

THE EDUCATION UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

EdUHK Education And Social Entrepreneurs “EASE” Fund 2019/20

Application Guidelines

1. Background

The **EdUHK Education And Social Entrepreneurs “EASE” Fund Scheme**, a seed funding scheme first introduced in 2018/19, is a major initiative in nurturing the entrepreneurship within EdUHK communities as another mean of transferring EdUHK knowledge, and hence, create impact to the society. EdUHK has a well-established tradition of applied research and seeks to not only extend knowledge frontiers but also benefit the education sector and community at large leading to innovative, profitable, economic, and social improvements. The EASE Fund Scheme aims to create and promote a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship in EdUHK community; to support students and alumni to pursue their dreams and creations by starting up a *sustainable* venture relating to ***EdTech, education innovation and social innovation***; and, to provide a new channel to transfer knowledge and EdUHK research outcomes into real applications to benefit the society.

Learning by doing is the core of entrepreneurship and innovation. Apart from recognition of social problems, creation of new knowledge/intellectual properties and development of related analytical and practical skills, applicants with outstanding proposals will be awarded seed funds to establish start-ups to implement their plans. With the overwhelming responses and positive feedbacks received in the first EASE Fund Scheme in 2018/19, the Research & Development Office’s KT Sub-office (“KTSO”) has decided to put more resources in this funding scheme. These includes the organization of more experience sharing workshops, entrepreneur skills trainings, enhancement of mentorship programme and increased the maximum funding to each start-up to HK\$150,000, plus a *potential* government matching grant of \$450,000 with details to be announced at a later stage.

2. Scheme Objectives

The EASE Fund is the first entrepreneurship funding scheme in EdUHK, which aims to:

- Provide seed *grant* to EdUHK students and alumni to set up companies / social enterprises / NGOs
- Create innovative products and services or implement a new concept to bring innovations to education, meet societal needs and challenges and create impact in the society

- Bring new career and personal development opportunities to EdUHK students / alumni
- Establish a culture of entrepreneurship and social innovation in EdUHK
- Build up a channel of transferring EdUHK knowledge into application via students and alumni

The fund should not be considered as an investment to sustain an existing business. Rather, interested start-ups should aim at continuation through self-financing or financial supported from other funding sources.

3. Eligibility

- a) The scheme is open for applications by students (full-time or part-time) or alumni of EdUHK (students/ alumni must be pursuing or have secured post-graduate degree/ diploma, undergraduate degree, associate degree or any other qualification offer by EdUHK).
- b) Application must be received from a team (i.e. more than one person) with a team leader.
- c) The team leader must satisfy requirement 3(a) (i.e. an EdUHK student or alumnus).
- d) An eligible applicant can only be the team leader of **ONE** application in the same cohort.
- e) The team leader shall play a major role in the decision and execution of the submitted proposal.
- f) Each team **MUST** include at least one EdUHK staff as team member or advisor. The EdUHK staff can act as advisor(s) without taking any ownership of the start-up.
- g) When the team forms a company, team members who are eligible applicants, collectively, have to hold more than 50% of the shares in the company.
- h) The team leader shall be the person-in-charge of the company, who:
 - shall have substantial control (at least 20% of ownership) of the company;
 - shall be engaged in the company's business in a senior position on a full-time basis;
 - shall oversee operations of the company; and
 - shall be reach-able during normal business hours.
- i) If the team already formed a company, the company must not be registered for more than 2 years as of the EASE Fund Scheme application deadline.
- j) Companies funded by EASE Fund Scheme 2018/19 are not eligible for application.
- k) Additional requirements imposed by the potential government matching grant, all shareholders/partners of the company:
 - must be Hong Kong permanent residents (i.e. holder of Hong Kong permanent identity cards);
 - must be of age between 18-40 as of the EASE Fund Scheme application deadline; and

- must not be the recipient of the Entrepreneurship Matching Fund (2016/17) under the Home Affairs Bureau (HAB)'s Youth Development Fund.

4. Fund Arrangement

- a) Each successful applicant can be awarded a maximum of HK\$150,000.
- b) At the time the KTSO issue this Application Guidelines, the KTSO is in the process of applying matching grant from the HKSAR government. Should this be approved, each successful application can be awarded a 1:3 matching grant, i.e. a maximum matching grant of HK\$450,000. Hence, subject to the KTSO's application results, each winning team may be awarded a maximum grant of HK\$600,000.
- c) The fund amount shall subject to a final funding budget plan agreed by a vetting panel. The decision of the vetting panel is final and conclusive.
- d) The fund will be transferred to the successful applicant's *company* bank account by installments upon achieving pre-agreed milestones.
- e) The fund may be used for
 - operating expenses of the start-up which include staffing, training, rental, management fee, legal services, accounting services and other daily office expenses;
 - expenditures directly related to the development, implementation, marketing and commercialization of the proposed products and/or services; and
 - essential office equipment.
- f) The winning team should have a company registered in *Hong Kong* before receiving the award fund. However, the company must not be registered for more than 2 years as of the EASE Fund Scheme application deadline.
- g) The award fund cannot be used to cover the cost and expenses related to the company business registration.
- h) The award fund cannot be used to pay salaries for the team leader and team members.

5. Assessment Criteria

The application should be related to ***education innovation, education technology and social innovation***. Application will be assessed based on:

- Innovation and Creativity (30 points);
- Feasibility and Sustainability of the business model (30 points);
- Professional Capability of the Team and Proposed Partner(s) (20 points); and
- Social Impact/ Beneficiaries/ Corporate Social Responsibility (20 points).

6. Application Procedures

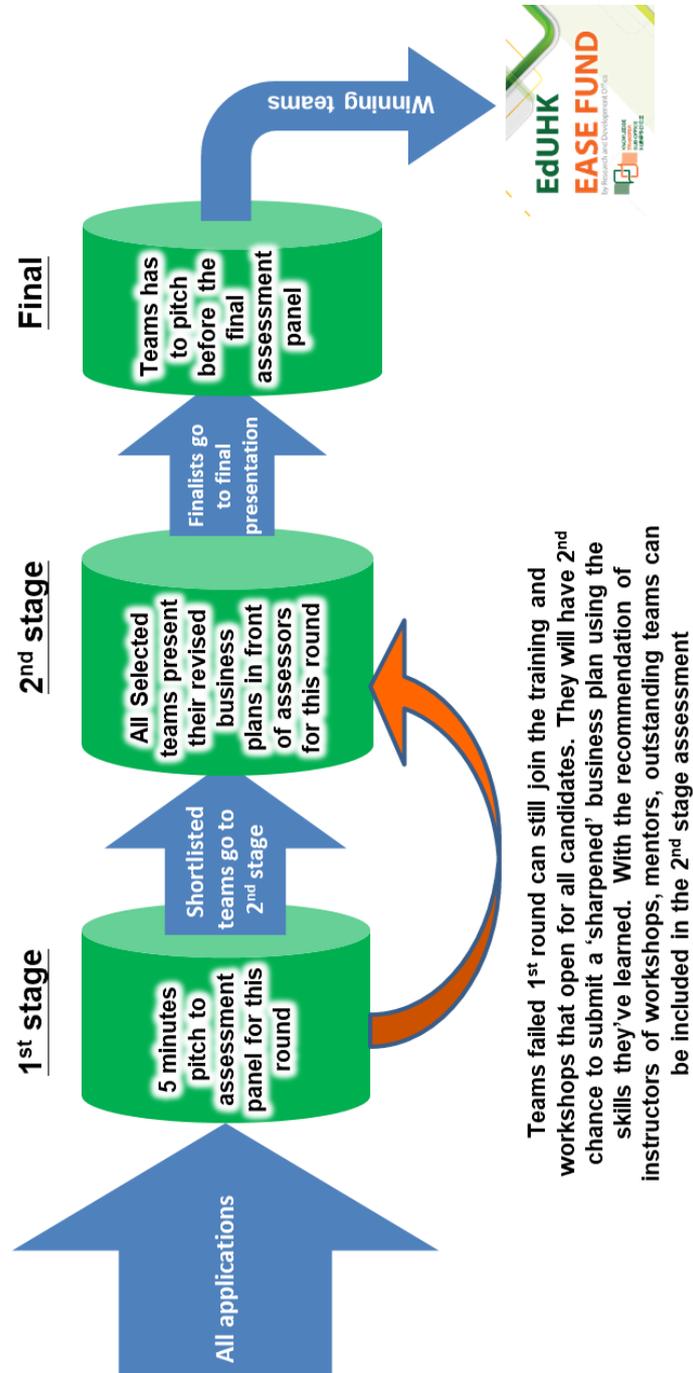
Eligible applicants should complete the application form: “*Application for EdUHK Education And Social Entrepreneurs “EASE” Fund 2019/20*” and send to chchung@eduhk.hk by email **on or before 12:00 noon 15 January 2020 (Wednesday)**. Interested parties with preliminary ideas are welcome to discuss with Mr Dickson Yeung (email: yshuyuen@eduhk.hk or tel: 2948 8156) or Mr Mark Chung (email: chchung@eduhk.hk or tel: 2948 6808) of RDO’s KT Sub-office for advices and comments before submission.

Late applications will NOT be considered.

7. Applicant’s Engagements and Reports

Applicant shall submit application form according to section 6 of this Application Guidelines. The EASE Fund applications will be assessed by stages with all applications will be invited to present their business proposals to assessment panel in the first stage. After the final stage, each award-winning team has to work out a funding budget plan with milestones, which shall be agreed by the vetting panel, before granting of award fund. Applicants shall attend the seminars, workshops, training, consultations and other activities under the EASE Fund Scheme. During the funding period, the award-winning teams shall give quarterly reports to RDO KT Sub-office on the operation of their start-ups. Each start-up has to submit company financial reports, on annual basis, to RDO KT Sub-office after the fund is granted.

8. EdUHK “EASE” Fund 2019/20 Team Assessment:



9. Enquiries

Contact Persons:

Mr Dickson Yeung, RDO KT Sub-office

Tel: 2948 8156

Email: yshuyuen@eduhk.hk

Mr Mark Chung, RDO KT Sub-office

Tel: 2948 6808

Email: chchung@eduhk.hk

Address: D4-1/F-37, Tai Po Campus

Website: <http://www.eduhk.hk/rdo/KnowledgeTransfer/>

September 2019

EdUHK EASE Fund Scheme 2019/20

Frequent Asked Questions

Eligibility

Q1: Can Postgraduate Diploma in Education Programmes “PGDE” students and alumni apply for EASE Fund?

Ans: Yes, all students/ alumni who are pursuing or have secured post-graduate degree/ diploma, undergraduate degree, associate degree or any other qualifications offered by EdUHK and meeting the requirements in section 3 of this Application Guidelines can apply for EASE Fund.

Q2: Can research student apply for EASE Fund?

Ans: Yes, students and alumni of both research postgraduate programmes and taught postgraduate programmes and meeting the requirements in section 3 of this Application Guidelines can apply for EASE Fund.

Q3: Can EdUHK staff apply for EASE Fund?

Ans: EdUHK staff cannot apply for EASE Fund as a team leader unless the staff is an alumnus of EdUHK.

However, if a full-time staff would like to be a *team leader* of an application, he/she has to quit his/her full-time job in EdUHK and works full-time for the start-up when the proposal is granted by EASE Fund.

If a staff is a *team member* of an application who would keep his/her job in EdUHK while taking a position in the start-up company, he/she has to follow the rules and regulation governing outside activities of EdUHK staff and seek approval from the management.

Q4: Are non-local students eligible to apply for EASE Fund?

Ans: No, as the *potential* government matching grant requires all shareholders/partners of the company must be Hong Kong permanent residents (i.e. holder of Hong Kong permanent identity cards).

Q5: My proposal is receiving other funding. Can I apply EASE Fund with the same proposal?

Ans: It depends as the *potential* government matching grant requires the selected teams cannot be recipients of other HKSAR government funding schemes. Also, companies funded by EASE Fund Scheme 2018/19 are not eligible for application. For other funding, however, you should check carefully if such funding scheme has any restrictions in applying another funding.

Team Formation

Q6: *Is there any restriction on the number of team members?*

Ans: Yes, the applicant must form a team of *at least* two people. There is no restriction on the maximum number of team members, but it is recommended to form a team with 3~5 team members whose skills and backgrounds are complementary to each other.

Q7: *Can I form team with non-EdUHK member(s)?*

Ans: Yes, there is no restriction on the mix of team members. However, the team leader must be an eligible student/alumnus of EdUHK meeting the requirements in section 3 of this Application Guidelines.

Q8: *Can I change team members after submission?*

Ans: No, you are not expected to change your team members after submission of application unless with very strong justifications for RDO KT Sub-office's approval at its sole discretion.

Q9: *Can I submit more than one application?*

Ans: No, each eligible applicant can submit one application only.

Q10: *Each team must include an EdUHK staff as a team member. Any restriction on the type of staff?*

Ans: At least one of the team members or advisor(s) must be an EdUHK staff when submitting your application. He/she can be an academic staff, teaching staff, administrative staff or research staff. Both full-time and part-time (include visiting) staff are eligible.

Application and Evaluation

Q11: What documents should I submit?

Ans: You have to submit a completed EASE Fund application form “*Application for EdUHK Education And Social Entrepreneurs “EASE” Fund 2019/20*” which should include (i) an executive summary of your proposed business, (ii) CVs of all team members (iii) HKID card copies of all team members, and (iv) proof of EdUHK students/alumni/staff status for all team members and advisor(s), if any (student/staff ID cards and/or graduation certificates)

Q12: What is the evaluation process?

Ans: The evaluation process has three phases:

1st stage – KT Sub-Office will organize entrepreneur experience sharing workshops to help interested parties to prepare themselves for the entrepreneur journey before submission of their applications. KT Sub-Office will check the eligibility of all applications. All the eligible applicants will be invited to give a 5 min pitching. Shortlisted teams can enter the 2nd stage assessment. However, teams not on list can still join the EASE Fund training/workshops and have chance entering into the 2nd stage assessment.

2nd stage – There will be a series of trainings, workshops and mentoring programs be organised to mature their business proposals. After attending the trainings, workshops and mentoring programs, teams not selected in the 1st stage can have a second chance to submit a ‘sharpened’ business plan. After considering the recommendations of workshop instructors/mentors, outstanding teams will be included for the 2nd stage assessment. Teams selected for 2nd stage assessment have to submit more detail proposals and deliver presentations to 2nd stage assessment panel.

Final stage – Selected teams will receive further consultations and workshops to shape up their plans and prepare their start-ups. Each team will deliver a final presentation to a panel composed of internal and external reviewers.

Q13: There were two types of fund ceilings, depending on whether EdUHK IP were used, in EASE Fund Scheme 2018/19 but not in 2019/20. Does it means that we don’t need to use EdUHK IP to get the maximum grant of HK\$150,000?

Ans: While are not separating the fund ceiling for projects involve the use of EdUHK IPs from those not, we still encourage the use of EdUHK IPs as one of the objectives of

setting EASE Fund Scheme is to “build up a channel of transferring EdUHK knowledge into application via students and alumni” and it will be assessed in the reflected in the marking scheme. That means, for two identical proposals, the one involves the use of EdUHK IPs should have a higher score.

Regarding EdUHK IP, it could be knowledge, innovation, technology or any research finding generated from EdUHK. Engaging EdUHK in consultancy or partnership research projects, which are closely related to the proposals’ core businesses, are also considered as making using of EdUHK knowledge. Student works and projects which are developed with financial support from EdUHK in the form of wages/ studentship, substantial use of resources of EdUHK (e.g. library, computer room, and any campus facility, etc.) or intensive supervision/ consultation from the faculty of EdUHK are also classified as IPs of EdUHK under the EASE Fund Scheme.

Examples of using EdUHK IP in a proposal:

- A. You read a book chapter or a publication written by the faculty of EdUHK about a new pedagogy for STEM education. You realize the business potential and propose a tutorial centre adopting the pedagogy.
 - B. A researcher of EdUHK invented a wearable device for emotional training of SEN students in classroom. You propose a company to commercialize and mass-produce the device.
 - C. In your final year project, you developed and conducted a trial run of a learning Cantonese via music campaign for ethnic minority in HK. The results are very positive that you intend to continue running the campaign as a social venture.
 - D. Your postgraduate research is about cultural heritage and historic preservation in HK. You plan to commercialize and render the findings to educational materials, including cartoon videos, books and mobile games.
 - E. Your family recipe for an herbal drink is believed to be effective in improving performance of marathon runners. You propose a new company to commercialize the drink. In the plan, you would engage a faculty member of EdUHK to do a scientific measurement of the drink’s effectiveness and safety.
- Please indicate the details in your application on what EdUHK IPs you are going to use and if there any licensing/consultancy arrangement with EdUHK already (or to be) made.

Examples not using EdUHK IP:

- F. You are a dancer. You know a NGO is planning to launch a dance for culture exchange campaign. You plan to set up a dance centre to collaborate with the NGO.
- G. You are a professional psychologist graduated from PS. You intend to run a start-up to provide counselling services for underprivileged families and support NGOs' social campaign with professional psychology services.
- H. You collaborate with your friends in the engineering and science fields to develop STEM toys for primary students.
- I. You plan to set up an innovative education centre with overseas education students you met during a study trip.

Q14: *What authorization should I obtain if I need to utilize my course work (e.g. final year project, honourable project and other class project) to my proposal?*

Ans: Student course works (including but not limited to final year project, honourable project and other class project) involve financial support, resources and intensive supervision of EdUHK are classified as EdUHK's IP. Student has to (1) ask for a consent of the project supervisor / course instructor, and (2) come up with a licensing agreement with EdUHK.

Q15: *Can research student apply EASE Fund with his/her research project?*

Ans: Yes, research student can render his/her research work into a business / social venture proposal for EASE Fund. Please note that the IP rights of the research works are owned by EdUHK. Student has to (1) ask for consent of the principle investigator, and (2) come up with a licensing agreement with EdUHK.

Q16: *Can the execution of the EASE Fund awarding project be counted as my honours project / final year project / field experience?*

Ans: It shall be subject to the decision of individual programmes. You have to check with your department / project supervisor.

Intellectual Property Rights

Q17: *What is intellectual property (IP)?*

Ans: The common IP types include patents, copyrights, trademarks, registered designs and trade secrets. Patents, trademarks and registered designs are all registrable, providing that certain requirements are fulfilled. Copyright and trade secrets exist through statute and are granted autonomously. Please contact RDO KTO staff with details in section 9 of this Application Guidelines if you have any query.

Q18: *Who owns the IP of student work? The student or EdUHK?*

Ans: The students own their inventions subject to the exceptions below:

- Students receiving financial support from the University in the form of wages/studentship.
- Substantial use of University's resources and intensive supervision from University's faculty.
- IP ownership depends on terms for sponsored research, contract research and consultancy.

Please consult your project supervisor on such arrangement.

Q19: *How is the ownership of any IP generated by my team during the EASE Fund Scheme?*

Ans: Subject to any other IP arrangement between the EASE Fund funding teams and other 3rd parties (including EdUHK), EdUHK will not claim any ownership of IP generated by the EASE Fund funding team using the EASE Fund.

Q20: *Where can I find EdUHK's IPs that I may make use of in my proposal?*

Ans: New IPs are being generated in the University every day. There is no full list of IPs. However, a recommendation list can be provided by the KT Sub-office or you can find information about research works of faculty members here:
https://oraas0.ied.edu.hk/rich/web/search_project.jsp

Q21: *If I have to use EdUHK's IP in my proposal, what should I do?*

Ans: You should discuss with the owner/ principle investigator of the IP and obtain his/her written consent before submitting your application. Documentary proof on confirming the use of EdUHK IP, like signed licensing/consultancy/partnership

project agreement or letter of intent, must be provided before you can be confirmed as the EASE Fund awardee.

Q22: *If I have to use a third party's IP in my proposal, what should I do?*

Ans: You should discuss with the owner/ principle investigator of the IP before submitting your application, Documentary proof on confirming the use of such IP, like signed licensing/consultancy/partnership project agreement or letter of intent, must be provided before you can be confirmed as the EASE Fund awardee.

Fund Disbursement and Company Formation

Q23: *How will the award fund be disbursed?*

Ans: EASE Fund will be disbursed to start-up *company*' bank account in multiple instalments according their meeting of pre-agreed milestones. The pre-agreed milestones should be the ones submitted for panel's final assessment during the final presentation and revised based on panel's recommendations (if any).

Example of milestones are:

- Incorporation of company in Hong Kong with business registration completed; open bank account for business transactions
- Hiring of key people (e.g. product manager, sales & marketing personnel etc.)
- Finish the prototypes of their products/services
- Decide the co-working spaces/incubation bases in GBA as their office business address(es)
- Launch of commercial products and services and marketing of products/services to target customers

Each team has to present a Business Registration, Bank account information, and/or any related document(s) before receiving the first instalment. Remaining instalments will be disbursed subject to satisfactory of quarterly progress reviews and meeting pre-agreed milestones.

Q24: *Will EdUHK hold any company interest/ share of the funded companies under EASE Fund Scheme?*

Ans: No, EdUHK will not hold any ownership of the companies.

Q25: *Can I pay the business registration fee by the EASE Fund?*

Ans: No, you cannot use the EASE Fund to pay business registration fee. You have to have a business registration done before you can receive the EASE Fund.

Q26: *Can I pay salary by the EASE Fund?*

Ans: You can use EASE Fund to pay salaries for *employees* who are neither team leader nor other team members listed in your application form.

Q27: *Can I pay licensing fees or royalties to EdUHK/third parties by the EASE Fund?*

Ans: Yes, you can as there are normal operating expense of the start-up company.

Execution of Proposal

Q28: *When shall we register the company?*

Ans: You need not to register a company upon submitting your application, but you must do so once your proposal is selected to be granted by the EASE Fund.
If you have already formed a company, the company must not be registered for more than 2 years as of the EASE Fund Scheme application deadline.

Q29: *Should I return any unspent EASE Fund to EdUHK?*

Ans: The EASE Fund intends to support the execution of the proposal in the funding period. However, in case of termination of the business / EASE Fund entitlement during the funding period, the awardees have to return any unspent fund to EdUHK.

Q30: *Can we change the proposed business / milestones during the funding period?*

Ans: You shall discuss with and get prior approval from EdUHK before making any change of the proposed business / agreed milestones (including but not limited to deliverables, business scopes, budget plans, target marketplaces, etc.). Such modifications shall be in writing and supported by clear rationales and justifications. Any change of business plan / milestone without prior approval from EdUHK can cause fund termination.

Q31: *Can I decide not to execute the proposed business?*

Ans: You must establish a start-up to execute the proposed business in order to receive the EASE Fund. Otherwise, your team cannot receive the EASE Fund entitlement.

Q32: *Should all team members take part in the start-up?*

Ans: Yes, every team member has to take part in the start-up during the funding period. The team leader must be engaged in the start-up's business in a senior position on a full-time basis. The team has to inform and get consent from EdUHK before making any change/withdrawal of the members' positions during the funding year. Please note that in case any member wishes to maintain another employment with a third party while running the awarded start-up, he/she has the responsibility to obtain written consent from the employer and provide such written consent to EdUHK before the entitlement of EASE Fund.

Q33: *If the team leader withdraws but the team members want to continue the proposal/start-up, is it possible?*

Ans: *From application submission to final presentation stage:*

No, change of team leader is **NOT** allowed. The applicants shall form a strong and cohesive team for the project with team leader as the core member.

During the funding period:

The company should identify a qualified replacement for team leader and seek prior approval from EdUHK for such a change. The replacement must also be an eligible applicant for the EASE Fund scheme. Otherwise, the funding entitlement will be terminated and the team has to return all unused fund to EdUHK.

Q34: *If my start-up is running out of money within the funding period, is it possible for me to apply for extra funding?*

Ans: No extra funding will be provided by the EASE Fund Scheme and the potential government matching grant requires the selected teams cannot be recipients of other HKSAR government funding schemes. However, you are encouraged to develop a sustainable business plan, with the advices from our mentors, to maintain the company's operation during and after the funding period. You can also look for other funding to support your business. The RDO KT Sub-office will from time to time provide EASE Fund funding teams with information on funds available outside EdUHK and solicit opportunities to network with potential investors.