

Ministry of Education

SOCIAL SCIENCE AND HUMANITIES RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP

Administrative Guidelines
for Applicants and Host Institutions

(With effect from 01 October 2026)

Social Science and Humanities Research Fellowship

CONTENTS

1.	Introduction	3
2.	Application, Evaluation and Award	3
3.	Disbursement of Funds	5
4.	Performance Management	7
5.	Data-Sharing	8
6.	Acknowledgement Guidelines	8
7.	Training & Education Programmes	9
8.	Grant Variation	9
9.	Compliance of Administrative Guidelines.....	10
10.	Miscellaneous.....	10

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Social Science and Humanities Research Fellowship (“SSHR Fellowship”) provides opportunities for promising Singaporean researchers to conduct independent, high-quality social science and humanities research (SSHR) in the early stages of their academic career.
- 1.2. The SSHR Fellowship is awarded by the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) on a competitive basis to suitable social science and humanities researchers in the Autonomous Universities (AUs) in Singapore.
- 1.3. The awardee of the SSHR Fellowship (“Awardee”) will be the Principal Investigator for the research project submitted as part of the application for the SSHR Fellowship.
- 1.4. The award of the SSHR Fellowship, including the research project supported under the SSHR Fellowship, will be subject to the “Guidelines for the Management of Research Grants” stipulated in Enclosure 1 and “Terms and Conditions of a Competitive Grant” (“Terms and Conditions”) stipulated in Enclosure 2.
- 1.5. Further instructions specific to the application and award of the SSHR Fellowship, and the grant administration procedures to be adhered to by the Awardees of the SSHR Fellowship are provided below.

2. Application, Evaluation and Award

Application

- 2.1. Applicants must hold a full-time faculty appointment at the Host Institution at the time of application for the SSHR Fellowship. For applicants who are designated for a faculty appointment at the time of application, the Host Institution may provide a letter of undertaking signed by the Faculty Dean or Head of Department stating that the applicant will be employed as a full-time faculty member in a designated department or faculty/school by the time the SSHR Fellowship is awarded, should the applicant be successful in his/her application. For applicants from Host Institutions with a tenure system, their faculty appointment must be a tenure-track appointment.
- 2.2. Applicants must be nominated by their Host Institution for the SSHR

Fellowship. Applications for the SSHR Fellowship must be endorsed by the Host Institution's Provost and Director of Research (or equivalent) who is registered with the Ministry of Education (MOE) (in Section 8 and Section 9 of the SSHR Fellowship Application Form respectively).

- 2.3. Applicants who are awarded the SSHR Fellowship may work in partnership or collaboration with any other organisation locally or overseas as part of the supported research project, subject to the "Guidelines for the Management of Research Grants" stipulated in Enclosure 1 and "Terms and Conditions of a Competitive Grant" ("Terms and Conditions") stipulated in Enclosure 2.
- 2.4. Applicants are not allowed to submit the same research proposal to the SSHR Fellowship and other grants concurrently, i.e., parallel submissions are not allowed.
- 2.5. Applicants must declare if they have submitted similar proposals before, and highlight any substantial changes¹. If they do not do so, their proposals may not be viewed favourably.
- 2.6. MOE will communicate directly with the Host Institution's ORE for all SSHR Fellowship applications. Any clarifications on the applications (including the research project proposal) shall be done within the grant call prior to the final award decision. Applicants should not communicate with MOE directly, unless approached by MOE.
- 2.7. The Host Institution may nominate candidates who were nominated before and not selected for the SSHR Fellowship. The Host Institution is required to justify why the candidate should be re-considered for the SSHR Fellowship.

Evaluation and Award

- 2.8. Applications for the award of the SSHR Fellowship will be evaluated by the SSRC.
- 2.9. The SSHR Fellowship will not support research projects that already receive other sources of direct public funding.
- 2.10. The Host Institution will be notified of the results of its candidates' application for the SSHR Fellowship through its ORE. Appeals for

¹ Examples of substantial changes could include: (i) using a similar methodological approach for a substantially different question, and (ii) using a very different methodological approach to address a similar issue.

unsuccessful applications will not be entertained.

- 2.11. In the event that the ethics and other research-related approvals are withdrawn or suspended, affected Awardees are to inform MOE, through their ORE, of such decisions immediately. MOE reserves the right to withhold funding if these approvals are not obtained, withdrawn or suspended.
- 2.12. MOE reserves the right to terminate the SSHR Fellowship, including the research grant, if the SSHR Fellowship Awardee's employment with the Host Institution is terminated, either by way of resignation or for any other reasons.

Privacy and Confidentiality

- 2.13. Submission of the SSHR Fellowship application and information within is voluntary. Failure to provide full and complete information, however, may reduce the probability of receiving an award. MOE reserves the right to disclose information submitted to members of the SSRC, staff assistants, expert panellists and other government agencies as part of the review and selection process. Information about the researchers may be used to select potential candidates to serve as future peer reviewers or advisory committee members with or without accreditation to the research proposal or application for the SSHR Fellowship.
- 2.14. The informed consent process should include, where appropriate, explicit provisions for sharing of data for wider or future research use to maximise the value of the data, while providing adequate safeguards for human subjects.

3. Disbursement of Funds

- 3.1. The SSHR Fellowship research project should start within 6 months of the Letter of Award² to the Host Institution, otherwise the SSHR Fellowship award would be considered as lapsed.
- 3.2. The Host Institution and Awardees should not commit to any expenditure before receiving the funding approval from MOE. Similarly, the Host Institution and Awardees should not commit to any expenditure after the SSHR Fellowship project end date.

² The Letter of Award refers to the letter/email that MOE sends to the Host Institution's President after the award of the SSHR Fellowships, conveying the specific budget approved for funding for each research project.

- 3.3. The Host Institution and Awardees are to follow the Host Institution's procurement procedures and guidelines to ensure that all purchases made using the SSHR Fellowship research grant are value-for-money and processes are transparent.
- 3.4. The Host Institution is required to ensure that there are **adequate internal financial controls and processes as well as adequate cost control measures to ensure that resources are utilised prudently.**
- 3.5. The SSHR Fellowship grant is provided on a reimbursement basis. The Host Institution should therefore pay for the expenditure incurred for approved projects first, and subsequently claim for reimbursement from MOE. The grant disbursement for indirect cost (IRC) will be based on the actual expenditure. Actual expenditure (direct cost and IRC) for projects should exclude commitments.

Research Scholarships

- 3.6. The existing policies that apply to students on MOE Postgraduate by Research (PGR) scholarships would similarly apply to students funded under the SSHR Fellowship awards. These include, but are not limited to, policies on stipend differentiation and the Graduate Assistantship Programme (GAP).
- 3.7. Funding for research scholarship under the SSHR Fellowship is applicable only to National University of Singapore (NUS), Nanyang Technological University (NTU), Singapore Management University (SMU), Singapore Institute of Technology (SIT) (Industrial Masters' and Industrial Doctorate only), Singapore University of Social Sciences (SUSS), and Singapore University of Technology & Design (SUTD), and duration of funding is capped at the project duration. Funding should only be used to cover tuition fees and stipends, in line with research scholarships funded by the MOE Research Scholarship Block and Academic Research Fund. Research scholarship funding is ring-fenced and cannot be transferred to other categories.
- 3.8. The Host Institution shall continue to manage the transition of students from PGR scholarship under the SSHR Fellowship to RSB once the project scholarship funding expires at the end of the project or when the SSHR Fellowship PGR scholarship budget has exhausted, whichever earlier.
- 3.9. In addition, students on PGR scholarships funded under the SSHR

Fellowship are not permitted to be concurrently employed (and receive salaries) on other MOE-funded grants, i.e., there should be no double-dipping of stipend and salary from MOE-funded grants.

Indirect Costs

- 3.10. MOE will support indirect research costs (IRC) at a flat rate of 30%³ of the total qualifying direct costs (less research scholarships⁴) of each approved research project under the SSHR Fellowship. The IRC should be budgeted within the overall cap of the SSHR Fellowship grant (up to S\$1M).

4. Performance Management

Annual Reports

- 4.1. The Host Institution shall ensure that the Awardees submit soft copies of their annual progress reports for each project using the Research Grant Forms (RGF4A – Annual Progress Report Form and RGF4B - Annual Progress Report Performance Review Form) via its ORE. The ORE should collate and submit all endorsed soft copies of progress reports to MOE.
- 4.2. These annual progress reports may be reviewed by the SSRC or an appointed review panel to assess the progress of the project. The Host Institution shall ensure that the Awardees are aware of their responsibilities to make a presentation of their interim research findings or progress to the SSRC or MOE's appointed review panel, or give additional information about the progress of the project if the information submitted is deemed to be inadequate.
- 4.3. Awardees who fail to submit the annual progress reports may be denied any grant disbursement, variation and/or extension until such progress reports are submitted.
- 4.4. Projects ending within three (3) months from the end of the reporting FY (i.e. 1 Jan – 30 Jun) are not required to submit the annual progress report. Progress within this period shall be accounted for in the Final Report instead. E.g. a project with end date falling within 1 Jan 2027 – 30 Jun 2027 will not be required to submit an Annual Progress Report by 31 May 2027, but will submit the Final Report in the same year instead.

³The rate of IRC funding is subject to revision at MOE's discretion.

⁴ Research scholarships funding is ring-fenced and cannot be transferred to other cost categories.

Final Reports and Closure of Accounts

- 4.5. The Host Institution shall ensure that the Awardees submit soft copies of their final report for each project using the Research Grant Forms (RGF5A - Final Report Form and RGF5B - Final Report Performance Review Form). The Host Institution should also ensure that the Awardees make a presentation on the completed research project to the SSRC or MOE's appointed review panel, if required.
- 4.6. The Host Institution's Office of Finance should use the Research Grant Form (RGF6 – Closing of Research Project Account) to close the account for the SSHR Fellowship project and return unspent funds to MOE, if any, upon completion of the project.

5. Data-Sharing

- 5.1 Subject to restrictions related to research ethics, confidentiality and intellectual property (IP), all data generated from research funded by the SSHR Fellowship should be made available to user communities at the earliest feasible opportunity. This would generally be no later than the release through publication of the study's main findings, or in line with established best practices in the respective fields.

6. Acknowledgement Guidelines⁵

- 6.1 All Institutions should attribute their awards/grants to the Social Science Research Council (Singapore) and the Ministry of Education, Singapore.
- 6.2 Where possible, the acknowledgement statement should follow:
"This research / project is supported by the Social Science Research Council (Singapore) and administered by the Ministry of Education, Singapore), under its <name of funding programme> (XX Award <ref no>, if applicable)⁶.

If there is more than one funding source, the names of each source of funding are to be placed in order of the funding value.

- 6.3 Where applicable, the following disclaimer must be included in all published materials arising from the Research:
"Any opinions, findings and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not reflect the views of

⁵ Paras 6.2 and 6.3 supersede paras 44 and 45 of Guidelines on the Management of Competitive R&D Grants".

⁶ This shall be based on the grant award reference number, as indicated in the Letter of Award.

the Social Science Research Council (Singapore) and the Ministry of Education (Singapore).”

7. Training & Education Programmes

7.1. Wherever necessary, the SSRC or MOE may request the Awardees and/or the research team to participate in education-related programmes, such as:

7.1.1. Presenting their research work in MOE schools, institutions of higher learning or public outreach activities; and

7.1.2. Supporting MOE’s and the SSRC’s initiatives in developing the social science and humanities research ecosystem in Singapore.

8. Grant Variation

8.1. The Host Institution shall ensure that the Awardees submit all project and grant variation requests through its ORE, using the appropriate forms:

No.	Type of Variation	Form
1	Amendments to Projects	RGF1
2	Grant Variation	RGF2

8.2. It is the Host Institution’s responsibility to ensure that the Awardees refer to “Guidance for Processing Variation Requests” (in Annex A) in their preparation of the variation requests to ensure that all supporting documents have been duly completed.

8.3. The Host Institution’s ORE should evaluate the Awardees’ variation requests and make decisions on all requests that fall within the Host Institution’s approving authority. For requests that require MOE’s approval, the ORE should first evaluate the requests based on the considerations, norms and checks listed in Annex A and make recommendations for MOE’s consideration.

8.4. For all variation requests, MOE’s decision is final and appeals will not be considered. **Retrospective variation requests will not be allowed, unless there is compelling justification for submission of a late variation request.**

9. Compliance of Administrative Guidelines

9.1. In the event of non-compliance of these administrative guidelines, MOE reserves the right to:

9.1.1. Withhold or withdraw the funding;

9.1.2. Disqualify the Awardees from subsequent MOE competitive funding; and/or

9.1.3. Carry out any action as MOE deems appropriate.

10. Miscellaneous

10.1. Upon project award, it is the responsibility of the Awardees to obtain the necessary approvals from appropriate authorities before commencing any data collection. For instance, before collecting data from MOE schools (including MOE Kindergartens), Awardees must obtain approval from MOE, and comply with MOE's data collection requirements – for details, please contact:

MOE_Sch_Data_collection_request@moe.gov.sg.

10.2. MOE reserves the right to change, including without limitation, modify, delete or replace the information and materials set out in this document unilaterally. MOE shall notify the Host Institutions in writing, enclosing the revised terms and conditions, accordingly.

10.3. As and when directed by MOE, Host Institutions will allow an auditor appointed by MOE to carry out an audit of its financial and related processes/procedures pertaining to the utilisation of SSHR Fellowship.

**Guidance for Processing Variation Requests
(Effective from 01 October 2025)**

S/N	Type of request	Key considerations	Norms	Supporting document required	Types of checks by ORE
1	Virements	The critical role of the proposed items to project outcome and the reason it was not budgeted in original proposal	Fund virement is to support the project only, not for support of “follow-on” research ⁷ .	RGF2	RGF2 is duly completed and endorsed. All supporting document attached. Check is done on whether requested item is in the approved budget and whether requested item is fundable.
		Cost-savings principle	It is possible for PI to use cost-savings within approved project cost to purchase essential new items not previously budgeted. However, purchase must be based on needs; availability of savings is not a reason for new purchase.	Latest statement of account	Fund availability
				Relevant quotations	Reasonableness of quotes by cross-referencing similar purchase or independent checks Whether proposed purchase items are already available in Host Institution, or can be more cost-effectively leased.
		Eligibility	PIs with over-due annual progress and/or final reports are not allowed to submit any virement requests.	N.A.	The PI has no outstanding annual progress/final reports for any MOE grants. (PIs with overdue reports are not allowed to submit variation requests.)
1 a)	Virements into Expenditure on Manpower (EOM)	If new headcount is requested, PI has to explain the staff's job scope		Job scope of additional EOM	ORE needs to assess the reasonableness of request, e.g. the job scope is not too small for the headcount. If the need is short-term, ORE needs to assess if part-time manpower is more appropriate.

⁷ An exception is for PIs whose requests for 6-month extensions to explore additional scope are approved.

S/N	Type of request	Key considerations	Norms	Supporting document required	Types of checks by ORE
1 b)	Virements for Visiting Professor /Visitors ⁸	Relevance and contribution to project outcome	The need for VP/visitors must be driven by project need (e.g. not because AU requires VP to give public lecture or other non-project activities.)	Curriculum Vitae/bio of prospective candidate	ORE needs to assess the role and expertise of the visitor.
		Track record		Job scope/deliverables of VP	ORE needs to assess reasonableness of request, e.g. the job scope is commensurate with the duration requested. Particularly, ORE needs to assess if the work can be done via email/tele-video conferencing.
		Duration of stay	The job scope and deliverables of VP must be clear for assessment of the duration required of his/her service.		
2 a)	Project Extension	Impact on deliverables and usefulness of final research outcome in view of the delay	To ensure currency of research, extension will be capped at 6 months	Evidence of satisfactory progress (e.g. copies of publication arising from the research, abstracts of conferences attended etc)	For extension requests that are motivated by project delays, a cap of 3 months will be applied.
		Cost implications	Must be within approved budget.	Revised Project Implementation Schedule (Gantt Chart)	MOE may consider a no-cost extension of 6 months only if the PI is able to demonstrate excellent scientific progress. Such PIs can use this extension to explore follow-on research that is beyond the original scope of the project. As a general rule of thumb, the PI should have met the key project deliverables (i.e. publications and conferences) before submitting such requests. PI must submit a 1-page write-up on the additional research to be done during the extension.
2 b)	Change of scope	Change of scope to pursue different research objectives is not allowed; this should be submitted as a new proposal.		N.A.	N.A.

⁸ Visitors include staff who have short-term appointments with the AU and concurrently retain full-time positions overseas. This is regardless of the job title such staff may have (e.g. Research Fellow/Visiting Research Fellow) at the AU. Also includes speakers and participants of conferences/events organised as part of the programme.

S/N	Type of request	Key considerations	Norms	Supporting document required	Types of checks by ORE
2 c)	Post-project Conference Travel	Timing and importance of conference		Acceptance of conference presentation/paper.	The conference presentation/paper should be accepted before the project end-date. The conference is within 3 months from the project end-date. Variation request should be submitted to MOE within a month from the date the conference presentation/paper is accepted. ORE must confirm that the conference presentation arises from work supported by the grant. DOR/HOD should explain why it is important for the PI to participate in the conference.
2 d)	Change of Autonomous University by the PI	Impact on the project		Variation request endorsed by DORs of both the original and new AU. Transition plan, showing how the transfer will take place with minimal disruption.	ORE needs to assess the feasibility of the transition plan.
2 e)	Termination	Alternative options to termination	Other options should be explored to ensure that the best outcome is achieved with the investment already made.	Department report: Department should prepare a report that includes: • A review of what went wrong for the project. • What are the alternatives to terminations and why they are not applicable in this case. • Preventive measures to avoid future occurrence. The report should be signed off by both the dean of department and the director of research.	ORE to assess the adequacy of the winding-down plan and the Department report.
		Orderly conclusion of project	A winding-down budget should be drawn up for MOE's consideration. This covers expenses necessary to effect an orderly conclusion, for a period not exceeding 3 months from the date of termination.		