

SPECIALTY BOARD

**PREPARATORY WORKSHOP
ON RESEARCH SEGMENT**

17 APRIL 2026

Prof Martin Wong
Coordinator, Research Segment

Guidelines on Exit Exam

Please take a reference from our college website:

www.hkcfp.org.hk

**Education & Examinations → Exit Examination
(for current examination 2026S)**

Page 6-7

Page 23 -27

Starting a Research Project

- Original work
- Candidate = principal investigator
- Same project cannot be submitted by any other candidate.
- Form a **research team** (involve your supervisor)
- Seek approval from your practice boss/ COS/ department

1st Year

May 2022	Preparatory workshop for Exit Exam
Mar- June	Literature review, identify and refine research question and draft research protocol (4 months)
July 31	Deadline for submitting Ethics Approval (IRB/ REC) (allow 2-3 months)
Aug/Sep	Exit Exam Clinical Audit and Research Forum
Sep	Commence data collection (6 months)
late October	Deadline for submitting Research Seeding Fund

Ethics Approval for Research Study

- MUST seek Ethics Approval from a recognized Ethics Committee before starting your study.
 - HA, DH or universities.
- Candidates must **submit** the supporting document(s) with the Research Report
 - Be disqualified if failed to do so
 - **Date of ethics approval** must be sought **within 3 years** before the application deadline of Exit Examination.

Sample of Ethics Approval Letter



HONG KONG EAST CLUSTER
港島東醫院聯網



Ethics Committee, HKEC
3 Lok Man Road,
Chai Wan
Hong Kong

10 May 20xx

(Candidate's Name)
Resident Trainee

Dept. of Family Medicine and Primary Healthcare
HKEC

Ref: HKEC-20xx-021

Dear Dr. _____,

The Ethics Committee (EC) of HKEC is authorized by the Cluster Chief Executive to review and monitor clinical research. It serves to ensure that research complies with the Declaration of Helsinki, ICH GCP Guidelines, local regulations and HA policy. It has the authority to approve, require modifications in (to secure approval), or disapprove research. This Committee has power to terminate/suspend a research at any time if there is evidence to indicate that the above principles and requirements have been violated.

The Committee has reviewed your research application dated 29 March 20xx by an expedited process, and reached the following decision basing on the documents submitted.

The Committee approves your application and the following documents, and requires you to adhere to the attached conditions:


Title of Study	(Research Title)
List of investigators	1. _____, Resident Trainee, Dept. of Family Medicine and Primary Healthcare, HKEC. 2. _____, Associate Consultant, Dept. of Family Medicine and Primary Healthcare, HKEC. 3. _____, Associate Consultant, Dept. of Family Medicine and Primary Healthcare, HKEC.
Protocol title and version	Research Protocol (Feb 20xx)
Consent Form versions	N.A.

Information sheet title and versions	N.A.
Certificate of indemnity/insurance	N.A.
Other Documents	Questionnaire (English & Chinese versions)
Conditions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The Principal Investigator is responsible and accountable for the confidentiality of the personal data of the study subjects they hold. The Principal Investigator must also ensure that there is appropriate arrangement to protect the security of personal data when it is stored, sent or received. Apply a clinical trial certificate from department of health if applicable. Do not deviate from, or make changes to the study protocol without prior written EC approval, except when it is necessary to eliminate immediate hazards to research subjects or when the change involves only logistical or administrative issues. Report the following to EC: (i) study protocol or consent document change (use 'HKECRE001F7'), (ii) serious adverse event (use 'HKECRE001F8'), (iii) study progress (use 'HKECRE001F9'), (iv) new information that may be relevant to a subject's willingness to continue participation in the study, (v) final report upon completion of study (use 'HKECRE001F9b'). Report first study progress to EC by 9 May 20 and thereafter at 12 monthly intervals until study closure. Submit Research Final Report Form (use 'HKECRE001F9b') to EC upon completion of study.

* Download forms from the HKEC intranet for use

Please report the progress of the study according to the time schedule stipulated in Clause 5 of Conditions shown above for the Cluster REC to consider whether the approval status can be maintained. Upon completion of the study, kindly furnish the EC with a final report using the form mentioned in Clause 6 of Conditions.

Yours sincerely,


Dr. Loletta SO
for Chairman of EC, HKEC

cc. COS(FM&PHC), HKEC

Research Funding

HKCFP Trainees Research Fund 2026 or
all registered HKCFP trainees four awards

HKCFP Research Seed Fund 2026

All HKCFP members

Please contact College if you are interested in.

2nd Year

March- May

Data Analysis (3 months)

June - August

Writing full report (draft) + Submit to supervisor for comments

August/Sep
(TBC in 2026)

Exit Exam Clinical Audit and Research Forum

August

Pre-Exit Exam Workshop

Early January

Submit for Exit Examination

Format of the Research Report

- **2,500 – 4,000 words** (excluding the Abstract, References and Acknowledgements)
- **Abstract < 250 words**
Objective, Design, Subjects, Main Outcome Measures, Results, and Conclusions
< 5 keywords
- **Max: 6 Graphs + 6 tables + 15-30 references**
- **Abbreviations should be spelt in full when first used.**
- **No** names of the practice, the candidate and his/her supervisor

Format of Main Text

- (<https://www.bmj.com/about-bmj/resources-authors/house-style>)
- **Introduction** background and objectives
- **Method** Subjects, Study Design and Measurements, Interventions, Outcomes, and Statistical Methods
- **Results**
- **Discussion**
- **Conclusions**

Format of Main Text

- **References** (Vancouver style, Journal titles abbreviated = Index Medicus Style, up to 3 authors/editors: et al.)

https://www.nlm.nih.gov/bsd/uniform_requirements.html

- **Acknowledgements**
- **Appendix** All study instrument and questionnaire should be send in as part of the appendices

Plagiarism

- *Zero tolerance*
- *NOT allow plagiarism or AI generated outputs*
- *All reports will be checked by the Veriguide*
- *https://veriguide1.cse.cuhk.edu.hk/portal/plagiarism_detection/register.jsp*
- *Definition of plagiarism: refer to exit exam guideline → P.7 suggested reading (Ref. 1)*

What is Plagiarism?

- *FP Links April 2026 issue*
- *Written by Dr Eric KP LEE*

RESEARCH MADE EASY

Plagiarism: A Serious Offence in Medicine and Academia

Dr. Eric K P LEE

Clinical Associate Professor, JCSPHPC, The Chinese University of Hong Kong
Member, Research Segment Subcommittee, Specialty Board

What is plagiarism?

Plagiarism occurs when someone presents another person's ideas, words, data, or work as their own without proper acknowledgement. This includes copying text verbatim without quotation and citation, paraphrasing ideas without crediting the original source, submitting work written by someone else, re using one's own previously submitted work without adequate acknowledgement (i.e. self plagiarism), or providing incomplete or inaccurate citations. All forms of plagiarism, including "accidental" ones, misrepresent authorship and constitute academic dishonesty.

Why is plagiarism harmful?

Plagiarism is a form of intellectual theft and a serious breach of professional ethics. In academic and medical settings, it undermines integrity, erodes trust between students, teachers, clinicians, and researchers, and compromises the credibility of scientific work. For students and doctor trainees, plagiarism bypasses the learning process entirely, creates a false sense of competence, and may ultimately result in unearned or misleading academic or professional credentials or qualifications. Widespread plagiarism ultimately stifles the development of new ideas and undermines the advancement of research and new knowledge.

International standards reinforce its seriousness - the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) considers plagiarism a violation of authorship and scientific integrity, while Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) distinguishes between minor plagiarism (e.g., a few uncited sentences) and major plagiarism (e.g. copying substantial portions of text or ideas).¹

How is plagiarism detected?

Although hints of plagiarism (e.g. inconsistencies in writing and referencing style) can sometimes be noticed manually, it is most commonly identified using specialised detection software such as Turnitin, SafeAssign, Scribbr, and, in Hong Kong, VeriGuide. These systems compare submitted work against vast databases of websites, published literature, and previous student submissions. They also analyse sentence structure, enabling detection of both direct copying and poorly executed paraphrasing. A similarity index is typically generated by these programs - Although there is no universal "safe" threshold, similarity above roughly 15-25% often prompts manual review to decide whether plagiarism is present.

What are the consequences?

Because plagiarism is a breach of integrity rather than a simple academic mistake, consequences can be severe. Students and trainees may receive a zero on an assignment, fail a course, or in serious cases be suspended or dismissed

from their programme. Records of misconduct may affect future applications for training or postgraduate opportunities.

In clinical and professional settings, any form of dishonesty (including plagiarism) raises concerns about an individual's suitability to practise and may trigger formal fitness-to-practise investigations. For medical doctors, and doctors-in-training, plagiarism can therefore have far-reaching consequences. These may include failure of the affected assignment or training rotation, removal from training programmes, and disciplinary action by medical councils—up to and including suspension or permanent removal from the medical register. Additional repercussions may involve termination of employment, reputational damage within the profession, and in some cases mandatory remediation or professional training. A well-documented example occurred in the UK in 2016, when psychiatrist Dr. Alveni Ramanujam was permanently struck off the medical register for repeated plagiarism and dishonesty in both academic work and clinical documentation.²

How to avoid plagiarism?

A simple guiding principle applies: if an idea, phrase, or sentence did not originate from you, give proper credit. When paraphrasing, read the source, set it aside, and rewrite the idea in your own sentence structure before citing it. Use quotation marks whenever wording is reproduced exactly. Avoid "patchwriting," where copied fragments are lightly edited and stitched together, and never reuse your own previous work without explicit permission and acknowledgement. Remember that images, figures, tables, and diagrams also require proper citation, and in many cases copyright permission. Using essay writing services or "paper mills" is strictly prohibited.


Be especially cautious when using AI tools such as ChatGPT or Grammarly: AI generated text may contain fabricated references, incorrect paraphrases, or unattributed source material. Submitting such text without verification is considered academic misconduct.

Finally, always screen your work using tools such as VeriGuide before submission. If your writing may resemble work by senior colleagues that is not publicly available, you may upload those documents to the system to avoid inadvertent similarity.

For a more detailed description of plagiarism, the readers may visit a dedicated webpage of the University of Oxford (<https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/skills/plagiarism>).

Reference:

1. COPE Council. COPE Flowcharts and infographics – Plagiarism in a published article – English. <https://doi.org/10.24318/cope.2019.2.2>
2. Dyer, Clara. "Psychiatrist Struck off for Repeated Plagiarism." *BMJ* 2016; 354 doi: <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.4872>

	VeriGuide Basic (Free Trial)	VeriGuide Academic
		
	Single User Account	Single Campus Account
User type	Individual student, teacher, etc	Principal/head of university, high school, etc
Originality checking	✓	✓
Readability analysis	✓	✓
Assignment collection	✗	✓
Originality report quota	3	No limit
Files per submission	1	No limit
Help desk for account owner	✓	✓
Extended help desk for teachers and students	✗	✓
	FREE TRIAL	PAID

Please note that the above services details are for references only. Please refer to our terms and conditions when you use or purchase our service.

Assessment Criteria

Background (20%)

- Research topic, question(s), aim(s) and objective(s)
- Originality, new knowledge / uniqueness
- Relevance and importance to HK practice and family medicine
- Critical review of background literature (update)

Methodology (30%)

- Appropriate for the research question(s)
- Sampling method (sample size calculation)
- Outcome measures
- Data collection
- Statistical tests & analysis of results (descriptive statistics, student-t test, chi square tests, logistic / liner regression...)

Assessment Criteria

Results (20%)

- Study population characteristics/ comparison
- Highlight of the results: significant + ve and – ve results
- Tables and charts

Discussion (20%)

- Compare (same/difference) results with previous literature (Vs background)
- impact of the research
- Strength and Limitation
- Application of results in daily practice/ family medicine
- Future research

Presentation (10%)

- Use of English (software checking, e.g. word, grammarly...)
- Copyediting (font style, size, spacing, paragraphing, table format, labelling)
- Reference list numbering, format

Dissemination of Research Report

1. HKCFP primary care conference
2. Overseas conference
3. HA convention
4. Submission to Hong Kong Practitioners

Suggested Reading:

1. *Plagiarism. University of Oxford. Available at: <https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/skills/plagiarism> . Accessed on 08 April 2025.*
2. *Robert H. Fletcher, Suzanne W. Fletcher, Grant S. Fletcher. Clinical Epidemiology – The Essentials. 5th Edition Philadelphia: Wolters Kluwer Health/Lippincott Williams & Wilkins, 2014*
3. *Geoffrey R. Norman and David L. Streiner, Biostatistics: The Bare Essentials, 4th Edition. Shelton, Connecticut : People's Medical Publishing House-USA, 2014*
4. *Peter Norton , Moira Stewart, Martin Bass etal Research methods for primary care vol 1 1991 Sage publications*
5. *Leon Gordis, Epidemiology. W B Saunders, 4th Edition, 2008 Robert*
6. *H. Fletcher, Suzanne W. Fletcher, Edward H. Wagner. Clinical Epidemiology – The Essentials. 5th Edition, 2005*
7. *Leon Gordis, Epidemiology, 3rd Edition. Philadelphia: Elsevier Saunders 2013*
8. *Marcello Pagano, Kimberlee Gauvreau, Principles of Biostatistics, 2nd Edition. Australia; Pacific Grove, CA: Duxbury, 2000*
9. *Rosaline S. Barbour, Introducing qualitative research. A student's Guide by Rosaline Barbour. 2nd edition. 2014 SAGE Publications Inc*

Research Workshop by HKAM

“Enhancing Professional Research Skills: Training Workshops for Medical Practitioners in Hong Kong”

- **16-hour research training programme is meant to cover the essentials of performing research projects.**
- **Details & Teaching Materials of the training programme provided by the HKAM**



- **The trainee may login eHKAM LMS, register, and open accounts to access to the speakers’ speeches. Trainees from all 15 Colleges of the HKAM may join free-of-charge.**
- **Info of new 2026 intake will be updated in due course**

If you have any queries....

Please contact the Secretariat of Specialty Board

Tel: 2871 8899

alkyyu@hkcfp.org.hk or exit@hkcfp.org.hk

Thank You!