香港教育大學
The Education University of Hong Kong

EDuce | EASE Fund
EdUHK Entrepreneurship Development Unit
Community • Empowerment

THE EDUCATION UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

The EdUHK Education+ and Social Entrepreneurs (EASE) Fund

(2026/2027)

Application Guidelines

1. About EASE Fund Scheme

The **Education+ and Social Entrepreneurs (EASE) Fund Scheme,** is a seed funding scheme set up by the Knowledge Transfer Office (KT Office) of The Education University of Hong Kong, aims to create and promote a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship in EdUHK community; to support students and alumni to pursue their dreams and creations by starting up a *sustainable* venture; and to provide a new channel to transfer EdUHK knowledge and research outcomes into real applications to benefit the society.

The EASE Fund Scheme **is formerly named as EdUHK Education And Social Entrepreneurs Fund** in 2018 which focuses on ***EdTech, education innovation and social innovation***. As EdUHK KT Office would like to support more students and alumni in pursuing their entrepreneurial dream, it has been decided to rebrand the EASE fund to **Education+ and Social Entrepreneurs (EASE) Fund Scheme in 2022. Any EdUHK students and alumni with a start-up idea are welcome to apply for EASE Fund.**

The EASE Fund Scheme will continue to serve as a 'platform' to cultivate innovation and entrepreneurship within EdUHK community with

(i) well-structured workshops to support (potential) candidates understanding the life of entrepreneurs and determining if they would like to take the challenge; identifying what obstacles start-ups usually face and how to tackle them; and equipping those determined to start their ventures with all necessary entrepreneur skills for them to start their entrepreneur journey; and

(ii) year-round consultations sessions and mentorship support for advice on turning their ideas into viable business plans, team formation, and preparation for external funding opportunities etc.

KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER OFFICE 知識轉移處

2. Scheme Objectives

The EASE Fund is the first entrepreneurship funding scheme in EdUHK, which aims to:

- Provide seed grant to EdUHK students and alumni to set up companies/social enterprises;
- Create innovative products and services or implement new concepts to bring innovations to meet societal needs and challenges, and create impact in the society;
- Bring new career and personal development opportunities to EdUHK students and alumni;
- Establish a culture of entrepreneurship and social innovation in EdUHK; and
- Build up a channel of transferring EdUHK knowledge and research results into applications via students and alumni.

The fund should not be considered as an investment to sustain an existing business. Rather, interested start-ups should aim at continuation through self-financing or financial supports from other funding sources.

3. Eligibility

a) Application must be made on a team basis (i.e. more than one person) with a team leader.
b) The team can be comprised of students, staff, alumni and friends of EdUHK.
c) The team leader must be student (full-time or part-time) or alumnus of EdUHK. The team leader must be pursuing or secured a postgraduate degree/diploma, undergraduate degree, associate degree or any other qualifications offered by EdUHK.
d) An eligible applicant can only be the team leader of **ONE** application in the same cohort.
e) Each team MUST include at least one EdUHK academic or teaching staff as an advisor without taking any ownership of the start-up. Both full-time and part-time (including visiting) staff are eligible.
f) The team leader shall be the person-in-charge of the company, who shall:
    - Have substantial control (≥ 20% of ownership) of the company;
    - Be engaged in the company's business in a senior position;
    - Play a major role in the decision and execution of the company; and
    - Be reachable during normal business hours.
g) EdUHK Team Leader and Team members (inc. EdUHK students, EdUHK staff and EdUHK alumni) must hold majority shares (≥ 51% in total) of the company.
h) If the team has already formed a company, the company must not be registered for more than 2 years as of the EASE Fund Scheme application deadline.
i) Companies previously funded by EASE Fund Scheme since 2018/19 are not eligible for application.

4. Fund Arrangement

a) Each successful team can be awarded funding and support up to HK$300,000.
b) The funding amount shall be subject to the successful team's final budget plan to be agreed by a vetting panel. The decision of the vetting panel is final and conclusive.
c) The fund will be transferred to the successful applicant's company bank account by installments upon achieving pre-agreed milestones. EdUHK KT Office and HKSTP reserve the final decision of funding and support.
d) The fund may be used for
   - Operating expenses of the start-up, such as staffing, training, rental, management fee, legal services, accounting services, and other daily office expenses;
   - Expenditures directly related to the development, implementation, marketing, and commercialization of the proposed products and/or services; and
   - Essential office equipment.
e) The winning team should have company registered in *Hong Kong* before receiving the fund.
f) The fund cannot be used to cover any expenses related to company business registration.
g) The fund cannot be used to pay the salaries of the team leader and team members.

5. Assessment Criteria

Applications will be assessed based on:

- Innovation and Creativity (30 points);
- Feasibility and Sustainability of the Business Model (30 points);
- Professional Capability of the Team and Proposed Partner(s) (20 points); and
- Social Impact/Beneficiaries/Corporate Social Responsibility (20 points).

6. Application Procedures

Eligible applicants should read this guideline, submit the completed online application form, Business Pitch Deck and Copies of related documents to KT Office **via the application link *on or before 12:00 noon, 10 November 2026 (Tuesday).***

Interested parties with preliminary ideas are welcome to discuss with the Entrepreneurship Development Unit (EDuce), KT Office for advice and comments before submission.

Late applications will NOT be considered.

7. Applicant Engagements and Reports

Applicants shall submit application forms according to section 6 of this Application Guidelines.

The EASE Fund applications will be assessed in stages. All applications will first be screened and assessed by the assessment panel based on the submitted business pitch deck. Selected applicants will be invited to present their business proposals to the assessment panel in the 2nd Stage.

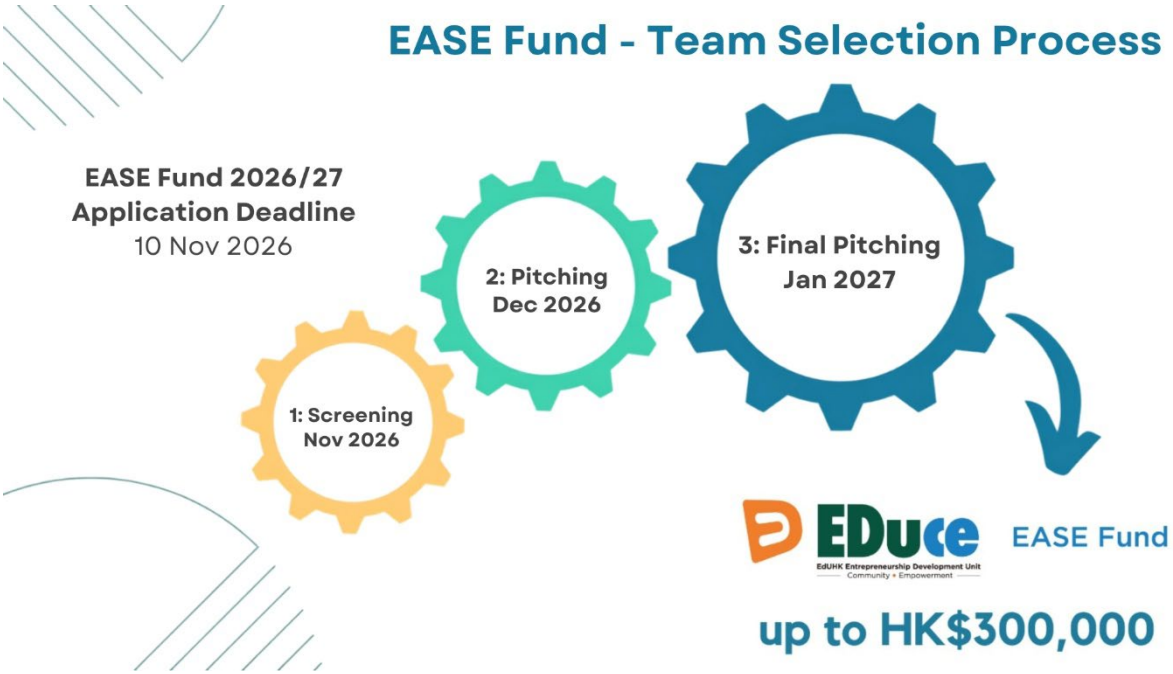
Selected finalist teams will be invited to deliver a final presentation in the 3rd Stage to a panel comprising internal and external reviewers.

After the final stage, each award-winning team shall develop a budget plan and project milestones for approval by the joint vetting panel prior to the disbursement of funding. Applicants shall participate in seminars, workshops, training sessions, consultations, and other activities organised under the EASE Fund Scheme.

During the funding period, the award-winning teams shall submit progress reports and final report to the KT Office. Each start-up has to submit audited financial reports, on an annual basis, to the KT Office.

Final funding decision is subject to the vetting panel's evaluation. Appeal or request for explanation of the decision will NOT be considered.

8. Assessment:



9. Enquiries

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Frequently Asked Questions

Eligibility

Q1: Can Postgraduate Diploma in Education Programmes "PGDE" students and alumni apply for the EASE Fund?

Ans: Yes, all students/alumni who are pursuing or secured a postgraduate degree/diploma, undergraduate degree, associate degree or any other qualifications offered by EdUHK and meeting the requirements in section 3 of this Application Guidelines can apply for the EASE Fund.

Q2: Can research students apply for the EASE Fund?

Ans: Yes, students/alumni of both research postgraduate programmes and taught postgraduate programmes meeting the requirements in section 3 of this Application Guidelines can apply for the EASE Fund.

Q3: Can EdUHK staff apply for the EASE Fund?

Ans: Yes, EdUHK staff can apply for the EASE Fund as a team member.
If the staff is a *team member* of an application who would keep his/her job in EdUHK while taking a KEY position in the start-up company, he/she has to follow the rules and regulations governing outside activities of EdUHK staff and seek approval

Q4: Are non-local students eligible for the EASE Fund (2023-24)?

Ans: Yes, non-local students who are pursing or have secured any academic qualification in EdUHK are eligible to apply. However, exchange students are not eligible.
Please note that the successful applicants have to establish and register a company in Hong Kong. Non-local students have to clear the visa, immigration, tax and any other related issues by themselves.

Q5: My proposal is receiving other funding(s). Can I apply the EASE Fund with the same proposal?

Ans: As long as your companies are not funded by the past EASE Fund scheme before and your application meets all the eligibility and requirements of EASE Fund, you can apply it with the same proposal. However, you should check carefully if your current funding party has any restrictions on applying for another funding.

Team Formation

Q6: ***Are there any restrictions on the number of team members?***

Ans: Yes, the applicant must form a team of ***at least*** two people. There is no restriction on the maximum number of team members, but it is recommended to form a team with 3~5 team members whose skills and backgrounds are complementary to each other.

Q7: ***Can I form team with non-EdUHK member(s)?***

Ans: Yes, you can form team with non-EdUHK member(s). However, the team leader must be an eligible student/alumnus of EdUHK meeting the requirements in section 3 of this Application Guidelines.

Q8: ***Can I change team members during the application period?***

Ans: No, you are not expected to change your team members after submission of application unless with very strong justifications for the KT Office's approval.

Q9: ***Can I submit more than one application?***

Ans: No, each team leader can only submit one application.

Q10: ***Each team must include an EdUHK staff as an advisor. Any restrictions on the type of staff?***

Ans: At least one of the advisors must be an EdUHK academic staff or teaching staff. Both full-time and part-time (including visiting) staff are eligible.

Application and Evaluation

Q11: What documents should I submit?

Ans: You have to complete an online application form "*Application for The EdUHK Entrepreneurship+ And Social Enterprise (EASE) Fund"* which should include (i) a pitch deck of your proposed business, (ii) CVs of all team members, (iii) HKID card copies of all team members, and (iv) proof of EdUHK students/alumni/staff status for all team members and advisor(s), if any (student/staff ID cards and/or graduation certificates).

Q12: What is the evaluation process?

Ans: The evaluation process has three phases:

The 1st stage – The KT Office will check the eligibility of all applications. Pitch deck will be assessed by the assessment panel. Shortlisted teams can enter the 2nd stage assessment. We will have a resurrection match for teams who are not shortlisted to refine their pitch deck and compete for a chance to enter 2nd stage assessment.

The 2nd stage – Teams selected for 2nd stage assessment have to submit detailed proposals and deliver presentations to the 2nd stage assessment panel.

The Final stage – Finalist teams will deliver a final presentation to a panel composed of internal and external reviewers.

Q13: Can a research student apply the EASE Fund with his/her research project?

Ans: Yes, a research student can render his/her research work into a business/social venture proposal for the EASE Fund. Please note that if the Intellectual Property (IP) rights of the research works are owned by EdUHK. Student has to (1) ask for the consent from his/her principal investigator, and (2) come up with a licensing agreement with EdUHK.

Q14: Can the execution of the EASE Fund awarding project be counted as my honours project/final year project/field experience?

Ans: It shall be subject to the decision of individual programmes. You have to check with your department/project supervisor. Please note that if the Intellectual Property (IP) rights of the project works are owned by EdUHK. Student has to (1) ask for the consent from his/her principal investigator, and (2) come up with a licensing agreement with EdUHK.

Intellectual Property Rights

Q15: What is intellectual property (IP)?

Ans: The common IP types include patents, copyrights, trademarks, registered designs, and trade secrets. Patents, trademarks, and registered designs are all registrable, providing that certain requirements are fulfilled. Copyright and trade secrets exist through statute and are granted autonomously. Please contact the KT Office staff with details in section 9 of this Application Guidelines if you have any queries.

Q16: How is the ownership of any IP generated by my team during the EASE Fund Scheme?

Ans: EdUHK will not claim any ownership of IP generated by the EASE Fund funding team using the EASE Fund.

Q17: If I have to use EdUHK's IP in my proposal, what should I do?

Ans: You should discuss with the principal investigator of the IP and obtain his/her written consent before submitting your application. Documentary proof on confirming the use of EdUHK IP, such as signed licensing/consultancy/partnership project agreement or letter of intent, must be provided before you can be confirmed as the EASE Fund awardee.

Q18: How can I identify EdUHK-owned IPs that may be relevant to my proposal?

Ans: EdUHK continuously develops new intellectual property (IP) and research outputs. Applicants who are interested in incorporating EdUHK-owned technologies, research outcomes, or other IP assets into their proposals are encouraged to consult the KT Office at an early stage. A recommendation list is provided by the KT Office here for your reference: https://cutt.ly/3yku5711

Q19: If I have to use a third party's IP in my proposal, what should I do?

Ans: You should discuss with the owner/principal investigator of the IP before submitting your application, documentary proof on confirming the use of such IP, such as a signed licensing/consultancy/partnership project agreement or letter of intent, must be provided before you can be confirmed as the EASE Fund awardee.

Fund Disbursement and Company Formation

Q20: How will the award fund be disbursed?

Ans: EASE Fund will be disbursed to the start-up company's bank account in multiple instalments according to their meeting of pre-agreed milestones. The pre-agreed milestones should be the ones submitted for the panel's final assessment during the final presentation and revised based on the panel's recommendations (if any). Other financial aid offered by co-organizer(s) and supporting organization(s) will be arranged based on their own procedures and policies.

Example of milestones are:

- Incorporation of company in Hong Kong with business registration completed and opening a bank account for business transactions;
- Hiring of key people (e.g., product manager, sales & marketing personnel etc.);
- Finish the prototypes of their products/services;
- Launch of commercial products and services and marketing of products/services to target customers.

Each team has to present a Business Registration, Bank account information, and/or any related document(s) before receiving the first instalment. The remaining instalments will be disbursed subject to submission of progress reports and achievement of pre-agreed milestones.

Q21 Will EdUHK hold any company interest/share of the funded companies under the EASE Fund Scheme?

Ans: No, EdUHK will not hold any ownership of the companies.

Q22: Can I pay the business registration fee by the fund?

Ans: No, you cannot use the fund to pay the business registration fee. You need to have a business registration certificate before you can receive the fund.

Q23: Can I get pay from the fund?

Ans: No, but you can use the fund to pay salaries for employees who are neither team leader nor other team members listed in your application form.

Q24: Can I pay licensing fees or royalties to EdUHK/third parties by the fund?

Ans: Yes, you can as they are normal operating expenses of the start-up company.

Execution of Proposal

Q25: When shall we register the company?

Ans: You must register a company once your project is selected as a granted team by the EASE Fund.

If you have already formed a company, the company must not be registered for more than 2 years as of the EASE Fund Scheme application deadline.

Q26: Should I return any unspent funding to EdUHK?

Ans: You have to return any unspent funding to EdUHK.

Q27: Can we change the proposed business/milestones during the funding period?

Ans: You shall discuss and get prior approval from the KT Office before making any changes to the proposed business/agreed milestones (including but not limited to deliverables, business scopes, budget plans, and target marketplaces etc.). Such modifications shall be in writing and supported by clear rationales and justifications. Any changes of business plan/milestone without prior approval from the KT Office can cause fund termination.

Q28: Can I decide not to execute the proposed business?

Ans: No, you must execute the proposed business during the funding period.

Q29: Can we change the team leader/team members during the execution period?

Ans: *Team leader:*

No, change of team leader is **NOT** allowed. The applicants shall form a strong and cohesive team for the project with the team leader as the core member.

Team member:

Yes, change of team member is allowed while maintaining EASE Fund requirement (e.g. share allocation) and need to inform the KT Office.

Q30: Is it possible to continue the business if there is a change of team leader/team members?

Ans: *Team leader:*
The business will NOT be eligible to further EASE Fund support any more but the business still can be continued by your own.

Team member:
The business will still be eligible to EASE Fund's support.

Q31: If my start-up is running out of money within the funding period, is it possible for me to apply for external funding?

Ans: Yes, it is possible for you to apply for external funding if your start-up is running out of money within the funding period.