



# Guidelines for Completion of the Formal Project

---

Document No.	HKCA-E03
Prepared by	Board of Education
Endorsed by	HKCA Council
Version	4
Effective Date	1 October 2026
Next Review Date	



## **Table of Contents**

<b>1. INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2. PROJECT .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>3. ASSESSMENT OF PROJECTS .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>4. CERTIFICATION .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>APPENDIX I - Procedure for submission, vetting and approval of projects .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>APPENDIX II - Procedure for appeal .....</b>	<b>6</b>



## **1 INTRODUCTION**

All trainees in anaesthesia of the Hong Kong College of Anaesthesiologists, will be required to submit evidence of satisfactory completion of a formal project which has been carried out at any time during the period of approved vocational training, before the fellowship of the Hong Kong College of Anaesthesiologists, will be awarded. This project is not a requirement for presenting for either the primary or the final examinations.

### **Goals of the formal project**

- To demonstrate the ability to produce and answer a clinical/scientific question relevant to the field of anaesthesia, pain medicine and/or intensive care medicine
- Ideally, the formal project would potentially impact clinical practice at their hospital or beyond

## **2 PROJECT**

### **2 A) The following are acceptable activities:**

2.1 Acceptance of a scientific paper for publication in a peer reviewed journal that referees all manuscripts. Evidence that the paper has been accepted should be submitted to the Project Officer before it should be accepted as the formal project. Subsequently, a copy of the publication should be sent to the Formal Project Team as a record.

2.1.1 The trainees must have contributed significantly to the manuscript (e.g. be the first author and/or corresponding author).

2.1.2 Publication that is not carried out at any time during the period of approved vocational training may be considered. However, it has to be related to anaesthesia, intensive care or pain medicine and meet the criteria of 2.1.1.

2.2 Acceptance of an approved research project by the Formal Project Team. This includes providing a research protocol that is approved by the Formal Project Team, followed by a completed manuscript (with project completed in accordance with the approved protocol). The completed manuscript must be approved by the Formal Project Team.

Note: Protocol, manuscript or publication has to be submitted with the completed Formal Project Application for assessment.



**B) The following are acceptable types of projects:**

1. Systematic review +/- meta-analysis
2. Randomized controlled trials
3. Observational studies (e.g. prospective cohort studies, retrospective studies)
4. Clinical audits
5. Quality improvement studies

The following types of work will not be considered eligible for the formal project, regardless of whether they have been published or not in peer reviewed journal articles:

1. Narrative review articles
2. Case reports

For any type of research work that does not appear to be covered here, the applicant should seek the advice of the formal project team in writing.

**3. ASSESSMENT OF PROJECTS**

The Formal Project Team composed of one Formal Project Officer and six Assistant Formal Project Officer from different institutions. Each Project Officer is nominated by the Board of Education and approved by council of the Hong Kong College of Anaesthesiologists. The Project Officer's term of office is three years from the date of approval by the council and is renewable. The Project Officer is responsible for certifying to the Board of Education and Board of Censor that each trainee has complied with the above requirements. The project officer is responsible for referring projects to reviewers for assessment, and for certification of projects within the following guidelines.

That the project:

- 3.1 has been conducted in major part by the trainee
- 3.2 prior to conducting the project, the research protocol has been submitted to reviewers for approval
- 3.3 falls into one of the categories in Section 2 above
- 3.4 is of satisfactory standard through a peer review process by an independent reviewer.

**4. CERTIFICATION**

Upon compliance with the above, the Formal Project Team will notify Board of Education and Board of Censor that the trainee has complied with the relevant regulations.



## **APPENDIX I- Procedure for submission, vetting and approval of projects**

### **Step 1**

The trainee shall make a project proposal on the prescribed form and in prescribed format, if any, to the Assessor who will determine the suitability of the project for consideration under this project requirement. Application for acceptance of previous work done by a trainee will be considered in the same manner as described hereunder.

### **Step 2**

On favorable advice from the Formal Project Team, the trainee will carry out the project. If changes or amendment are necessary, the project proposal needs to be resubmitted.

### **Step 3**

The trainee will submit the completed project paper to the Formal Project Team on completion of the project.

### **Step 4**

The Formal Project Team will arrange to have the project reviewed and the review completed within two months of submission. If amendments are needed, the trainee shall make the necessary amendments and re-submit the paper to the Assessor and reviewers for re-assessment.

### **Step 5**

On the advice of the reviewers of the project paper, the Formal Project Officer shall submit his/her recommendation to the Formal Project Team if amendments are needed, the trainee shall make the necessary amendments and re-submit the paper to the Assessor and reviewers for re-assessment.

### **Step 6**

If no reply or review report is received from the reviewer, within two months, the project will be handled by the Formal Project Team for review.

### **Step 7**

Trainees whose projects are accepted by the Board of Education shall be advised accordingly by the Formal Project Officer who shall also advise the Board of Censors at the same time on behalf of the Board of Education that the trainee has satisfied the Project requirement.



## **APPENDIX II- Procedure for appeal**

- 1) Upon rejection of formal project protocol or manuscript, the trainee has the option of appealing the decision process if s/he feels that the reason for rejection is unreasonable.
- 2) A formal appeal letter needs to be sent to the Formal Project Team. The appeal letter should contain a point-by-point response to the reviewer's comment and rebuttal explaining why the trainee thinks the decision should be reconsidered.
- 3) The Formal Project Team will independently review the formal project and the response letter.
- 4) The Formal Project Team will decide whether to send the formal project for a second opinion from another reviewer.
- 5) If the Formal Project Team feels that a second opinion is not warranted, decision to reject the formal protocol/manuscript will be made. This decision will be final and further appeals for the project will not be entertained.
- 6) The Formal Project Team may decide to send the protocol/manuscript for review by a second reviewer. The Formal Project Team would review the comments from both reviewers. The project will also be reviewed by the Formal Project Team. A decision would be made based on all the above information. The decision can include: 1) acceptance of the protocol/manuscript, 2) rejection of the project, or 3) revision and resubmission. Should the project be rejected, such a decision will be final and further appeals will not be entertained.
- 7) The Formal Project Team will be involved in the discussion and make the final decision.