

THE HONG KONG COLLEGE OF ANAESTHESIOLOGISTS

ADMINISTRATIVE INSTRUCTIONS: FORMAL PROJECT (INTENSIVE CARE)

1. Introduction

- 1.1 All vocational trainees in Intensive Care of the Hong Kong College of Anesthesiologists who are preparing for the Exit Assessment in Intensive Care are required to submit evidence of satisfactory completion of a Formal Project.
- 1.2 The Formal Project is not a pre-requisite for presenting for the Final Fellowship Examination in Intensive Care.
- 1.3 The objectives of the Formal Project are:
 - 1.3.1 To learn research skills
 - 1.3.2 To develop an understanding of evidence-based medicine and be exposed to the rigour of scientific research

2 The following are acceptable activities for the Formal Project:

- 2.1 Clinical audit including practice review. The audit must be of significant magnitude and require the use of appropriate statistical analyses.
- 2.2 Systematic review with meta-analysis and require the use of appropriate statistical analyses.
- 2.3 Prospective clinical trial (either single or multi-centered) conducted in Hong Kong or involvement with a multi-centered international trial. The trainee must be directly involved in the trial (i.e. either first or corresponding authorship in locally conducted trial or act as the local coordinator for Hong Kong in a multi-centered international trial with presentation of local data).
- 2.4 Epidemiologic studies (cross-sectional comparison, correlation, case-control, prospective or retrospective cohort)
- 2.5 Laboratory-based studies related medical science
- 2.6 Surveys of practice or opinion conforming to the principles of research for survey design. The audit must be of significant magnitude and require the use of appropriate statistical analyses
- 2.7 Quality improvement project including clinical audit with demonstrated practice change processes. The audit must be of significant magnitude and the trainee must be the direct lead of the project.
- 2.8 Educational project with predefined objective(s) of significant magnitude relevant to the practice on intensive care medicine. The project must include a testable evaluation of effectiveness with the use of statistical analyses.

2.9 Advocacy projects relevant to intensive care medicine with a formal impact assessment

Where appropriate, approval by an institutional Ethics Committee or Review Board must be granted

3 The following are not acceptable activities for the Formal Project:

3.1 Individual case reports

3.2 Letters to the editor

3.3 Correspondence

3.4 Book chapters

3.5 Editorials

4 Formal Project Assessment

4.1 The Formal Project submitted by trainees will be vetted and assessed by the Formal Project Committee. The members of the Formal Project Committee are nominated by the Board of Intensive Care Medicine.

4.2 The Formal Project Committee shall ensure the fair vetting and assessment of projects submitted and recommends to the Board of Intensive Care Medicine whether the individual project has met the required standard. The Board of Intensive Care Medicine shall appoint new members to join the committee based on the recommendation of the Formal Project Committee.

4.3 Upon completion of the Formal Project and other training requirements, the trainee will be eligible for the granting of the Fellowship in Intensive Care.

4.4 Any appeals shall be addressed to the Appeals Committee according to the Hong Kong College of Anaesthesiologists Administrative Instructions. The Appeals Committee will make recommendation to the Council and the Board of Intensive Care Medicine whose decision shall be final.

5 Procedure for submission, vetting and approval of Formal Project

5.1 The trainee shall submit his/her Formal Project proposal to the Formal Project coordinator during his/ her Higher Vocational Training. The proposal must have obtained endorsement at least 9 months **BEFORE** the intended exit assessment.

5.2 The Formal Project coordinator shall arrange regular Formal Project meeting and invite the trainee to present his/her Formal Project proposal in the meeting.

- 5.3 The Formal Project Committee will determine the suitability of the Formal Project for consideration under the project requirement in the Formal Project meeting.
- 5.4 On favorable advice from the Formal Project Committee, the trainee will carry out the project.
- 5.5 On the unfavourable advice from the Formal Project Committee, the trainee shall re-submit his / her proposed project. The trainee shall make the necessary amendments recommended and re-submit the project to the Formal Project Committee for further consideration.
- 5.6 After the trainee has completed his/her Formal Project, he/she shall present his/her final report in the Formal Project meeting.
- 5.7 In order to allow sufficient time for Formal Project Committee to review, all submissions (including proposal / final Formal Project) have to be submitted **at least 14 days prior to each of the Formal Project Meeting date.**
- 5.8 Approval of the Formal Project shall only be granted by the Formal Project Committee, based on the favourable and unanimous decision as recommended by the committee members.
- 5.9 The trainee shall submit the completed project paper to the Formal Project Committee upon completion of the project. The trainee is encouraged to present his/her research findings at conferences and submit the paper to scientific journals for publication.

6 Acceptance for papers published in journals or presented in conferences as Formal Project

- 6.1 Any trainee who has completed a project may submit that project to the Formal Project Committee for consideration as a Formal Project, subject to the criteria set out in sections 6.2 and 6.3 below. The acceptance of the project as Formal Project shall be at the final discretion of the Formal Project Committee.
- 6.2 Published paper:
 - 6.2.1 Evidence that the paper has been accepted and a copy of the publication must be submitted to the Formal Project Committee before it should be accepted as the Formal Project.
 - 6.2.2 The paper must satisfy the following criteria:
 - 6.2.2.1 Trainee must contribute significantly to the manuscript and be the first author or corresponding author.
 - 6.2.2.2 The topic has to be related to anaesthesia, intensive care or pain related, and meet the criteria of 6.2.2.1.
- 6.3 Oral presentation of paper in conference
 - 6.3.1 Presentation of a paper at the Hong Kong College of Anaesthesiologists Annual Scientific Meeting or other approved scientific meetings, such as the Hong Kong Society of Critical Care

Medicine Annual Scientific Meeting, the College of Intensive Care Medicine, Australia and New Zealand Annual Scientific Meeting, or the European Society of Intensive Care Annual Congress, etc., could be accepted as the Formal Project.

- 6.3.2 The topic has to be anaesthesia, intensive care or pain related, and meet the criteria of 6.2.2.1.
- 6.3.3 A written manuscript on the presentation must be submitted to the Formal Project Committee for review.
- 6.3.4 The trainee will be invited to present his/ her project in the Formal Project Meeting if his/her project fulfills the Formal Project requirements of 6.2 and 6.3.
- 6.3.5 Acceptance of the project as Formal Project will be determined by the Board of Intensive Care Medicine based on the recommendation by the Formal Project Committee.

6.4 Special consideration for trainees with a prior fellowship

- 6.4.1 For trainees who already possess a fellowship (e.g., from the Hong Kong College of Anaesthesiologists or the Hong Kong College of Emergency Medicine) and are concurrently undertaking Intensive Care Medicine fellowship training, the standard two-stage process (endorsement of formal project proposal followed by submission of full report) as outlined in section 5 may not apply, provided that the trainee submits a published paper meeting the criteria set out in section 6.2.
- 6.4.2 The existing policy of accepting a published paper as a Formal Project remains unchanged for this group, subject to the same quality and relevance criteria outlined in section 6.2.
- 6.4.3 The trainee shall formally submit the published paper to the Formal Project Committee for review **at least 14 days prior to each of the Formal Project Meeting date**. If the paper is accepted for consideration as a Formal Project, the trainee will be invited to present the paper at a Formal Project Meeting.
- 6.4.4 Final endorsement of the Formal Project shall be granted only after the trainee has presented the paper at the Formal Project Meeting and the Committee has completed its review.

The new regulation will be applicable to trainees registered after 1st July, 2026.

1st Edition : 5/12/1999

Revised and approved by Board of Intensive Care Medicine, HKCA on 10 Aug 2018

Revised and approved by Board of Intensive Care Medicine, HKCA on 16 May 2022

Revised and approved by Board of Intensive Care Medicine, HKCA on 27 Dec 2023

Revised and approved by Board of Intensive Care Medicine on 6 May 2026 and Council, HKCA on 15 May 2026