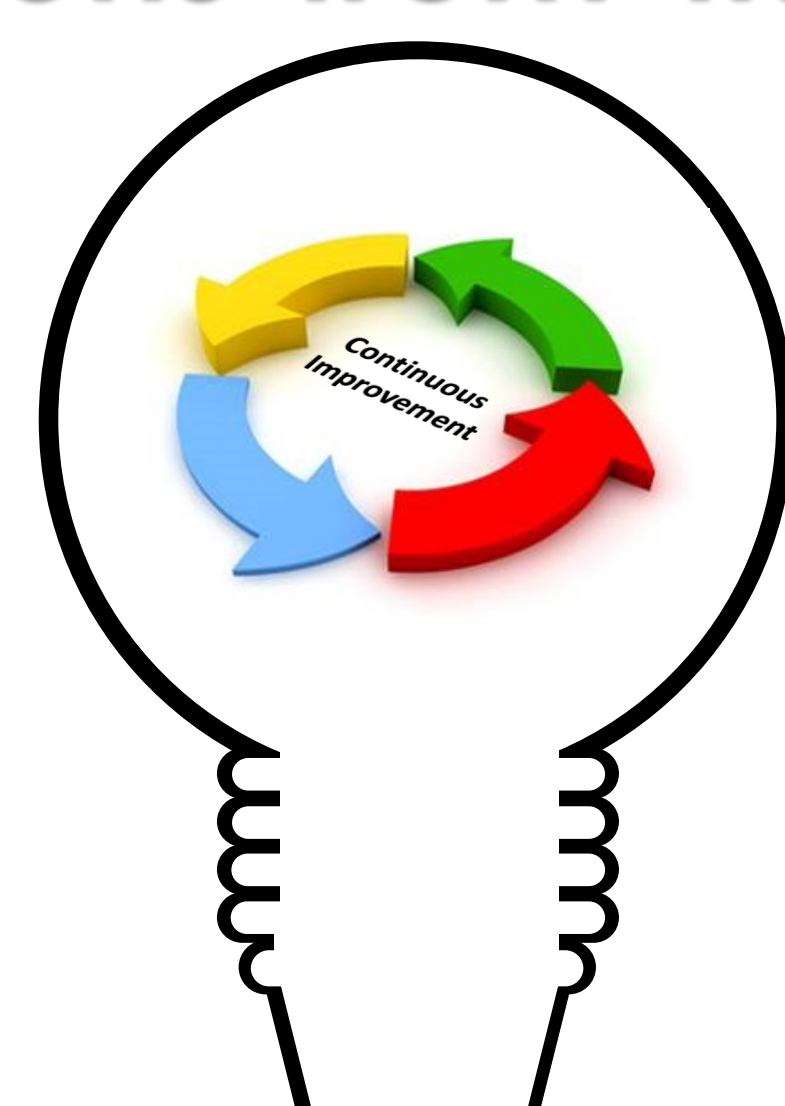




Singapore Healthcare  
Management 2019

# Improving Review Process for Grant Proposals – Lessons from the Academic Clinical Programme (ACP) Clinical Innovation Programme Funding

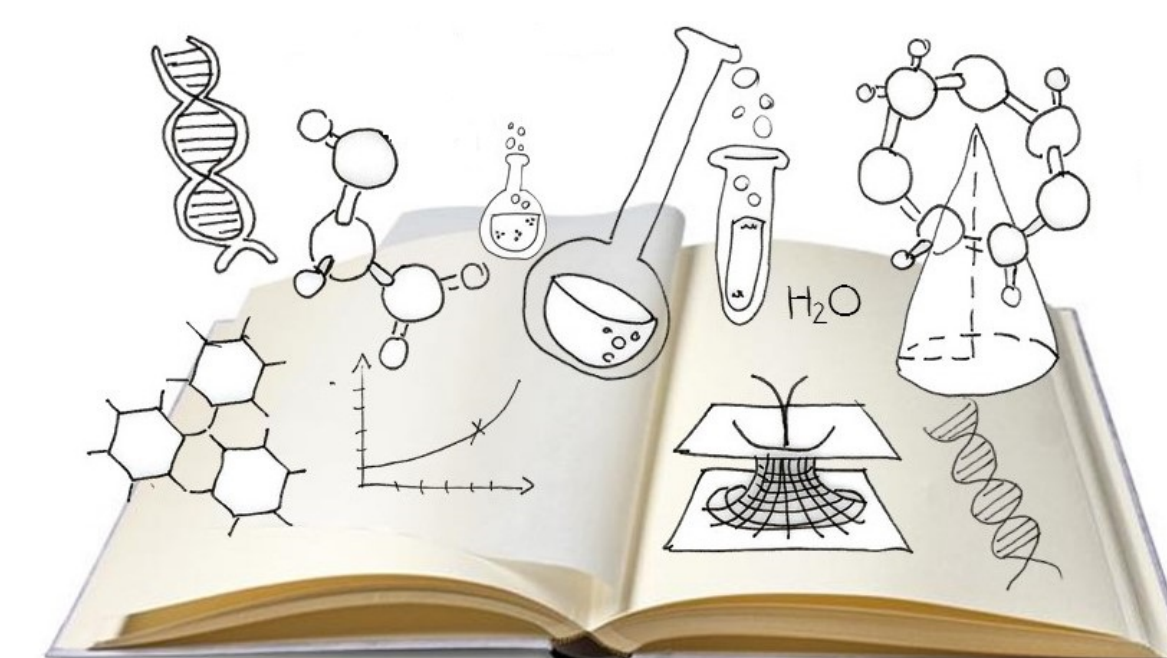


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## OUR BACKGROUND STORY

ACP Programme Funding is one of the many core initiatives of Joint Office of Academic Medicine to catalyse and enable the implementation of Academic Medicine across SingHealth and Duke-NUS Academic Medical Centre. The objectives of the Funding are to seed development and facilitate advancement of the ACPs' Academic Medicine strategic goals. These areas include (1) Research Support; (2) Education Support; and (3) Clinical Innovation Support.



### Problems faced:

The reviews of these proposals were time consuming and demanded significant amount of effort. The process is therefore costly in terms of the time and effort spent.



### Mission:

To introduce an improved methodology of reviewing Clinical Innovation proposals. If proven successful, it could then serve as a model to be adopted or adapted for use for other review platforms.

## HOW WE DID IT...

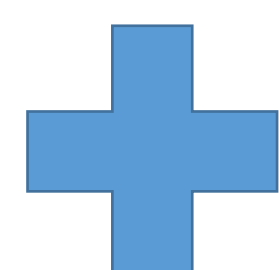
The solution should be (1) Easy to implement, (2) intuitive and user-friendly and (3) sustainable in the long-run.

We revisited the then existing processes and found the possibilities to synergise 2 different evaluation approaches. Grading and ranking method have always been used as part of review processes. By combining the best features of both approaches, a hybrid approach was piloted.

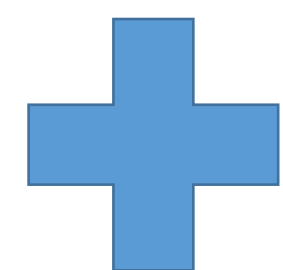
The revised Clinical Innovation Review package comprises:



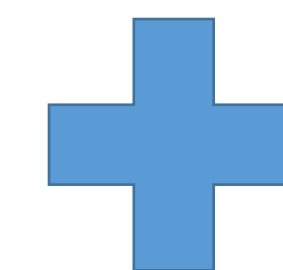
1. Proposals to be reviewed.



2. Revised Grading Guidelines detailing clearer proposal requirements & more robust evaluation criteria.



3. An Evaluation Form for each proposal. Each reviewer will score individual proposal in accordance with the Grading Guidelines.



4. New Ranking Table. Each reviewer will rank all the proposals in order of merit. Reviewer can use the scores of proposals and/or other qualitative considerations to decide on the ranking.

At the review panel meeting, the consolidated ranking scores are presented. The individual reviewers' scores for each proposal and ranking of proposals are also made available for reference where needed. In scenarios where there are identical ranking scores generated for 2 or more proposals, the review panel can refer to the quantitative metrics of the individual proposals to assess, discuss and deliberate the ranking of the proposals.

With the aid of these quantitative metrics, the review panel can focus the discussions on qualitative considerations and also offer suggestions to strengthen the proposals whilst finalising the recommendations for award.

## WHAT WERE OUR RESULTS?

### Pre-implementation

1. Typically required 2 review panel sessions (about 6 hours)

2. The grading guidelines and evaluation criteria were generally qualitative.

3. Without the aid of quantitative metrics, reviewers would spend significant amount of time and effort to assess the proposals and articulate qualitatively the merits of the proposals.



### Post-implementation

1. Process is improved with only the need for 1 panel review session (about 2 hours).

2. The revised grading guidelines and evaluation criteria offer greater clarity and are made more robust with complementary quantitative context.

3. With the aid of quantitative metrics, less time and effort are needed for assessment without compromising on the rigour of the review process. The review panel can focus on discussions on qualitative considerations and also offer constructive suggestions to improve on the quality of the proposals.

## WE CONCLUDED...

By creatively creating a review package from existing resources, a more effective and efficient review was put in place. The new review process facilitated a more robust evaluation, improved overall transparency, ensuring unbiased assessment while reducing the overall time needed for review.

The enhanced review process was implemented in FY2017 and garnered much tremendous positive feedback from the review panel. The same approach could be adopted and adapted for other types of grant proposals in our Academic Medical Centre.

