

ERFP Project Variation Requests

REFER TO

ERFP ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINES AND TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOR APPLICANTS //
ENCLOSURE 1: GUIDELINES FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF THE 5TH TRANCHE EDUCATION
RESEARCH FUNDING PROGRAMME (ERFP) // SECTION 6 (VARIATION REQUESTS)

Project Variations:

1. Project Amendments

- Change in Research Scope: Research Questions/Objectives, Deliverables, Milestones, Sample and/or Sample Size, Methodology
- Change in Team Composition
- Change in Consultants
- Project Extension
- Other Amendments (requests that does not fall in the above categories)

2. Fund Virements

- Virement within a vote
- Virement between votes
- Virement across sub-projects for Programmatic Project (PP)

1. Project Amendments (RC5)

Extracted from ERFPO Administrative Guidelines and Terms and Conditions, and Letter of Award:

- The project grant is awarded based on the premise that the **research questions/objectives and deliverables as stated in the approved proposal will be fulfilled**. Any variation to the project must first be approved by the Education Research Funding Programme Office (ERFPO). Failure to do so may result in the termination of the project.
- Implication: The research questions/objects and the deliverables that the PI stated in the APPLICATION FOR A RESEARCH GRANT FORM and the Case for Support are binding
 - Permission is required from ERFPO/MOE/Approval Panel to change them

Variation

- For every request for variation, the PI must state if the research questions/objects and the deliverables are affected and explain how the PI intends to address any impact on the research questions/objects and the deliverables.
- No material amendments, alterations or changes shall be made to the project without prior approval from the relevant Approval Panel

More details are given in Appendix 1

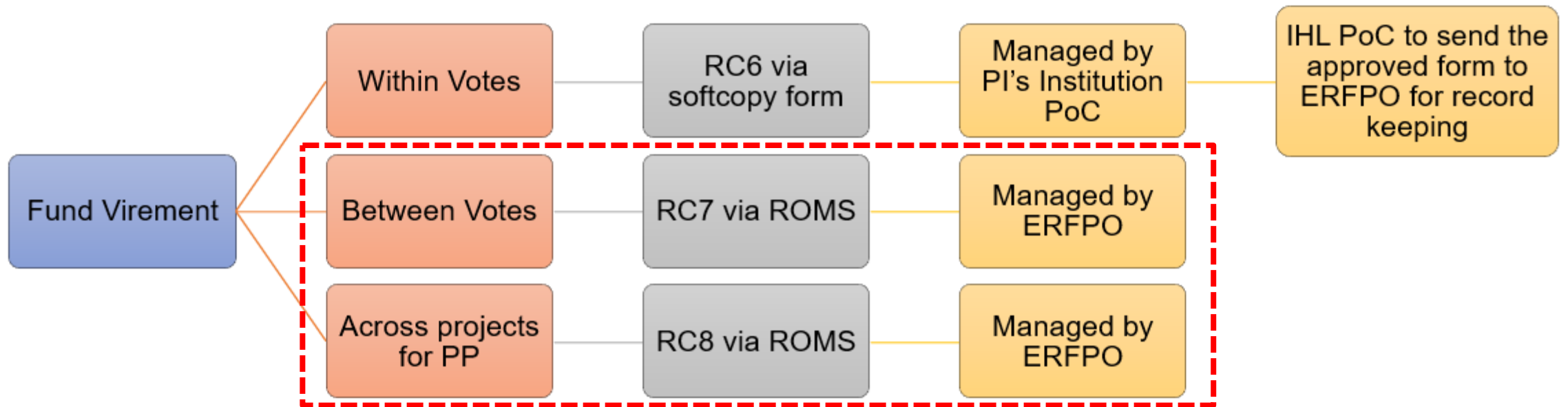
- All research questions/objectives and deliverables as stated in the approved proposal must be fulfilled
- If there are discrepancies between what are stated in the Final Report and approved research proposal/case for support, ERFPO will scrutinise the RC5 applications to determine if the changes were approved.

- The questions that ERFPO will ask with respect to the discrepancies are:
 - Are research questions/objectives and the deliverables as stated in the approved project proposal affected?
 - Are there RC5 applications to support the changes made?
 - Can the PI justify the changes made?

- Examples of ‘red flags’ which invite scrutiny
 - If one of the deliverables in the project proposal is 4 case studies and only 3 case studies are reported in the final report
 - If the sample in the project proposal is “beginning teachers” and but that which is stated in the final report is “beginning and experienced teachers”
 - If 10 schools are mentioned in the project proposal but only 6 are involved in the study as stated in the final report
 - If interviews are one of the methods stated in the project proposal but there is no mention of interviews or it is mentioned that interviews are replaced by surveys in the final report

2. Fund Virements

Fund Virements: Types and Submission



See Appendix 2 for more details on Fund Virements

Appendix 1

More details on Project Amendments

Project Amendment

- Request for project amendment should be made at least 6 months before the project end date.
 - Project Extension requests can be requested maximum 3 times (6 months max per request).
 - There is no limit in requesting for the rest of the amendments.
- All amendments must be submitted with proper justifications and relevant documents.
 - PI must verify whether ethics clearance for amendments is required by the respective Institutional Review Boards (IRBs). If IRB approval is necessary, the PI should obtain the IRB approval before submitting the Project Amendment request.
- All requests are subjected to approval.
 - Requests will be reviewed by ERFPO Admin, PI's DoR, followed by ERFPO (in some cases, approval will only be given after consulting CRO/relevant Approving Panels).

Project Amendment

Change in Scope:

- PI to explain whether the change(s) will impact the research questions/objectives and deliverables of the project

Changes in Team composition:

- PI to provide justification for the required change in the team composition.
 - Why are team members withdrawn?
 - Are they replaced by new members?
 - Why are the new members suitable replacements
 - Why are new team members introduced?
- PI to explain the impact of the change in team membership on the project's ability to meet approved project objectives, RQs, methodology, deliverables, and timeline.
- PI to submit latest CVs for new members joining the team, email correspondence between PI (PI needs to indicate the roles of the new member is to take on and the new member need to acknowledge acceptance of this role.

Project Amendment

Change in Consultants:

- PI can only make changes to the names of the consultants.
- PI is not allowed to include any **additional** visiting consultants after the grant is approved.
- PI to submit updated CVs for consultant joining the team, email correspondence between PI (PI needs to indicate the roles and responsibilities of the consultant is to take on) and the consultant.

Project Amendment

Grant Extension (Project Extension)

- PIs are to seek ERFPO's approval for no-cost grant extension **6 months** before the original project end date.
 - A "no-cost" grant extension means that the project is extended to a later date, but no additional funds are requested to cover the extended period. The project will need to proceed using the approved budget as stated in the Letter of Award.
 - Justifications are to be submitted together with revised milestones (on ROMS) and Gantt charts (supporting document)
- In line with the “ERFP Administrative Guidelines and Terms and Conditions for Applicants”, the PI must state that there are sufficient funds in each vote to support the extension request and briefly describe any virement requests necessary to meet the extension period.
 - Specific virement requests are made through RC6, RC7 and RC8 forms
 - More details are given in Appendix 2

Project Amendment

ERFPO's Role in Project Amendment:

- ERFPO specifically checks on how each amendment request impacts on the Research Questions, Objectives, Deliverables, Budget and timeline as stated in the grant application and CfS.
- Will PIs be able to answer the Original research questions?
- Provide necessary advice to PI
 - If PI encounter issues, PI can request a meeting with ERFPO for guidance and to gain clarity on the project amendment request.
- If required, for amendments, alterations or changes that have a material effect on the scope, nature, direction or purpose of the project, ERFPO will send the relevant documents submitted to MOE CRO for their consideration.
 - MOE CRO may give some comments on the RC5 request for ERFPO's and PI's consideration if needed.
 - Following that, the Approving Panel (the panel which approved the project) will be informed and approval will be sought. The approval may be reviewed via email OR during the AP meetings depending on the seriousness of the request.

Appendix 2

More details on Fund Virement

Fund Virement Guidelines

- *Request for fund virement should be made at least 3 months before the project end date.*
- Additional approval from the Grantor (MOE) is required if the cumulative transfers exceed:
 - (i) 20% of total direct cost for Tier 1 projects
 - (ii) 15% of total direct cost for Tier 2 projects
 - (iii) 10% of total direct cost for Tier 3/Programmatic projects
- Virement of funds into "Overseas Travel and PI/Co-PIs' Professional Development" and "Professional Development (For Full-time RA/RF)" are not allowed.
- Any deviation from the guidelines will require approval from MOE CRO (with ERFPO's in-depth assessment).

Fund Virement Justifications

Pointers for detailed justification as reference:

- PI to provide justification for the fund transfer.
- PI to provide detailed breakdown of the amount requested. For example, if the fund transfer is:
 - to fund RA for an extended period of 3 months, PI is to provide the salary computation table as supporting document.
 - for a purchase or service, PI is to provide evidence of price such as a quotation or documentation to support the purchase or service.
- PI to provide current budget utilization of the project.

Pointers for detailed information for savings as reference:

- PI to provide justification for the savings, explaining why the funds are no longer needed.
- *When determining the amount to be transferred, PI must take into account any expenses that have been incurred or committed but have not yet been charged and reflected in the financial system.*
- In case of discrepancies in the requested amount, PI will need to resubmit a new fund virement for approval.