31RFP ERFP Grant Writing Workshop: *For those new to ERFP*

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14 March 2024, 1-2pm

Abstract

This grant writing workshop is targeted at potential Principal Investigators new to the Education Research Funding Programme (ERFP). In this workshop, there will be a focus on the general ERFP grant review process and essential elements in successful ERFP grant proposals. In particular, the aspect of relevancy will be elaborated on.

Attendees are encouraged to go through the ERFP guidelines (particularly, the Administrative Guidelines for ERFP Applicants) before coming for the workshop.

You may also access previous grant writing workshop slides and videos at https://erfp.edu.sg/useful-resources/.

Outline

- Aims and scope

- ERFP versus other grant instruments

- Grant review process

- Essential elements in successful ERFP grant proposals
  - Relevancy to MOE
  - Relevancy to international literature and contribution

- Any questions?

ERFP Aims

- Strengthening the foundation (in terms of knowledge, capability, and structure) for education research, development and innovation in existing and emerging research areas.

- Encourage efforts to design, develop and implement strategic, evidence-based, theoretically-warranted, collaborative, scientifically-rigorous and outcomes-focused innovations in schools and classrooms

- Primary aims: improve classroom practice, enhance student outcomes, and build organizational and teacher capacities

ERFP Scope

Projects should fall within the following scope:

a) Early childhood, primary, secondary and/or junior college/centralised institute education-related.
b) Studies on other parts of the education system that link to the emphasis of ERFP might be considered if those links are clearly articulated.
c) May involve formal or informal learning linked to (a).
d) Teacher education and teacher professional learning for Singapore's education system.
e) Studies of pathways of education and/or lifelong learning which are based in or include participants from higher education are allowed (bearing in mind (b)). Projects that are limited to benefits for higher education not related to (a) are excluded.
f) Meta-analysis/meta-synthesis studies can be submitted for funding if the studies meet all of the ERFP requirements. This includes ensuring that the scope of the synthesis is well-defined, and the proposed budget and methodology are clearly articulated in line with the intended scope. Traditional literature reviews are not within the funding scope.
g) International comparisons are allowed but international data collection, analysis or hiring is not supported.

ERFP versus other grant instruments

- Other popular education grants (non-exhaustive)
  - Teaching and learning grants in respective IHLs
  - MOE Tertiary Education Research Grant (TRF)
  - Human Potential (HP) Programme

ERFP versus other grant instruments

ERFP

- Competitive within Singapore IHLs (External)

- Intended for teaching and learning of early childhood learners to JC learners or/and teachers (pre/in)

- At least four rounds of external review

- Generally larger fund quantum

- Could be the next stage/expansion/translation of the pilot

TEACHING AND LEARNING GRANTS IN RESPECTIVE IHLS

- Usually internal within institution

- Intended for teaching and learning of IHL learners and/or instructors

- Review process depends; but usually internal

- Generally smaller fund quantum

- Useful as initial pilot

ERFP versus other grant instruments

ERFP

- Intended for teaching and learning of early childhood learners to JC learners or/and teachers (pre/in)

TRF (FROM 2022 EMAIL)

- "supports applied educational research focused on Pre-Employment Training (PET). Projects are awarded on a competitive basis at Singapore's Institutes of Higher Learning1 (IHLs) so as to fulfil the following objectives:
a) Empower educators and institutions to actively and continuously improve teaching and learning (T&L) practices for PET based on reliable research and data;
b) Promote effective and innovative T&L practices which have the potential to improve the quality of T&L in PET across all IHLs in Singapore."

- Intended for pre-employment training at IHLs
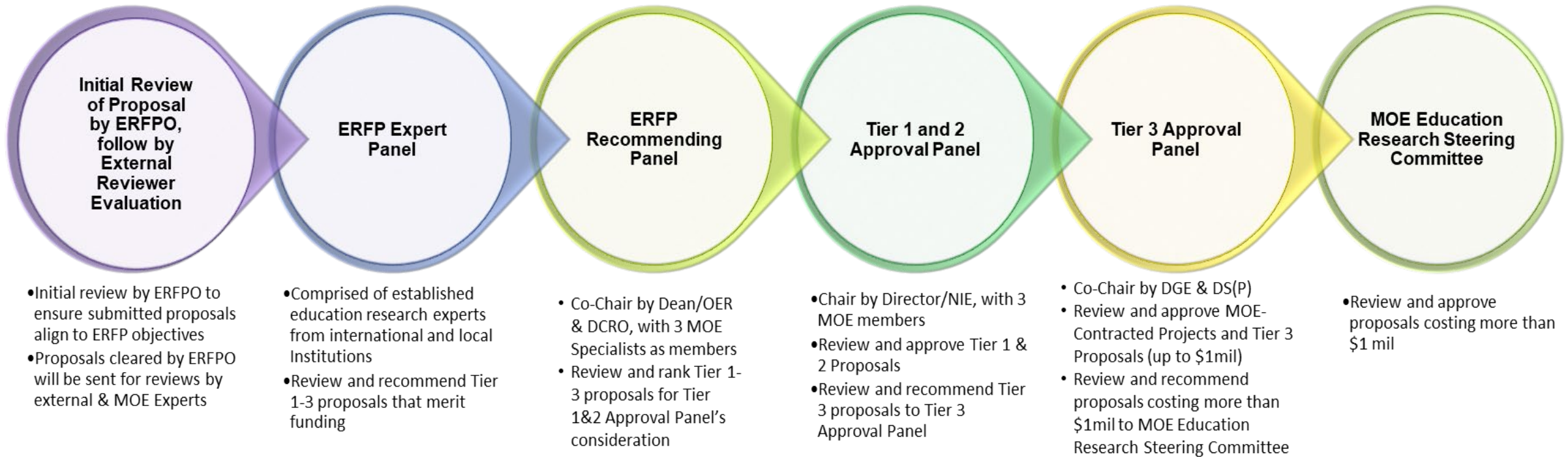
ERFP versus other grant instruments

ERFP

- Primary aims: improve classroom practice, enhance student outcomes, and build organizational and teacher capacities

- May or may not need a neurological/physiological component; this 'science of learning' component needs to be well justified

HUMAN POTENTIAL (HP) PROGRAMME

- https://www.nrf.gov.sg/rie-ecosystem/ecosystem-wide-fis/hhp-fis/

- "The HP programme is newly established in RIE2025 to drive R&D and research translation activities that support improvements in **health and well-being, productivity and learning** capacity across the life course of Singaporeans. This is especially pertinent for a small country like Singapore, which relies greatly on human capital as one of our most valuable resources. Singapore is also increasingly facing challenges such as a low birth rate, rapidly ageing population and rising healthcare demands. The HP programme comprises 3 strategic focus areas as follow:
    - Early Life
    - Science of Learning
    - Healthy and Meaningful Longevity"

- Especially for Science of Learning grants
    - Target participants can be similar to ERFP but also wider and broader (e.g., other tertiary learners)
    - The 'Science of Learning' component needs to be one of the key foci and well justified

The Approval Panel Meetings convene twice a year in tandem with the grant call cycle.

Initial Review of Proposal by ERFPO, follow by External Reviewer Evaluation

- Initial review by ERFPO to ensure submitted proposals align to ERFP objectives
- Proposals cleared by ERFPO will be sent for reviews by external & MOE Experts

ERFP Expert Panel

- Comprised of established education research experts from international and local Institutions
- Review and recommend Tier 1-3 proposals that merit funding

ERFP Recommending Panel

- Co-Chair by Dean/OER & DCRO, with 3 MOE Specialists as members
- Review and rank Tier 1-3 proposals for Tier 1&2 Approval Panel's consideration

Tier 1 and 2 Approval Panel

- Chair by Director/NIE, with 3 MOE members
- Review and approve Tier 1 & 2 Proposals
- Review and recommend Tier 3 proposals to Tier 3 Approval Panel

Tier 3 Approval Panel

- Co-Chair by DGE & DS(P)
- Review and approve MOE-Contracted Projects and Tier 3 Proposals (up to $1mil)
- Review and recommend proposals costing more than $1mil to MOE Education Research Steering Committee

MOE Education Research Steering Committee

- Review and approve proposals costing more than $1 mil

Essential elements in successful ERFP grant proposals

- Relevance of the proposal to MOE, Singapore
  - Relate to General Education Research Agenda (GERA) and Early Childhood Research Agenda (ECRA)

The 31RFP engagement session, highlighted the following 4 areas:

Beyond the problems of policy/practice in these two areas, research proposals which address other MOE research priorities and are in line with the scope of ERFP will be supported.

GERA Area 5	GERA Area 6
Understanding the impact of educational pathways and related policies on social interaction and mobility, and other longer term outcomes.	Shaping environment (e.g., physical, social, cultural) within school and beyond school to better support students and optimise learning.

ECRA Priority 2	ECRA Priority 4
Social mobility and support for children from lower-income families.	Impact of preschool.

Essential elements in successful ERFP grant proposals

- Relevance of the proposal to MOE, Singapore
  - Show knowledge of policies/initiatives, context, specifics and nuances
  - Avoid over-simplification and assumptions
  - Use local-relevant terminology (provide equivalent international terms)
  - Relate and build on existing research and findings in Singapore
    - Useful resources:
      - Research briefs https://www.ntu.edu.sg/nie/research/research-publications/nie-research-brief-series
      - Local evidence syntheses https://www.ntu.edu.sg/nie/research/research-publications/local-evidence-syntheses
  - Demonstrate feasibility and a clear implementation plan for the Singapore context/ecosystem
    - E.g., ICT-related, consider Singapore Student Learning Space sandbox and discuss with ETD

Essential elements in successful ERFP grant proposals

- Relevancy to international literature and contribution
  - Highlight key and up-to-date issues, gaps and theoretical, and methodological concepts
  - Recognize alternative theories/perspectives/methods while providing sufficient justification for the chosen lens/approach
  - Use international terminology (and relate to the local equivalent)

Other tips:

- Use the Self-Checklist

- Don't underestimate the time needed for the documents other than the main CFS (application form, budget, implementation schedule & Gantt chart, deliverables, team details etc.)

- Alignment across documents

- Grant management system: ROMS
  - Do not only enter details on the last or second last day before the deadline; give yourself at least a week to add/edit on the system
  - Click 'submit' at least a day before the grant submission closes

SELF-CHECKLIST: ERFP APPLICATION & RESEARCH DESIGN

This self-checklist is intended to help researchers who are preparing grant proposals to do a quick, self-evaluation before submission. The focus is on ensuring that the research methodology is sufficiently developed and clearly presented.
This checklist is purely for your own use. You do not have to submit it as part of your proposal package.

A.	Unit of investigation (sites, groups, participants, events, or another units)	√ if 'yes'	Add comments if desired
1.	Are the units of investigation clearly stated?		
2.	Is the selection of the unit of investigation explained and justified?		
3.	Are the inclusion/ exclusion criteria for participants clearly stated?		
4.	Are there any special ethical considerations for the units of investigation? If yes, have you stated how will you address the ethical considerations?		
5.	For qualitative projects: Have you explicitly stated the role of the researcher in the project, especially in relation to the units of investigation (e.g. participant/non-participant observation)?		
B.	Instruments		
1.	Have you listed and described the instruments necessary used to carry out the study? Have you succinctly justified the selection of these instruments (as opposed to other options)?	☐	
2.	Has the validity of the instruments been tested? (a) If yes, when and where? (b) If no, how might that impact the study?		
C.	Data Collection		

Any Questions?

- For further questions do check with grants@erfp.edu.sg
- ERFP details can be found at https://erfp.edu.sg/