

Quality Education Fund
The e-Learning Ancillary Facilities Programme
Points to Note for Completing Project Proposal
(For applications of New Project Scheme)

General

Before completing the project proposal, tertiary institutions / school sponsoring bodies (SSBs) should read the Guide to Applicants for the e-Learning Ancillary Facilities Programme (hereafter “the Programme”).

Electronic Project Management System (EPMS) Account

Applicants are required to complete and submit the application form and project proposal in no more than 20 pages of A4 size paper and at font size no smaller than 12 points. The file should be saved in PDF format and submitted through the Electronic Project Management System (EPMS) on the Quality Education Fund (QEF) website (<https://www.qef.org.hk>). Applications exceeding the page limit may not be considered.

Applicants who do not have a user account in the EPMS should register a user account by completing and submitting the registration form via the EPMS. The registration process will generally be completed within seven working days from the date of submission of the registration form. Applicants who have registered a user account in the EPMS should log into the EPMS with their login ID and password. After logging into the EPMS, applicants should check the information provided when registering the user account, including name and email address, etc. Should there be any discrepancies, rectification should be made immediately.

Part A: Application Form

1. Title of project and total amount of grant sought

- Applicants need to fill in basic information, such as the title of the project and the total amount of grant sought.

2. Project period

- The first date of the month stated will be regarded as the project commencement date and the last date of the month stated will be regarded as the project end date. Applicants should enter a feasible commencement and end date for the proposed project in the application form.

- The duration of each project, covering both development and testing period and trial use period, should normally not exceed 36 months. Applicants are required to reserve at least 12 months within the 3-year project period for the trial use of the deliverable(s).

3. Particulars of Applicant

- If the applicant is an SSB, please state its registered name and the name of its head. For tertiary institutions¹, please state the name of the department² of the tertiary institution and the head of the department.
- Each department of a tertiary institution and each SSB can submit only one application in each application cycle. In case the application is a cross-department, cross-entity or cross-SSB collaboration project, the applicant should identify one department/ entity or SSB to serve as the applicant.

4. Particulars of Collaborative Partner(s)³

- Applicants should seek prior consent from the collaborative partner(s) and provide their names through the EPMS of the QEF. Initial consent could be obtained from the partner(s) first. After the projects have been approved, applicants could approach their partner(s) for signing a written consent. It is not allowed for the applicants to change their partner(s) after the projects have been approved, unless under exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the QEF Secretariat.

Part B: Project Proposal

Direct Beneficiaries

- Application made by the SSB/ department of a tertiary institution should benefit at least five schools. In case the application involves collaboration amongst more than one SSB, the project should benefit at least five schools in total. If the application involves a special cluster falling short of five schools, the applicant should provide justifications.

¹ All University Grant Committee-funded universities and self-financing tertiary education institutions are eligible to apply.

² For the present purpose, a “department” includes a department of a tertiary institution and its centre, division, unit and laboratory, which shall collectively count as one “department”. For the avoidance of doubt, entities which exist as separate entities to a tertiary institution, including entities which are subsidiary to the tertiary institution and entities which are connected to the tertiary institution in howsoever manner, are not eligible to apply for the New Project Scheme.

³ Collaborative partners could be IT companies, NGOs, educational or professional associations, tertiary institutions, SSB or other business sector (e.g. e-learning service provider).

- Applicants could obtain initial consent from the participating schools first since only the names of their participating schools are required at the application stage. Applicants could approach each of the participating schools for signing a written consent after the projects have been approved. All applications for changing the participating schools with justification will be carefully reviewed and considered on a case-by-case basis.
- The Programme supports e-learning projects that bring benefits to local kindergarten⁴, primary, secondary and special education. In case the project is related to e-learning for young children between two to six, detailed justifications should be provided in the project proposal with due considerations of their eye health⁵.

Overall Description of the Project

- Applicants should state the project aims in clear and concise terms. An overview of the project, including the expected performance/ learning outcomes, technology components of the project design, functions and impacts of the deliverables, the strategic framework for promotion and dissemination of the deliverables to the target beneficiaries as well as the measures for ensuring sustainability after project completion, should be provided. Key activities should be also set out on a quarterly basis for the entire project period.

Project Details

1. Project Needs

Applicants should, based on the objectives of the project, set out the project details accordingly. Guidelines on the interpretation of the different project objectives are set out below for reference.

1.1 Innovative element(s)

- Applicants should describe the project design, the innovative ideas and/ or strategies to be adopted, including new pedagogies and assessment changes in the

⁴ According to the Kindergarten Curriculum Guide 2017, appropriate integration of IT equipment to assist learning and teaching can bring interactive and interesting activities and experiences in play and help cater for children’s diversity. However, IT cannot take the place of learning activities or play, especially outdoor learning, artistic creation and physical activities. Over-reliance on technology in teaching will deprive children of the opportunity to learn from the real world.

⁵ As recommended by the Department of Health, prolonged use of electronic screen products should be avoided for children aged two to six. Please refer to Department of Health “Physical Activity Guide for Children Aged 2 to 6 (Revised 2020)” (https://www.startsmart.gov.hk/files/pdf/physical_guide_en.pdf).

education sector and/ or how the project could enrich and bring new impetus to existing resources/ platforms related to e-learning.

1.2 Addressing the needs and/ or trends of e-learning in the education sector

- Applicants should explain how the project can address the needs of e-learning of the education sector and/ or promote the affordance of e-learning in education development and give an account on the project's positive impacts on implementing e-learning. For example, how the project could facilitate or be deployed in the blended mode of learning and teaching under the new normal , i.e. face-to-face classes, combination of e-learning and other modes of learning in various extents.
- Applicants should elaborate on how the project is compatible with the development needs of the education sector and/ or the participating schools, for instance, by making reference to their performance in relevant areas, the learning and teaching strategies, students' learning needs, etc, and how to extend the benefit to the education sector at large.
- Applicants should explain how the project can fill a gap in the current development of e-learning arena or complement existing e-learning ancillary infrastructures and facilities for the education sector at large. Relevant literature, research findings or survey data could be quoted to evident the necessity and/ or potentials of the project.

1.3 Facilitating a sharing culture in the school sector

- Applicants should explain how the project can facilitate a sharing culture in the school sector. While different modes of sharing for capacity building and knowledge transfer could be adopted, various factors such as school types, grade levels, subjects, teachers' competence, support measures, etc. should be duly considered when adopting the mode of implementation of the project.

2. Project Feasibility

2.1 Key personnel of the project team

Applicants should provide details of the readiness of the project team, including the track record, relevant qualifications, experience and/ or area of expertise in e-learning related field of the key personnel and their roles in the project, for assessment of the technical capacity for implementation of the project.

2.2 Implementation Timeline/ Project Management Plan

Applicants need to provide an overview of the entire project from the commencement and end dates. The project tasks should be organised in chronological order. It is important to make a reasonable time estimate for each item, and project activity. Applicants should also set out the key dates for development, testing, launch and trial use of the project deliverables.

3. Expected Project Outcomes

3.1 Key concept(s)/ rationale(s) of the project

- Applicants should state and explain the key concept(s)/ rationale(s) of the project and/ or technology component involved, such as how the project can support learning and teaching activities in the education sector with the use of technology and how the dissemination strategy works. Applicants may refer to the curriculum documents of the Education Bureau (EDB), supplemented by relevant literature review if necessary.
- Applicants should provide details of the roles, duties and cross-sector collaboration among the different parties in the project.
- Where applicable, applicants should explain how the project could foster synergy with the existing learning and teaching platforms or e-learning infrastructures and leverage on or enrich the resources of the EDB, other government bureaux/ departments and the Hong Kong Education City Limited (HKECL)⁶. Applicants shall consider making use of or connecting to the platform of the HKECL to host and display its deliverables.
- Applicants should explain how the project could enhance learning and teaching effectiveness in this new era of e-learning. For example, how the project can facilitate promoting teacher-student/ peer interaction and self-directed learning among students.
- Applicants should clearly state the degree of involvement of the school principals and/ or teachers of the participating schools and their roles in the project. Parents' involvement should also be elaborated if applicable.

⁶ The HKECL is an e-learning company fully owned and subvented by the Hong Kong SAR Government and is the official partner of the QEF for implementing the e-Learning Ancillary Facilities Programme. By hosting the deliverables on the HKECL (where applicable), the applicants would be able to save cost in hosting and promoting the deliverables.

3.2 Details of project activities

- Applicants should provide details of the project activities to be conducted, including the activity name, objective, content, time required, teachers and/ or personnel involved as well as expected learning outcomes⁷.
- Applicants should also give information on the proposed equipment to be procured and the details of the works if applicable. It is crucial for the applicants to justify how the proposed equipment and/ or the works contribute to the fulfillment of the project aim(s) and if applicable, the expected utilisation rate.

4. Budget

- The budget should be commensurate with the project scale and the expected outcomes. There is no funding cap for the grant sought of the project.
- Applicants should submit a detailed budget with expenditure, breakdown and justifications. Estimated cash flow on a quarterly basis for the entire project period is required. In principle, the approved grant will be transferred to the designated bank account quarterly in equal installments during the project period. If circumstances warrant, the amount of each installment will be adjusted based on the implementation details to cater the needs of individual approved projects.
- In preparing the budget, applicants should refer to the latest market price and the Pricing Standards on the QEF website (<https://www.qef.org.hk>). If the unit cost of individual expenditure items is higher than the market price that set out in the QEF Pricing Standards, sufficient justifications should be provided for consideration.
- All project personnel, if employed on a full-time basis, should be remunerated on a fixed salary point during the whole project period. In normal circumstances, salary increment is not granted. Fringe benefits of staff such as education allowance, medical insurance, housing allowance, etc. should not be included in or charged to the project. Terms of employment should be specified in accordance with the Employment Ordinance, Employees' Compensation Ordinance and, where applicable, the Mandatory Provident Fund Schemes

⁷ Depending on the nature of the project, the outcome of project activities could be related but not limited to enhancement of student learning or teachers/ parents' capacity in supporting/ facilitating the implementation of e-learning.

Ordinance. Brief job descriptions and qualifications required for the project personnel should be provided.

- Some projects may require the employment of short-term or part-time personnel, such as guest speakers, research assistants and technicians to carry out duties specific to the project. Salaries of such personnel should be calculated on a time-on-project basis. While salary should be commensurate with qualifications and experience, candidates are normally assumed to be appointed at the minimum pay rates. Strong justifications are required for the appointment of personnel at higher pay rates.
- For projects submitted by the UGC-funded tertiary institutions that incur administrative charges, the institution may include the item in the budget together with details, breakdown and justifications. In general, such administrative charges should not be more than 15% of the total budget exclusive of contingency provision of the project.
- A contingency provision, of not more than 3% of the total budget exclusive of staff cost and audit fee, is considered acceptable for projects lasting for more than one year.
- As set out in the “General Guidelines on Management and Monitoring of Projects” and “Notes for Auditors of the QEF Grantees”, grantees of projects with approved grant exceeding \$100,000 are required to submit audited project accounts and a report of factual findings within three months after project end date. In this connection, the QEF will cover up to \$5,000 of audit fee for projects with approved grant of not exceeding \$1 million, and up to \$15,000 for those with approved grant exceeding \$1 million. As such, the related audit fee can be included in the budget of general expenses.
- If the same project has already obtained funding support from other sources, the use of the funding of the different sources and the elements to be supported by the funding from this project should be clearly stated in the proposal.
- Applicants should provide details of recurrent component(s) and funding sources to cover the recurrent cost within and/ or beyond the project period.
- To support the project in the long term, grantees are allowed to generate income

during and after the project period. Applicants are required to provide, amongst others, forecasts of project income (e.g. subscription fee) and other sources of financial contribution or donation, etc. and individual categories of expenditure (e.g. equipment cost, dedicated staff cost, audit fee, etc.).

- Sponsorship will be provided for publicly-funded schools to trial use the deliverable(s) tested by participating schools. The sponsorship period will last for three years and begin only after the launch of the deliverable(s). Applicants are required to state the information of the deliverable(s), the basis for calculating the cost as well as the amount of school sponsorship for the Task Force's consideration.

5. Expected Project Deliverables

- Expected project deliverables include tangible deliverables related to e-learning such as e-platforms, e-tools (e.g. teaching software), apps, learning and teaching materials, e-resources, as well as enhancements arising from strengthening synergy with and leveraging on existing e-platforms and resources. The tangible deliverables should bring about intangible outcomes such as enhancing teacher-student and student-student interactions, developing students' self-directed learning capabilities, enhancing implementation of e-learning, etc.,.
- To reinforce the sharing of deliverables in the education sector, the information and/or deliverables of the funded projects shall be made available on or linked to the website managed by the HKECL for members of the public and the education sector to access, download and trial use.

6. Evaluation

- Applicants should adopt concrete evaluation method(s) with success criteria specified to assess project effectiveness. The success criteria should be clearly defined and tied in with the expected project aims. There should be a balance between qualitative and quantitative data to be collected for comprehensive evaluation of the project.

7. Sustainability of the project

- Applicants should state how the key activities and/ or the project impacts will be sustained after the end of the project period, such as how the project outcomes could be sustained to benefit the education sector beyond the project period and how to secure funding sources for recurrent components of the project beyond the project period.

8. Dissemination

- Applicants should set out a project dissemination plan for sharing and disseminating the deliverables, benefits and project outcomes to the school sector via effective channels (e.g. seminars, workshops, and learning circles).

Quality Education Fund Secretariat

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