# Education Research Funding Programme (ERFP)

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| **28th Request for Proposals:** | **24 February 2022** |
| **ERFP Grant Call Briefing:** | **9 March 2022, 2pm to 4pm** |
| **ERFP Grant Writing Workshop:** | **14 March 2022, 2pm to 3pm** |
| **Expressions of Interest:** | **24 March 2022, 5pm** |
| **Submission Deadline:** | **5 May 2022, 5pm** |
| **Endorsement by Director of Research (DoR):** | **16 May 2022** |

Dear Colleagues

The ERFP Research Grants Management Unit (RGMU) is pleased to announce its 28th Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Education Research Funding Programme (ERFP). The 28RFP is the fifth call to open to Institutes of Higher Learning (IHL) with the aim of fostering stronger collaborations with IHL partners.

The 28RFP forms part of the 4th tranche of research funding from the Ministry of Education (MOE), Singapore for the continuity of the ERFP. Over these few years (FY2018-2022), the ERFP continues to build on the work that has been undertaken in the previous three cycles of education funding by strengthening the foundation (in terms of knowledge, capability and structure) for education research, development and innovation in existing and emerging research areas. NIE Office of Education Research (OER) also continues to encourage efforts to design, develop and implement strategic, evidence-based, collaborative, scientifically-rigorous and outcomes-focused innovations in schools and classrooms. The primary aims are to improve classroom practice, enhance student outcomes, and build organisational and teacher capacities. More information can be found in [here](#).

The ERFP for FY2018-2022 is developed in line with recommendations made by the Committee of the Future Economy and recent educational policy initiatives. Over the past year, besides horizon scanning, consolidation of research project findings, and strategic planning to meet future needs, NIE OER has also met and consulted key education stakeholders in MOE, schools, and both international and local experts. The result is an ERFP that both strengthens National Institute of Education's (NIE) international standing as an education research institute of distinction and supports Singapore's education system in providing a "Research-Informed Education for Future-ready Learners."

NIE OER encourages research collaborations among colleagues within NIE as well as with colleagues at the MOE and other Institutes of Higher Learning (IHL).

## A.   FOCUS OF RESEARCH

1.  The ERFP focusses on education research in Singapore (in terms of knowledge, capability and structure), developing innovations in existing and emerging niche research areas, and growing hubs of research excellence to support Singapore's education system in providing "Research-Informed Education for Future-ready Learners." It encourages efforts to design, develop and implement strategic, evidence-based, theoretically-warranted, collaborative, scientifically-rigorous and outcome-focused innovations in schools and classrooms.

2.  The primary aim of ERFP is to improve classroom practice, enhance student outcomes, and build organisational and teacher capacities in Singapore schools. Thus, proposals for ERFP funding must demonstrate relevance to MOE/OER's mission and goals and potential benefits to Singapore's educational institutions.

    Scope of the projects should fall within the following criteria:
    i.     Early childhood, primary, secondary and/or JC education-related.
    ii.    Studies on other parts of the education system that link to the emphasis of ERFP might be considered if those links are clearly articulated.
    iii.   May involve formal or informal learning linked to (i).
    iv.    Teacher education and teacher professional learning for Singapore's education system.
    v.     Studies of pathways of education and/or lifelong learning which are based in or include participants from higher education are allowed (bearing in mind (ii)). Projects that are limited to benefits for higher education and/or home-based research not related to (i) are excluded.
    vi.    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 is clearly articulated, in line with the intended scope. Principal Investigators can refer to the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines or an example of crucial methodological features to discuss.
    vii.   International comparisons are allowed but international data collection, analysis or hiring is not supported.

3.  The 28RFP will be a general call focusing on the broad MOE Priority research areas below.

**MOE PRIORITY RESEARCH FOCI**

There are five priority research foci that are of strategic interest to MOE. Researchers are encouraged to explore research lines of inquiry in these priority research foci.

i.    Instructional Core
Pedagogical research that studies the teaching and learning practices in the instructional core (academic and non-academic) and how to improve these practices is important and useful to MOE. Possible lines of inquiry include research to describe and measure patterns of curriculum, instruction and assessment practices in Singapore schools; measure and explain the impact of these practices on student outcomes with consideration of student/classroom characteristics; as well as identify opportunities for improvement through interventions and professional development.

ii.    Contexts of Learning
Learning occurs within multiple socio-cultural-historical contexts which interact with individual differences to affect learning. A nuanced understanding of the complex interactions among these contexts and their impact on individual learning is needed to better shape educational policies and customise effective programmes. Possible lines of inquiry include research to examine less formal learning environments (including out-of-school and online) which affect learning; as well as understand the diverse needs, schooling experiences and life contexts (e.g., home, community) of students (beyond their individual differences) so as to enhance their overall learning and well-being.

iii.    Early Childhood Education
Children's early years can critically affect their longer-term developmental trajectories, and quality early childhood education plays an important role in developing their potential to the fullest. Possible lines of inquiry include research to examine structural and process factors which influence children's learning and developmental outcomes (including non-academic areas); design effective professional development for pre-school practitioners; as well as understand the levers and mechanisms which can help narrow developmental and learning gaps for low progressing children (including those from disadvantaged backgrounds).

iv.    Bilingualism and Biliteracy Education
Bilingual policy has been a cornerstone of Singapore's national curriculum. Contextually-attuned research is needed to advance our understanding and strengthen our approaches in English and Mother Tongue Languages learning.  Possible lines of inquiry include research to support and motivate students who are less proficient in English and Mother Tongue Languages; develop age-appropriate language proficiency measures; as well as understand the perceived role and value of Mother Tongue Languages and English Language among families and in society.

v.    Lifelong Learning
It is important to help our learners develop not only the competencies that allow them to access further learning (i.e., learn how to learn), but also the desire to learn, so that they can and will continue to learn long after they leave school. Possible lines of inquiry include research to examine the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values (KSAV) that are essential for a student to be an effective lifelong learner beyond their schooling years; as well as understand the relationship between these KSAV and 21st century competencies (including adaptability, resilience, perseverance) needed to thrive in life and at work.

**NIE OER 4TH TRANCHE RESEARCH PROGRAMMES**

The Key ERFP FY2018-2022 research programmes provide a comprehensive and synergistic research framework for a future-ready learners' research agenda. The organisation of research into programmes addressing priority areas ensures that research is more focused, cumulative, coherent and impactful.

The research on the Future-Ready Learners' Agenda includes research priority on:
  i.    Cognitive, Emotional and Social Development (CESD)
  ii.   Teacher Professionalism and Learning (TPAL)
  iii.  Schools, Leadership and System Studies (SLSS)
  iv.   Lifelong Learning, Cognition & Wellbeing (LLCW)
  v.    Learning Sciences and Innovation (LSI)

These five programmes constitute multiple levels of analysis of our education system, from the individual learners to teachers to schools and systems, cross-cut by research focusing on future-ready values, skills, competencies and learning. Importantly, these five programmes include research that can be conducted in domain-specific areas like language, mathematics, science, humanities as well as areas such as the Singapore Teaching Practice (STP), early childhood, bilingualism, and low progress learners.
In planning your research focus, you should consider how your proposed project fits within the MOE priority research foci, the research programmes of the Future-Ready Learners' Agenda.

## B. RESEARCH TYPE

**TIER 1, 2, AND 3**

Proposals can be characterized by 'tiers'. This relates to the quantum for each project. These typically have a research team of PI, Co-PI and Collaborators who work together, focusing on one cohesive project.

**PROGRAMMATIC RESEARCH**

Programmatic research are a specific category of proposals which have a funding quantum of a Tier 3 proposal. Programmatic research is not applicable to Tier 1 and Tier 2 proposals.

Programmatic research is defined by an over-arching project research theme which focuses on a key educational issue, problem, phenomena or outcome, along with a number of sub-projects – specific research studies that address important aspects or components of the issue, problem, phenomena or outcome. It therefore has a common strand or focus, supported by a common theoretical framework, and undertakes a coherent, comprehensive, multi-faceted approach to understanding and addressing the issue, problem, phenomena or outcome. Unlike the usual Tier 1, 2, and 3 proposals, programmatic research includes sub-PIs who are responsible for a specific sub-project within the larger PP.

Programmatic research is characterised as follows:

i.   examine, describe or address a fundamental or challenging complex educational issue, problem, phenomena or outcome.
ii.  incorporate multi-level, multi-method, multi-perspectival and multi-disciplinary approaches to examining or addressing the problem, issue, phenomena or outcome.
iii. comprise strong team synergies to facilitate shared expertise, knowledge exchange and collaborations.
iv.  comprise a range of (typically, two to five) themes which are coherent, aligned, and which allows comprehensive breadth of analytical foci, research outcomes and findings that have an impact on the education system and the various stakeholders (NIE, MOE, schools, society and international research fraternity).
v.   have strong translational efforts as part of its agenda; including encouraging stakeholders to be actively involved at the proposal design stage, building in time and funding for professional development, designing an innovation or intervention as part of the proposal, or hiring journalistic writers to translate findings for various stakeholders.

**FUNDING QUANTUM**

| TIER | QUANTUM |
|---|---|
| 1 | < S$150K |
| 2 | S$150K to < S$350K |
| 3 / Programmatic Proposal | ≥ S$350k |

## C. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

### i. Expressions of Interest (EOI)

Applicants should indicate their expression of interest and submit them to the IHL Point of Contact (POC) within the Institution **before 5pm, 24 March 2022**.

EOIs are required to be submitted for all ERFP (Tier 1 to 3) and Programmatic Proposals via the EOI Form enclosed in the "28RFP ERFP Guidelines and Application Package".

IHL POCs will be required to collate all EOIs that the Institution would like to support and send them to ERFP RGMU via email at erfp.grant@nie.edu.sg before the submission deadline of 5pm**. Late and incomplete submissions will not be accepted.**

### ii. Submission Details and ROMS Account Access

Applications for ERFP (Tier 1 to 3) as well as Programmatic Proposals are submitted directly by applicants online, via the Research Operation Management System (ROMS), **before 5pm, 5 May 2022**. Only applicants who had submitted EOIs will be able to submit applications via ROMS.

ROMS account Access
ERFP RGMU will liaise with IHL POCs who have submitted the collated EOIs about account access on ROMS for respective applicants by 5pm, 24 March 2022. The account access for the Director of Research (DoR) at the relevant institutions will also be provided.

The submission deadline for all applications is **before 5pm, 5 May 2022**. ERFP RGMU **will not** accept late or incomplete submissions after this deadline. Directors of Research are required to endorse applications by **16 May 2022**.

### iii. 28RFP ERFP Grant Call Briefing

ERFP RGMU will be organising a Grant Call Briefing (online) on 9 March 2022.
Applicants are encouraged to attend the briefing to find out more about the grant call.

**Date:**                                **Wednesday, 9 March 2022**
**Time:**                                    **2pm to 4pm**

Please RSVP your attendance via your IHL Point of Contact. IHL POCs, please send ERFP RGMU the names of the attendees by 4 March 2022.

iv. **28RFP ERFP Grant Writing Workshop**

ERFP RGMU will be organising a Grant Writing Workshop (online) on 14 March 2022. Applicants are encouraged to attend the workshop to find out more about proposal writing.

**Date:** **Monday, 14 March 2022**
**Time:** **2pm to 3pm**

Please RSVP your attendance via your IHL Point of Contact. IHL POCs, please send ERFP RGMU the names of the attendees by 9 March 2022.

v. **Useful Resources and Contacts**

Please refer to the attached **28RFP ERFP Guidelines and Application Package** prior to submitting your expressions of interest and applications.

The grant call information can also be found in the NIE Website.

For general grants queries, please email ERFP RGMU at erfp.grant@nie.edu.sg.

For technical assistance on ROMS, please contact servicedesk@nie.edu.sg.
We look forward to your submission. Thank you!

Best Regards
ERFP Research Grants Management Unit