comment on the relevance of their findings for a) policy makers, b) health service managers, c) service providers, and d) future research.

Dissemination: Plans for dissemination and implementation of the research findings should be described. The researchers should also indicate any other

persons or bodies to whom they consider it would be appropriate to send a copy to the final report or present their findings and, if applicable, possible commercial exploitation.

Publications: Publications and other scientific presentations derived from the study should be listed.

Bibliography: Follow the format of "Uniform Requirements For Manuscripts Submitted To Biomedical Journals".

List of research workers: Investigators are to prepare a list of all research workers involved in the project outlining their individual contributions. This should include principal applicant, co-investigators, those employed by the grant and those employed on any other basis but who have given support to the completion of the project. Provide the names in English and Chinese characters, where appropriate.

Appendix: The investigators should include in the appendix tables and figures not included in the text, study instruments, and other documents that were used for the study. Copies of relevant publications by the investigators should be included.

2.3 Dissemination Reports

Dissemination reports are required for both Full Grant and Mini-Grant projects. A dissemination report must be submitted, together with a final report, within 6 months for Full Grants and 3 months for Mini-Grants of the project end date.

The dissemination report is another important tool for the dissemination of research results to policy makers, health service managers and the general public in Hong Kong. The dissemination report is intended to provide a 'snapshot' view of the research. The dissemination report should be readable, relevant and accurate. It should be written in a style suitable for a general as well as an academic readership, be thought provoking and stimulate discussion with regard to the findings and their possible implications. The dissemination report should be self-contained and it should be possible to circulate it without the full research report attached. Therefore, the text should be readily understandable and focus on describing the main results and their potential practical implications for health care and health policy in Hong Kong.

The dissemination report should be a maximum of **2000 words** in length (including main text, references, key messages) and a maximum of **3 tables and/or figures and no more than 5 references**. The standard format of dissemination report is appended in Appendix C and can be downloaded from https://rfs.healthbureau.gov.hk The following headings should be used:

Introduction
Methods
Results
Discussion
References
Acknowledgements

III. Assessment of Final and Dissemination Reports

3.1 Final and dissemination reports will be assessed by a two-tier peer review process; first by external referees, and then by the Grant Review Board (GRB). A sample assessment form is appended in Appendix D.

3.2 If a report is found to be not acceptable, the GRB may indicate to the principal applicants what amendments and additions are required.

3.3 Satisfactory final and dissemination reports (graded 4 or above) will be published by the Council. The final and dissemination reports may be graded at any level and closed at the discretion of the GRB.

IV. Copyright

4.1 The Final Report and Dissemination Report may be published on the Secretariat's website or by other methods at the discretion of the Health Bureau.

4.2 Copyright in the Final Report and Dissemination Report is co-owned equally by the administering institution and the Hong Kong SAR Government.

4.3 The content of the Final Report and Dissemination Report should contain no violation of any existing copyright or other third party material and to the best of the authors' knowledge the dissemination report should not infringe the rights of others, in particular those held by the publishers of peer reviewed journals.

V. Further action that the GRB may recommend

5.1 The GRB may comment on any proposals for dissemination made by the researchers and might encourage them to disseminate their findings towards particular target readerships as represented by professional publications.

5.2 The Council may also routinely inform relevant policy interest in the final and dissemination reports which have been received along with the GRB's assessment of the report.

5.3 The Council may also consult policy interests as to whether and how a particular report might be disseminated. In some cases, it may be more appropriate to disseminate the report in the form of an executive summary, including a contact address for persons wishing to obtain a full copy of the report.

5.4 The Council may distribute copies of a final and dissemination report throughout the SAR to bodies of professional and other relevant groups.

5.5 The Council may recommend that the principal applicants be invited to submit a version of the final report as a possible article to a particular journal.

5.6 In the case of certain studies, it may be appropriate and desirable to organise small or large meetings for the SAR where researchers may present and discuss their findings with policy makers, managers and service providers. The Council may organise such meetings or may encourage other organisations to hold such meetings.

Interim Report

(For projects funded in 2012 application round and thereafter, please enter the report details in the eGMS (https://rfs.healthbureau.gov.hk/eGMS/) directly.)

Important: Please submit 1 printed copy and an electronic version of the Interim Report and any attachments. Complete all sections with sufficient detail to allow review of the progress of the project. Incomplete or insufficiently detailed reports will be returned for revision and resubmission. The principal applicant and all co-applicants are required to sign the Interim Report. Continued funding of the study is dependent upon the submission of an acceptable Interim Report.

1. **Project No.** _____
2. **Grant Period:** **Commencement Date** _____ **End Date:** _____
3. **Title of Project:**

4. **Applicant (s)**	5. **Administering Institution:**

6. **Aims/Objectives of the research:** List the main objectives as stated in the approved proposal. Approval must be sought for any change to the study objectives.

Approved aim / objective	Estimated completion of aim / objective (%)

7. Timetable of Work:

Document the study progress according to the proposed timetable.

8. Achievements / Major findings of the Project so far:

9. Budget & Expenditure (attach a certified financial statement)

10. Applicants' comments

Describe the potential of further investigations or exploitation of results. May include reflection/feedback of applicants and/or any difficulties encountered during the course of project. Comment of the potential for/current dissemination of research findings

11. Publications, including in press

Have any publications resulting directly from this research project been published? ☐Yes ☐No

If YES, provide details below. Include published or in press items only. Do not include manuscripts in preparation or submitted for review. Insert additional lines below, if necessary.
1.
2.

12. Patents and other Intellectual Property Rights

Have any patents or other intellectual property rights resulting directly from this research project been produced? ☐Yes ☐No

If YES, provide details below. PA/AI should seek written consent from the Government before filing a patent application. Insert additional lines below, if necessary.
1.
2.

13. Signatures of Project Team

The principal applicant and all co-applicants are required to sign the Interim Report. By signing this Interim Report, the principal applicant and all co-applicants (if any) acknowledge that they have contributed to the Project and agree with the information contained herein.

	Signature of Applicant(s)	Name (Capitals)	Date
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			

Final Report # «APP_NO»

(For projects funded in 2012 application round and thereafter, please upload this report to eGMS (https://rfs.healthbureau.gov.hk/eGMS/)

HMRF (RFCID/HHSRF)

Health and Medical Research Fund

(formerly Research Fund for the Control of Infectious Diseases / Health and Health Services Research Fund)

«TITLE»

Submitted to the Grant Review Board (Date)

Applicant(s)
(Applicants)
Department and Affiliation
(Organisation)

Contents
(Times New Roman 12 pt)

Page

Signatures of Project Team

*(For projects funded in 2012 application round and thereafter, p**lease** ignore this page as Co-Applicants will be invited to endorse this report via eGMS.)*

The principal applicant and all co-applicants are required to sign the Final Report. By signing this Final Report, the principal applicant and all co-applicants (if any) acknowledge that they have contributed to the Project and agree with the information contained herein.

	Signature of Applicant(s)	Name (Capitals)	Date
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			

Standard Format for Final Reports

1. Version: Microsoft Word

2. Maximum of 5000 words

3. Title Page (see example above)

4. Layout of report
    a. Page size - A4
    b. Line Spacing – 1.5 spaces
    c. Case - Sentence Case
    d. Single Column

5. Margin
    a. Top: 2.54 cm
    b. Bottom: 2.54 cm
    c. Left: 2.54 cm
    d. Right: 2.54 cm

6. Layout of the Executive Summary
    a. Ragged right margin
    b. Font Type - Times New Roman 12 pt
    c. Heading Times New Roman 12 pt, bold (e.g. "Objective: To compare the… " in the same line)
    d. Line Spacing - single space

7. Layout of Text
    a. Ragged right margin
    b. Font type
        - Heading 1 - Times New Roman 12 pt, **bold**, 1 line space before and after
        - Heading 2 - Times New Roman 12 pt, ***bold and italic***, 1 line space before and after
        - Heading 3 - Times New Roman 12 pt, *italic*, no space before or after
        - References - superscript all reference numbers

8. Layout of Tables
    a. Font Type: Arial 10 pt
    b. Title Table x and wording (e.g. Table 1 Causes of perinatal death…)
    c. Horizontal and vertical lines 0.25 pt only

9. Layout of Figures
    a. Font Type: Arial 10 pt
    b. Title Figure x and wording (e.g. Figure 1 Causes of perinatal death…)
    c. Border around the Figure 0.25 pt only

10. References
    a. Font Type: Times New Roman 10 pt
    b. Use 1,2,3,4 … to number references
    c. Vancouver style (see: http://www.nlm.nih.gov/bsd/uniform_requirements.html)
    d. Superscript references in text after punctuation

11. Publications, including in press
    a. Times New Roman, 12 pt.
    b. If none, state NONE.

12. Patents and other Intellectual Property Rights that have resulted directly from the research project.
    a. Times New Roman, 12 pt.
    b. Describe the patent to be filed/obtained
    c. If none, state NONE

(For projects funded in 2012 application round and thereafter, please upload this report to eGMS. https://rfs.healthbureau.gov.hk/eGMS/)

Standard Format for Dissemination Reports

1. Version: Microsoft Word

2. Title (Times New Roman, 14 pt, bold)

3. Maximum of **2000 words** in length (including main text, references, key messages), a maximum of **3 tables and/or figures**, and no more than **5 references**.

4. Authors (Times New Roman, 12 pt) [In both Roman letters and Chinese characters where applicable]

5. Affiliations (Times New Roman, 12 pt)

6. Principal applicant and corresponding author:
   a. [name]
   b. [address]
   c. [Tel / Fax / E-mail]

7. Key messages
   a. Times New Roman, 12 pt
   b. Maximum of 5 key messages (numbered 1-5 in descending order of importance)

8. Body of the text, indexed under appropriate headings (i.e. Introduction, Methods, Results, Discussion)
   a. Times New Roman, 12 pt
   b. Text in double spacing and single column
   c. Page margins 2.54 cm each side
   d. Align text with left margin, right margin ragged

9. Heading format
   a. Level 1 heading: Times New Roman, 12 pt, bold
      Leave one line space after heading
   b. Level 2 heading: Times New Roman, 12 pt, bold and italic
      No space after heading
   c. Level 3 heading: Times New Roman, 12 pt
      No space after heading

10. Figures and Tables
    a. Maximum of 3 tables and/or figures (N.B. Reduce total word count if more tables / figures are included)
    b. Do not insert figures and tables in the text; append them to the end of the text.
    c. Title: Arial 10 pt bold
    d. Content: Arial 10 pt
    e. Footnotes: Arial 8 pt
    f. Enclosed in Box with 0.25 pt borders

11. Publications, including in press
    a. Times New Roman, 12 pt.
    b. If none, state NONE.

12. Patents and other Intellectual Property Rights that have resulted directly from the research project.
    a. Times New Roman, 12 pt.
    b. Describe the patent to be filed/obtained
    c. If none, state NONE

13. Acknowledgements
    d. Times New Roman, 12 pt

14. References
    a. Times New Roman, 10 pt
    b. Maximum of 5 references
    c. Vancouver style (see: http://www.nlm.nih.gov/bsd/uniform_requirements.html)
    d. Superscript references in text after punctuation

Research Council

«Reference_No»

Grant Review Board

Referee / Speaker Assessment Form - Health and Medical Research Fund

(formerly Research Fund for the Control of Infectious Diseases/ Health and Health Services Research Fund)

To: Research Fund Secretariat (rfs@healthbureau.gov.hk; Fax: 852-2102 2444)

Assessment of Final Report

Title: «Project_Title»

Principal Investigator: «Title» «Forenames» «SURNAME»

Overall Recommendation ☐

Please rate the accompanying research report by allocating in a score of 1-5 (1 being the worst and 5 being the best) according to the descriptions indicated below. Please write the score in the box above:

1	Unredeemable	Final report not accepted. The report should not be returned to the investigators for revision and resubmission.
2	Unacceptable	Report should be returned to the investigators for major revisions, including rewriting, re-analysis and resubmission to the GRB. The report may be re-graded upon resubmission.
3	Accepted	Report accepted conditional to the revision, resubmission and approval of the GRB. Failure to revise may lead to re-grading as a 1 or 2.
4	Satisfactory	Report accepted by the GRB. Minor revisions to be made prior to publication of the report; which may be considered for wider distribution.
5	Excellent	The report should be accepted without revision; dissemination report to be prepared for wider distribution.

Summary comments and recommendations
Please complete the table below.

		Yes	No
a	Does the reviewer agree with the conclusions drawn by the author?		
b	Does the study represent value for money?		
c	Does the report merit dissemination to a wider readership?		
d	Does the report comply with the investigators' original proposal?		

Please provide a written assessment of the quality of the report, or any additional or confidential comments, on page 4 of this form.

Name _____

Date_____ **Signature** _____

Report Quality

Focus on the quality of the written report on this page

Please grade the report by marking the appropriate boxes (X), as follows:
Yes; No; Don't know / Not applicable (NA)

Assessment categories		Yes	No	Don't know / NA
1. Literature Review				
a)	Were the literature references reported appropriately?			
2. Objectives				
a)	Were the research questions stated clearly?			
b)	Were the objectives and hypotheses stated clearly?			
3. Study Design				
a)	Was the rationale for choosing the study design described clearly?			
b)	Were the study design described clearly and consistently?			
4. Study Population				
a)	Was the population under study described clearly?			
5. Method				
a)	Were the analytical methods described appropriately?			
6. Validity and Reliability				
a)	Were sufficient data provided to determine the validity and reliability of the results?			
7. Results				
a)	Were there sufficient data and analysis to judge the success of the project?			
8. Discussion				
a)	Were the following addressed appropriately in the discussion:			
	i. execution of research?			
	ii. observations, explanation and implication of results?			
	iii. conclusions?			
9. Limitations				
a)	Were the limitations of the study described appropriately?			
10. Implications of the Findings				
a)	Did the researchers comment on the relevance of their findings in terms of:			
	i. future research?			
	ii. the provision of services?			
	iii. the management of services?			
	iv. policy?			
11. Dissemination of Results				
a)	Was the plan for the dissemination of the results appropriate?			

Overall Assessment of the Quality of the Report

			Score
1	Rejected	Report quality does not meet the standard expected.	
2	Unacceptable	Report is returned for major revision, rewriting and resubmission.	
3	Accepted	Report quality is accepted conditional to revision and resubmission.	
4	Satisfactory	Report quality is accepted; minor revisions are required.	
5	Excellent	Report quality is accepted without revision.	

Research Quality

Focus on the quality of the research on this page

Please grade the report by marking the appropriate boxes (X), as follows: Yes; No; Don't know / Not applicable (NA)

NB: If the report does not comply with the original proposal, please complete the table on the following page.

Assessment categories		Yes	No	Don't know / NA
12.	**Study Design**			
a)	Was the proposed plan of investigation adhered to appropriately?			
b)	If no, were deviations to the proposed plan of investigation described clearly and justified?			
13.	**Results and Discussion**			
a)	Was the analysis carried out appropriately?			
b)	Were there sufficient data and analysis to draw conclusions?			
c)	Were the conclusions drawn appropriate?			
d)	Were the results generalisable to the study population?			
e)	Was the discussion appropriate?			
14.	**Overall Impression**			
a)	Was this a useful study?			

Overall Assessment of the Quality of the Research

			Score
1	Very Poor	Major flaws in methodology and results.	
2	Poor	Questionable validity and reliability.	
3	Fair	Re-analysis of data and revision of interpretation, and conclusions needed.	
4	Good	Generally good quality study with only minor deficiencies.	
5	Excellent	Research of high standard in all aspects.	

Additional Reviewer Comments

Please indicate here if these comments are to be kept confidential. **Yes / No**

Research Council
Grant Review Board
Referee's Declarations Form – Conflict of Interest

DECLARATIONS

Please select the appropriate box.

Notes:
If "None" is selected (i.e. no conflict of interest), **you can start reviewing the proposal after confirmation.**

If other option(s) are selected, you will soon receive an email on whether you can continue the review after the Secretariat has considered your declaration.

1. Relationship with any of the applicants named in Application Form (please select)

- ☐ None
- ☐ Spouse/partner/other relative
- ☐ Close personal contact
- ☐ Research collaborator (co-grant holder) within three years from date of review
- ☐ Research collaborator (co-author) within three years from date of review
- ☐ Mentor/student (under direct supervision) within three years from date of review
- ☐ Work colleague (including same department or thematic research programme) within three years from date of review
- ☐ Employer/employee/business partner (including direct supervisor/subordinate) within three years from date of review
- ☐ Same professional organisation (currently serving in the same management board or committee as office holders)
- ☐ Others if within three years from date of review (Please specify:)

Please indicate where appropriate the name(s) of person(s) with whom there is conflict of interest, year of co-authorship/research collaboration, etc.

*Please select the box where applicable

2. Confidentiality of proposal*

- ☐ I understand this proposal is confidential and I will not reveal or divulge the content to any party during or after the assessment.

Name of Referee: ---------- Date: ----------
(dd/mm/yyyy)