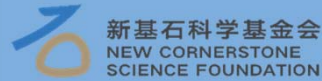


# New Cornerstone Investigator Program

For researchers at  
The University of Hong Kong  
June 21, 2024

# New Cornerstone Science Foundation



China's largest non-governmental and non-profit funding organization focusing on scientific research



- Exceptional scientists
- Stable long-term support
- Discovery research



- Promising young scientists
- Unleashing their full potential
- Advancing the cutting edge
- Basic science and frontier technology

## Scientific Community

- Organizing scientific forums and symposia
- Fostering interdisciplinary collaborations

Guided by scientists

# New Cornerstone Investigator Program



Established in 2022

Eligible applicants:

Well-established outstanding scientists  
Under 55 years of age

Field coverage (basic sciences):

数学与物质科学

Mathematics and Physical Sciences

生物与医学科学

Biological and Biomedical Sciences

Program philosophy:

**People, not Projects**

Internationally leading, high risk & high impact

Program objectives:

Support **200-300** exceptional scientists over **10** years with **10 billion RMB (1.4 billion USD)**

Provide stable and long-term support for discovery research

What Investigators will receive:

**Funding:** 15 million or 25 million RMB (2.1 or 3.5 million USD) over 5 years (potential to renew for a 2nd five-year round of funding)

**Freedom:** Fully curiosity-driven, no KPIs, no timeline for deliverables, no strings attached

Selection:

Merit-based and vigorous selection process

International panel of highly-qualified peer reviewers

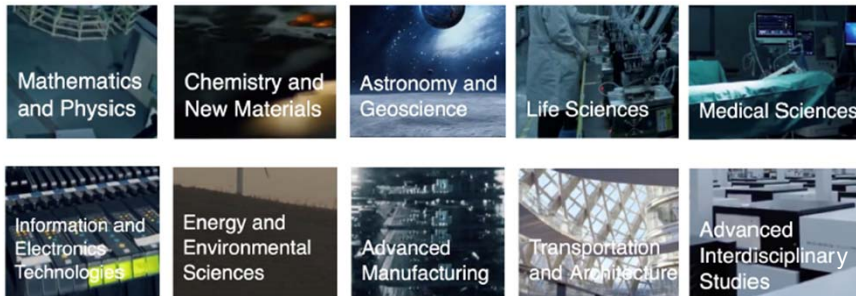


**Established in 2018**

**Eligible applicants:**

Early/mid-career scientists, engineers & doctors  
Men under 45; Women under 48

**Field coverage (basic sciences & frontier technologies):**



**Program objectives:**

Select up to 50 awardees per year

Support promising young candidates to unleash their full potential and push the frontiers of scientific research

**What awardees will receive:**

**Funding:** 3 million RMB (420K USD) over 5 years in no-strings attached funding

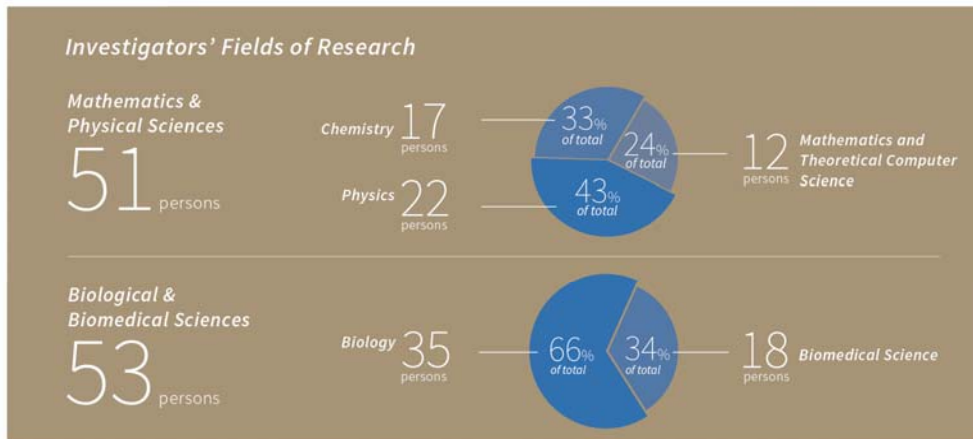
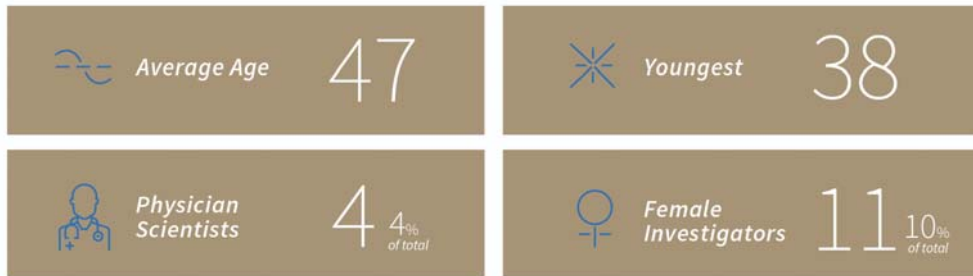
**Freedom:** to spend the cash as they wish

**Selection:**

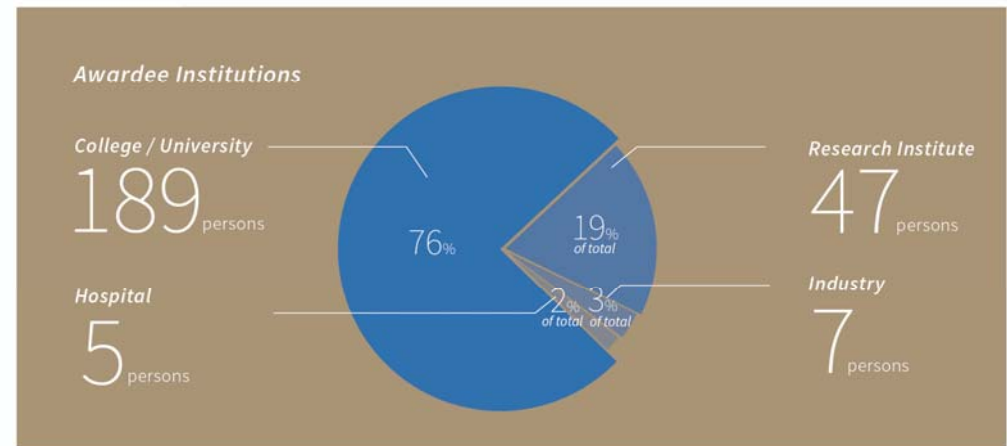
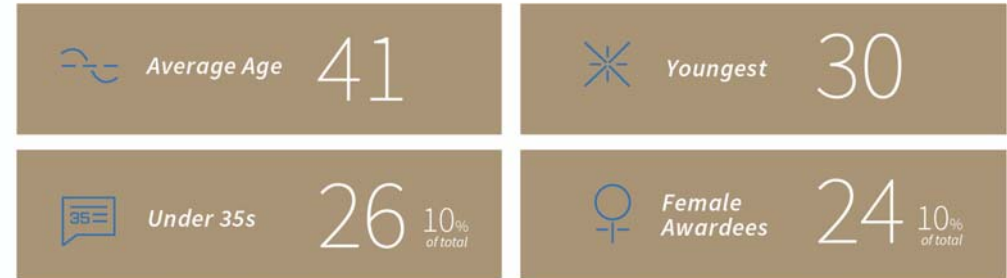
Merit-based review by highly esteemed and competent peer reviewers

# Quick Glance at New Cornerstone Investigators & Xplorer Prize Awardees

- 104 Investigators have been selected
- The highest caliber of Chinese scientists in their fields



- 248 outstanding young scientists, engineers and doctors have been awarded
- All leading the way in basic science or frontier technology



# 15 Hong Kong & Macau Investigators/Xplorer Prize winners (1)



The University  
of Hong Kong



**Xuhua HE 何旭华**  
Chair Professor of Mathematics  
Xplorer Prize 2020  
New Cornerstone Investigator  
2022



**Wang YAO 姚望**  
Chair Professor of Physics  
Xplorer Prize 2021  
New Cornerstone Investigator  
2023



**Shuang ZHANG**  
张霜  
Chair Professor of Physics  
New Cornerstone Investigator  
2022



**Mingxin HUANG 黄明欣**  
Chair Professor of Materials  
Technology  
Xplorer Prize 2021



**Xiaobo YIN 尹晓波**  
Professor of Mechanical  
Engineering  
Xplorer Prize 2022



**Joseph Ryan  
MICHALSKI**  
Professor of Earth Sciences  
Xplorer Prize 2023

The Hong Kong  
University of  
Science and  
Technology



**Xi DAI 戴希**  
Chair Professor of Physics  
New Cornerstone Investigator  
2023



**Henry He YAN 颜河**  
Chair Professor of Chemistry  
Xplorer Prize 2020



**Zhiyong FAN 范智  
勇**  
Chair Professor of Electronic  
and Computer Engineering  
Xplorer Prize 2022

# 15 Hong Kong & Macau Investigators/Xplorer Prize winners (2)

The Chinese  
University of  
Hong Kong



**Renbao LIU 刘仁保**

Professor of Physics

New Cornerstone Investigator 2022



**Yi-Chun LU 卢怡君**

Professor of Mechanical and  
Automation Engineering

Xplorer Prize 2021



**Siew Chien NG 黄秀娟**

Professor of Medicine

New Cornerstone Investigator 2023



**Yilin WU 吴艺林**

Professor of Physics

Xplorer Prize 2023

The Hong Kong  
Polytechnic  
University



**Zuankai WANG 王钻开**

Chair Professor of Nature-Inspired  
Engineering

Xplorer Prize 2020

University of  
Macau



**Pui In Mak 麦沛然**

Professor of Electrical and Computer  
Engineering

Xplorer Prize 2022

# Scientific Community

Fostering interdisciplinary collaborations, including dialogues, exchanges and the sharing of unpublished work

- Xplorer Symposia (closed door)
- Xplorer Forum (open to public)
- New Cornerstone Science Meetings (closed door)





# Approaches & Underlying Principles

## Philosophy

- **Foster Original Innovation**
- **Encourage Free Exploration**
- **People, not Projects**

## Approaches

Dedication to supporting **basic research** (as defined in program positioning)

**Originality & breakthrough potential** given significant weight (in the review criteria)

**Freedom** to propose what to do, encourage **bold ideas** (in the research plan)

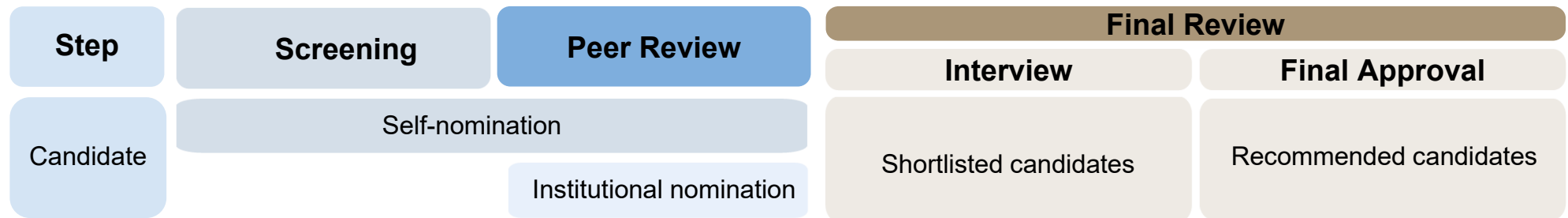
**Sufficient funds** allowing PIs to stay focused and avoid distractions

**Flexibility** to change research topics, no KPI for deliverables (accommodating grant management)

**Stable long-term support** (enabled through renewal)

**Dynamic & supportive community** (with inter-disciplinary forums & scientific meetings)

# Application & Review Process



## Key Factors

- **Guided by scientists**  
~600 scientists involved in the selection; from China & abroad
- **Three independent selection rounds**  
Conducted by 3 separate groups of reviewers
- **Quality control & “dark horse” candidates**  
Review panel chairs select any borderline candidates, give any with demonstrated talent a second chance

# We invite you to apply



The image is a screenshot of the New Cornerstone Investigator Program website. The background features a 3D molecular model with red, white, and black spheres. The website header includes the text "About Application Investigator Research" on the left, the New Cornerstone Investigator Program logo and name in the center, and "Login 中 | EN" on the right. A large white text overlay at the bottom of the screenshot reads: "Notice: the next round of applications will reopen in 2025."

**New Cornerstone Investigator Program will be open for applications in early 2025.  
For inquiries, please email: [contact@newcornerstone.org.cn](mailto:contact@newcornerstone.org.cn)**



新基石科学基金会  
NEW CORNERSTONE  
SCIENCE FOUNDATION

*Thank you*