

Research Ireland Pathway Programme 2026

Call for Submission of Proposals

Key Dates

Call launch:	12 th November 2025
Research Body nomination of candidates:	20 th February 2026, 13:00 Dublin local time
Full proposal deadline:	time 7 th May 2026, 13:00 Dublin local time
Applicant Response:	September 2026

Terms of Reference

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During the application process or at any time following the conclusion of the application process and decision, Research Ireland may contact the Research Body, the Principal Investigator or any member of the Research Team concerning funding opportunities, Research Ireland activities or any events, or for the purposes of monitoring and evaluation including but not limited to collecting scientific data and data related to the applications process. Research Ireland may choose to authorise a third party to contact the Research Body, the Principal Investigator or any member of the Research Team on its behalf.

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1 Introduction

Taighde Éireann – Research Ireland is the national research and innovation funding agency, which was established on the 1st of August 2024, building on the previous work of Science Foundation Ireland and the Irish Research Council. Research Ireland is an agency of the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science working in collaboration with Higher Education Institutions and other state agencies such as the Higher Education Authority (HEA), IDA Ireland and Enterprise Ireland.

Research Ireland has a statutory duty to support research excellence and talent across all disciplines spanning the AHSS and STEM fields. This expanded remit represents a significant evolution, establishing Research Ireland as a unified agency that can fund across the full spectrum of research endeavour—from curiosity-driven research that generates new knowledge to applied research that seeks to develop solutions and innovations.

The **Pathway Programme 2026** call supports talented postdoctoral researchers from all research disciplines to develop their track record and transition to become independent research leaders. These grants will enable postdoctoral researchers to conduct independent research for a four-year period and will provide funding for a postgraduate student who will be primarily supervised by the Applicant.

Objectives of the Pathway Programme

- To enable talented postdoctoral researchers to develop their track record and establish themselves as independent investigators, with the support of an eligible Research Body.
- To provide a mechanism for Irish Higher Education Institutions to increase talent retention in Ireland as well as attracting excellent international early-career researchers from all disciplines by supporting their development towards becoming research leaders of the future.
- To fund excellent research in all disciplines with the potential to drive impact and innovation.
- To contribute to further development of the Higher Education system through knowledge creation, training, and skills development.
- To support early-career researchers to leverage success in national, European and other international funding programmes, including the European Research Council, and develop their network within the European Research Area.
- To increase the representation of women in the higher education sector and promote alignment with international policies including research assessment, Open Science and equality, diversity and inclusion.

The Research Ireland Pathway Programme will have two streams, determined by the primary research discipline. The programme stream will determine the primary expertise of the reviewer pool and Applicants should apply to either the **Science, Technology, Engineering or Mathematics**-led (STEM-led) or **Arts, Humanities or Social Sciences**-led (AHSS-led) stream of the programme. Interdisciplinary proposals are welcomed, and consideration will be given to ensure an appropriate panel of reviewers. Research Ireland reserves the right to move the application to another stream if appropriate.

Research Bodies will be permitted to put forward a maximum of **16 candidates to the STEM-led stream** and a maximum of **eight candidates to the AHSS-led stream**. Research Ireland is aware of the

need to address gender imbalance in academia and is supportive of the **Athena SWAN** initiative,¹ which is endorsed by Irish Research Bodies. In recognition of this, **a maximum of eight applications to the STEM-led stream, out of the 16 permitted from each eligible Research Body, can be submitted by men.** Similarly, **a maximum of four applications to the AHSS-led stream, out of the eight permitted from each eligible Research Body, can be submitted by men** (see Section 3.1 and the FAQs for further details). Upon submission, all applications will be treated equally regardless of the gender of the Applicant. Women are strongly encouraged to apply to this funding call.

Research Ireland's External Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy 2023-2028

Research Ireland is committed to enhancing equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) within the Irish research and innovation sector. The Agency recognises that excellent research stems from diverse and inclusive teams, which reflect our society and the communities we serve. As such, Research Ireland aspires to proactively lead in driving the EDI agenda forward through the research and research teams that it funds.

In Research Ireland's External Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy 2023-2028,² increasing the number of women and members of Historically Underserved Communities in Applicant Teams is a key objective. As such, women and members of Historically Underserved Communities are strongly encouraged to apply to this programme. Further details on application submission and success rates by gender (binary) can be found for historic programmes on the Research Ireland website.

Towards achieving this goal, the Research Ireland Pathway Programme will encourage Eligible Research Bodies to seek applications from excellent women.

To this end, **each Research Body may nominate a maximum of eight applications (out of a possible 16) to the STEM-led stream and a maximum of four applications (out of a possible 8) to the AHSS-led stream, from men.** Upon submission to Research Ireland, all applications will be treated equally regardless of the gender identity of the Applicant.

Gender data fields on SESAME, Research Ireland's Grants and Awards Management System, have been expanded to encompass more inclusive gender identifiers. These expanded gender identifier fields support those objectives described in Research Ireland's External EDI Strategy, which aims to be a key driver of an inclusive research culture, lead in minimising barriers to participation in the research endeavour and ensure that its investment reflects the input of researchers that are representative of society, and thus the outputs are relevant to society. Gender data gathered will inform the diversity of the Applicant group. It will help to inform future iterations of this and similar programme calls. The data gathered will also inform how we can best improve the representation of other Historically Underserved Communities, including individuals from underrepresented genders, in our portfolio of grants awarded.

2 Programme Details

2.1 Funding

The Research Ireland Pathway programme provides up to **€535,000** total direct costs over a four-year term. The budget requested should include the Applicant's salary, to which Research Ireland will

¹ <http://www.ecu.ac.uk/equality-charters/athena-swan/>

² <https://www.researchireland.ie/about/policies/>

contribute over the duration of the grant, the fees and stipend of the PhD student and costs for materials and consumables, equipment, and travel (see Section 3.8 for more details).

2.2 Programme Remit


Research Ireland funds research and innovation that pushes the boundaries of human knowledge and which contributes to economic, social, cultural and environmental development and sustainability in the State. This programme supports talented postdoctoral researchers from all disciplines across the full spectrum of endeavour—from curiosity-driven research that generates new knowledge to applied research that seeks to develop solutions and innovations, including in the social and cultural domains, to develop their track record and transition to become independent research leaders. Applications of an interdisciplinary nature that draw together insights and approaches from one or more research disciplines will also be welcomed.


2.3 Co-Funding Partnerships

Met Éireann and the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland

The Research Ireland Pathway Programme includes a co-funding partnership with Met Éireann and the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI). The partnership between Research Ireland and the co-funders is based on alignments to research topics that are of particular significance to the partners' research objectives (see details below).

Following the submission of proposals, Research Ireland will reach agreement with the co-funding partners on which proposals may be supported through the partnership. All applications that potentially align to the research topics outlined by the co-funders below will be considered for support under this partnership. There is no requirement for Applicants to indicate specifically that funding through the partnership is sought. Partnership and non-partnership applications to this call will be treated the same with respect to the review process.

	<p>The overall aim of the Research Ireland – Met Éireann Partnership for the Pathway Programme is to co-fund impactful research into weather and climate to develop services in support of the protection of life and property and the promotion of wider societal and economic wellbeing. Research priority areas of strategic interest include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applications of AI, Machine Learning and Data Analytics to weather and climate services • Climate services • Climate modelling • Specialised weather and climate research, e.g., impact, satellite, marine-, agri-meteorology • Weather and climate monitoring and observing systems and instrumentation • Numerical Weather Prediction (NWP) modelling • General forecasting and flood forecasting • Dissemination and communication of weather
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	<p>and climate information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perception and interpretation of weather and climate information • Decision making and emergency management in extreme weather events • Socio-economic impact of weather and climate information • Multi-hazard early warning systems
	<p>SEAI is Ireland's national sustainable energy authority and the overarching objectives of SEAI National Energy Research, Development and Demonstration (RD&D) Funding Programme are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accelerate the development and deployment in the Irish marketplace of competitive energy-related products, processes and systems • Support solutions that enable technical and other barriers to energy market uptake to be overcome • Grow Ireland's national capacity to access, develop and apply international class R&D • Provide guidance and support to policymakers and public bodies through results, outcomes and learning from supported projects <p>The partnership between SEAI and Research Ireland aims to support excellent scientific research that will contribute to Ireland's transition to a clean and secure energy future, including but not exclusively, those aligning with research topics that are of particular relevance to SEAI:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decarbonised electricity • Decarbonised heat • Decarbonised transport • Energy efficiency • Energy security • Behaviours and affordability

By submitting an application to the Research Ireland Pathway Programme, an Applicant is accepting that Research Ireland has the right to share information (including the application and any post-award reports submitted) with existing and potential co-funding partners, on a confidential basis, without the need to obtain any further consents from such Applicants.

2.4 Definitions of Applicant, Mentor and Collaborator

2.4.1 Applicant

The Applicant must have held a PhD or equivalent qualification³ for at least two years at proposal submission. The official date of a PhD is defined as the year that the degree was conferred (i.e., the year printed on the official PhD certificate). The number of years is determined by calendar year – **only individuals with an official conferral date of 2024 or earlier may apply to the Research Ireland Pathway Programme 2026 call.**

The Applicant will be responsible for the research direction of the research programme, the supervision of the PhD student and the submission of reports to Research Ireland. The Applicant has primary responsibility for carrying out the research within the funding limits awarded and in accordance with Research Ireland's Grant Conditions (inclusive of Research Ireland's General Terms and Conditions,⁴ Letters of Offer and Research Ireland policy documents.⁵ **The Applicant will serve as the primary point of contact on the grant during the review process and, if successful, during the course of the grant. Please note, if successful, an Applicant must be based in and employed by an eligible Research Body within Ireland on a full-time basis.**

2.4.2 Mentor

The Mentor will be an established researcher working in the same institution as the proposed host Research Body for the Applicant, who will give advice and provide laboratory space (where applicable) and related infrastructure to both the Applicant and the PhD student for the duration of the grant. The Mentor will also take the role of co-supervisor for the PhD student; however, it is the Applicant who will act as the primary supervisor. The Mentor does not play a supervisory or presiding role to the Applicant but acts as an advisor and host. The Mentor will work with the Applicant to ensure that all fiduciary and ethical approval aspects, where relevant, of the grant are managed successfully.

2.4.3 Collaborators

An **Academic Collaborator** is an individual working in an academic institution who is committed to providing a valuable intellectual and/or technical contribution to the proposed research. As appropriate, Academic Collaborator(s) based in an eligible Research Body in Ireland may receive funding through the grant (see the budget section for details), but the funding allocated should reflect the supporting role that such Collaborator(s) are expected to play in the research programme. CVs **must** be provided for Academic Collaborators.

Collaborators in industry, public bodies, civil society / non-governmental organisations, and other entities can be included in the application where relevant. CVs should be provided and failure to do so may disadvantage an application during the review process. Each collaborator **must** provide a letter of support with the grant application, and this must clearly outline the role of that collaborator in the programme of research proposed. Applicants who have included an Industry Collaborator should consider whether they are required to complete an Industry Collaboration Form, as described in Section 5.1.

The role of any Collaborators must also be referenced in the main body of the research proposal (for example: Will the Collaborators be supplying samples, data, etc.? Will the Collaborators be providing training in techniques or the use of equipment? Will the Collaborators directly participate in specific projects? Will Collaborators be acting in a purely advisory capacity?). Please see Section 3.10 for

³ https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/eligibility-related-information/PHD-equivalence-policy_September_2018.pdf

⁴ [Research Ireland Grant Terms and Conditions - Research Ireland](#)

⁵ <https://www.researchireland.ie/about/policies/state-aid/>

details on letters of support and Section 5.1 on State aid and Research Ireland Grant funding where an Industry Collaborator is involved.

2.5 Applicant Profile

The Research Ireland Pathway Programme is targeted towards talented postdoctoral researchers who are poised to transition to an independent research career. As such, the Applicant should demonstrate a proven record of research accomplishments appropriate to their research field and career stage. Reviewers will be asked to consider the quality of the Applicant's track record in the context of an Applicant's research-active years. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Publications in major international peer-reviewed journals
- Research monograph(s) and any translations thereof
- Other forms of peer-reviewed recognition of achievement
- Publication of books, chapters, policy briefs, datasets, software, code
- Innovation and commercialisation activities (e.g., patents, licenses, novel assays and reagents)
- Participation in consortia
- Invited presentations to internationally established conferences; and/or International advanced schools.

2.6 Applicant Requirements

Research Ireland Pathway grants are intended to be the primary source of funding for the grant holders and, as such, the expected time commitment to the research supported through this grant should represent the majority of the working time for the grant holder. Research Ireland understands that grant holders will actively seek further funding for their research. It is expected that grant holders will dedicate almost all of their time to their Research Ireland Pathway grant in the first year. In cases where further funding has been obtained, the expectation is that the grant recipient's commitment to the Research Ireland Pathway grant should never drop below 50%. Research Ireland must be notified of any other grants won by the Applicant and, where necessary, reserves the right to approve any expected changes to the Applicant's time commitments. **Holders of Research Ireland Pathway grants are not permitted to apply to any Research Ireland programmes during the first 12 months of the grant unless specifically indicated in the relevant call documentation that it is permissible to do so.** Potential Applicants are advised to contact Research Ireland in advance of submission to ensure eligibility.

2.7 Eligibility Criteria of Applicant

Applicants to the Research Ireland Pathway Programme must:

- have held a PhD or equivalent qualification for at least two years at proposal submission.⁶
- not be considered an independent investigator

⁶ The official date of a PhD is defined as the year that the degree was conferred (i.e., the year printed on the official PhD certificate). The number of years is determined by calendar year (e.g., only individuals with an official date of 2024 or earlier are eligible to apply to the Research Ireland Pathway programme 2026 Call). There is no upper limit for PhD duration.

- not hold, or have held, an academic contract (e.g., lecturer, assistant professor, professor, or similar) of greater than, or equal to, 36 months in duration.⁷ Teaching-only academic contracts greater than or equal to 36 months in duration are permitted.
- not hold, or have held, a significant peer-reviewed, independent research grant, or a grant providing similar support to the Research Ireland Pathway Programme. Personal grants, including student, postdoctoral or individual fellowships, travel grants, and bursaries are permissible.
- have identified a Mentor, who will give advice, co-supervise the PhD student and provide access to laboratory space (where relevant) and related infrastructure for the duration of the grant.

Research Ireland has stringent requirements for the reporting by grant recipients on the grants that it makes. Failure to satisfactorily complete Research Ireland's reporting requirements on a current or historic Research Ireland-funded grant may result in an Applicant being deemed ineligible for the Research Ireland Pathway Programme.

Applicants currently under active review by Research Ireland as either Principal Investigator (PI) or co-Principal Investigator (co-PI) under certain programmes are not entitled to apply to the Research Ireland Pathway Programme. These programmes include, but are not limited to: COALESCE, Research Ireland Investigators Programme, Frontiers for the Future, Research Centres and Spokes programmes. Please contact pathway@researchireland.ie in advance of applying to discuss your eligibility for this call where you are currently under review for another Research Ireland programme.

Please Note: Eligible candidates under review for both the Research Ireland Pathway Programme and the Royal Society – Research Ireland University Research Fellowship Programme must accept the University Research Fellowship, if successful, and withdraw their application from the Pathway Programme. It is not possible for successful Applicants to accept and hold both grants.

In addition, researchers who have been confirmed as independent investigators by a Research Body (e.g., Funded Investigators in Research Ireland Research Centres) are not eligible to apply.

Where an Applicant fails to meet the eligibility criteria outlined above, the application will be deemed ineligible and will not be accepted for review. Where uncertain, potential Applicants are advised to contact their host research office, prior to contacting Research Ireland, in advance of submission to ensure eligibility.

2.8 Research Body Requirements

The Research Body must confirm that the Applicant meets the above criteria prior to the submission of a candidate list and must also provide assurance that the space and infrastructure to carry out the proposed research are available for the duration of the grant. Please see Section 3.10 for more information.

⁷ Applicants who hold, or have held, academic positions will be required to articulate why they do not consider that these positions represent research independence in their statement of eligibility and career development.

2.9 Eligibility of Research Body

The Research Body of the Applicant is the body responsible for the overall financial and administrative co-ordination of research programmes supported by funding from Research Ireland. Details of Eligible Research Bodies are available on the Research Ireland website.⁸

3 Application Procedure

3.1 Nomination of Candidates by Research Bodies

The research offices of potential host Research Bodies will be expected to instigate a procedure to select candidates for this call. Those wishing to apply to the Research Ireland Pathway Programme 2026 call should first contact their intended host Research Body, informing the Research Office about their identity and credentials, the identity of their chosen Mentor, and an outline of their intended research plan. Research Bodies are asked to ensure that consistent support is provided to Applicants on drafting their proposals, particularly in areas such as impact and budget management and preparation.

In selecting excellent candidates, Research Bodies should consider the evaluation criteria described in the call document. Research Bodies are expected to support successful grant recipients to transition to independence and to compete for staff positions beyond the duration of this grant; as such, Research Bodies should consider their strategic vision and their plans for the retention and development of internationally competitive faculty and research leaders.

Eligible Research Bodies may nominate a maximum of **16 candidates to the STEM-led stream** and a maximum of **eight candidates to the AHSS-led stream**. Nominated candidates will then be invited to submit a Full Proposal. **No more than eight of the 16 STEM-led candidates, and four of the eight AHSS-led candidates may be men.** See the [FAQs](#) on the Research Ireland website for further details.

Eligible Research Bodies should submit the names and gender identities of their approved candidates, provisional titles, primary/secondary research areas, keywords, and abstracts for their applications. Should a nominated candidate withdraw from the process prior to the full proposal deadline, the Research Body may nominate a replacement. The maximum numbers with respect to gender identity must be maintained, the agencies must be notified of the change, and the full proposal must be submitted through the SESAME in advance of the full proposal deadline. Any proposals submitted by Applicants not featured in this document, or by replacements that have not been accepted by Research Ireland, **will be deemed ineligible and not reviewed**.

With respect to the maximum number of proposals submitted, Research Bodies are encouraged to collaborate with each other when preparing their final nominated list of candidates. Given the distribution of HEIs across Ireland, there may be opportunities for Applicants to apply to the Research Ireland Pathway call through a different Research Body to that which was initially intended. Research Bodies with an excess of interested candidates may wish to link candidates with other Research Bodies that have not satisfied their quota.

To provide useful information and assist Research Ireland with future calls, research offices will also be asked to submit aggregated details of **all** applications they received, including the primary and secondary research areas and gender identity of the Applicants, along with a description of the

⁸ <https://www.researchireland.ie/about/policies/>

selection process that was undertaken to select their nominated candidates. Consideration should be given to the suitability of the candidates, Research Body strategy, and strategic talent management.

Please note that Research Bodies must provide Research Ireland with their list of approved Applicants by 13:00 on the 20th February 2026. The document should be sent by email to pathway@researchireland.ie, and may nominate a maximum of 16 STEM-led and eight AHSS-led applications. No more than eight of the 16 STEM-led, and four of the eight AHSS-led, nominated applications may be from men. If the nominated list breaches the prescribed limits for either stream, all applications from that institution, under the infringed stream, will be deemed ineligible.

Following successful selection of candidates by the associated host Research Body, approved candidates will be required to submit a proposal. Full details of the information required are provided in the following section. **Proposals must be submitted to Research Ireland online through SESAME by the Research Office of the Applicant's Research Body before the call deadline.**

Only Applicants that submit a proposal in the format described above, and before the deadline of 7th May 2026 at 13:00, will be eligible.

Only proposals submitted by Applicants and approved in advance by their Research Body will be eligible for this call. Any other submitted proposals will not be reviewed.

3.2 Submission

Proposals will only be accepted through SESAME, Research Ireland's grants management system.

The Research Ireland Pathway Programme is the subject of a Data Sharing Agreement, and therefore by submitting an application to the Research Ireland Pathway Programme, an Applicant is accepting that Research Ireland has the right to share information (including the application and any post-award reports submitted to Research Ireland) with existing and potential co-funding partners, on a confidential basis, without the need to obtain any further consents from such Applicants.

Access to **SESAME** is controlled by staff at the Research Office of your host Research Body. Please follow your internal organisational process to request this access. Once you have been registered by your research office, **you will receive an email** containing the following:

- 1. Username**
- 2. Password**
- 3. Research Ireland PIN number**
- 4. SESAME website address**

Your **username** and **password** are needed to log in to **SESAME**. This PIN number is also stored in your **contact profile** on **SESAME**.

SESAME is accessed using the internet; no additional software needs to be installed. You can access **SESAME** online from any location. **SESAME** supports Internet Explorer, Chrome and Firefox. With Mac we recommend that you use either Firefox or Chrome. The configuration of some browsers and internet infrastructure (popup blockers, firewalls, etc.) can restrict an individual's access to the internet and as a result, to the **SESAME system**. If you are having any such difficulties, please contact your organisation's internal IT support team.

The SESAME system is accessed here: https://grants.researchireland.ie/s_Login.jsp

Please see the **SESAME** Researcher User Guide for more detailed information.⁹

Once submitted by the host Research Body to Research Ireland through **SESAME**, an application cannot be withdrawn and subsequently modified for resubmission in the same call, regardless of the date of submission.

Proposals must be endorsed and submitted online through **SESAME** to Research Ireland by the Research Office of the Applicant's Research Body by **7th May 2026 at 13:00 Dublin local time**.

Applicants should note that their Research Body may have internal deadlines before this date that must be adhered to.

Proposal submission requirements:

- **All text in uploaded PDFs** should be provided in Calibri font or similar, with minimum font size of 11, and at least single-line spacing as well as a minimum margin size of 2.5cm. Text in diagrams may be in any clearly legible font.
- Uploads in **SESAME** must be submitted in **Adobe or Microsoft PDF format only**. Please ensure to use unencrypted, non-password-protected PDFs with the copying function disabled, developed using either Adobe or Microsoft Word PDF convertor software only.
- The number of pages in uploads must not exceed the specifications for any given section. **Applications that do not comply with these requirements will be deemed ineligible and will be returned without review.**
- Appendices or other unsolicited documentation are not permitted. **Applications that include such unsolicited documentation will not be reviewed.**
- File sizes of attachments should be **less than 5MB**.
- Hyperlinks and URLs are only allowed when specifically noted in call documents or **SESAME System** guidance/instructions. The use of hyperlinks is typically limited to citing information already in the public domain, which is non-critical to the evaluation of the proposal. Hyperlinks and URLs may not be used to provide additional information, which would be necessary for application review, and as a means of circumventing page limits. Furthermore, the use of hyperlinks and URLs to provide additional information on submitted Narrative CVs is not permitted as per the Guidance on Research Ireland Narrative CVs and associated FAQs.¹⁰ Reviewers are not obligated to view linked sites and are cautioned that they should not directly access a website (unless the link to the site was specifically requested in application instructions). When allowed, you must reference the actual URL text such that it appears on the page, for example, in brackets or in a footnote, rather than embedding the URL in a specific word or phrase.
- Applicants must complete all mandatory **SESAME** profile fields (marked in red) before submitting an application. It is not possible to submit an application without this information.

⁹ <https://www.ResearchIreland.ie/funding/award-management-system/>

¹⁰ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/narrative-cv-dora/>

Applications not adhering to these requirements, or with incomplete content, will be deemed ineligible and will not be accepted for review, regardless of the date of submission.

It is the responsibility of the Applicant to ensure that eligible proposals are received by Research Ireland before the deadline indicated. In order to safeguard against ineligibility, Applicants are reminded to adhere rigorously to the guidelines in the call documentation and to review the proposal document prior to submission in SESAME.

Please note that proposal eligibility checks will be completed by Research Ireland staff. Applications cannot be withdrawn and subsequently modified for resubmission in the same call.

3.3 ORCID ID

ORCID¹¹ provides a unique identifier for all researchers, which can then be linked to their different research works across different platforms. There are a number of benefits to creating an ORCID iD, which include the following:

- ORCID allows you to pull information from different platforms, creating a centralised reference to your different works (e.g., publications, patents, awards) in one location using a single sign in.
- Your ORCID iD is a unique identifier, which distinguishes you from other researchers with a similar name.
- Using the ORCID iD helps to make your research works more visible to funders and publishers. You are able to build a complete picture of your research in one location.

As part of the integration of **SESAME** with ORCID, it is possible for researchers to import publication data from ORCID directly into their SESAME Research Profile. Applicants are **required** to link their **Grants Management System** Research Profiles to an ORCID iD **before an application can be submitted**.

3.4 Proposal Summary

Please populate the following required proposal sections in SESAME, as outlined below.

- **Proposal Title (max. 30 words)**
The Research Proposal title should clearly convey the nature of the research to be undertaken and should not contain confidential details, given that the titles of funded proposals are published by Research Ireland.
- **Duration of Grant Requested**
All Research Ireland Pathway grants are supported for a period of **48 months**.
- **Total Funding Request (in €)**
This figure will be populated from the requested budget submitted.
- **Resubmission Statement**
Applicants must declare whether a new submission relates to a previous unsuccessful application to any Research Ireland scheme (including any previous Science Foundation Ireland or Irish Research Council scheme). If the application is a resubmission, a statement

¹¹ <http://orcid.org/>

referencing the previous application and explaining the differences must be provided and must make reference to reviewer comments where relevant. This statement will assist Research Ireland staff in the assessment of the eligibility of a revised application and will not be shared with reviewers. See Research Ireland's Resubmission Policy for further details.¹²

- **Research Area (Primary)**

Applicants should select a primary research area from the drop-down menu, which best describes the proposed research. This will assist Research Ireland in identifying appropriate reviewers.

- **Research Area (Secondary)**

Applicants should select a secondary research area from the drop-down menu, which in combination with the primary research area already selected, best describes the proposed research. This will assist Research Ireland in identifying appropriate reviewers.

- **Alignment to Programme Remit (max. 250 words)**

Applicants should describe how the application is within the programme remit as described in Section 2.2. **This statement will not be shared with reviewers.**

3.5 Lead Applicant Details

- **Location of Applicant at Time of Submission**

Applicants must insert the country in which they are employed at the time of submission.

- **Time Commitment to Grant**

Indicate the Lead Applicant's time commitment to the proposed research project as a percentage of their total working time. See Section 2.6 for Research Ireland's expectations concerning the time commitment required.

- **Lead Applicant Narrative CV (Upload)**

A CV of the Lead Applicant, using the template provided in the Downloads section of the Research Ireland Pathway Programme [website](https://www.researchireland.ie/funding/pathway/),¹³ must be completed and uploaded (**upload; max. 5 pages**). Please click on "Save Draft" after upload. The template allows for the provision of additional information such as that relating to periods of leave from research, where relevant. **References to metrics such as journal impact factors, h-indices, and total numbers of publications are not permitted. If these metrics are included, they will be redacted prior to expert review.** Furthermore, the use of hyperlinks and URLs to provide additional information on submitted Narrative CVs is not permitted, in line with the Guidance on Research Ireland Narrative CVs and associated FAQs.¹⁴

Failure to use this template will result in an application being deemed ineligible.
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¹² [Research Ireland policy on Resubmission of Grant Proposals](#)

¹³ <https://www.researchireland.ie/funding/pathway/>

¹⁴ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/narrative-cv-dora/>

- **Statement of Eligibility and Career Development Plan (max. 750 words)**

Applicants must clearly articulate why they do not consider themselves as independent investigators¹⁵ and how a Research Ireland Pathway grant will support them in building an independent research career.

Applicants who have been awarded grants or fellowships must address how these do not represent significant, independent research grants or similar support to that offered by the Research Ireland Pathway Programme.

Applicants who hold, or have held, academic positions should articulate why they do not consider that these positions represent research independence.

Applicants should state why the aims of this grant will be beneficial at this stage in their career, articulate how they intend to build an independent research career through this grant, and explain how the grant will help them to reach their defined goals.

- **Supervisory Experience**

Provide summary information on supervisory experience to date for the Lead Applicant.

- **Research Funding History**

- The Lead Applicant must provide a report on expired, current and pending funding. Funding details may be added from the Applicant's existing SESAME profile or can be created in this section.
- If the Applicant is a Collaborator on a research project, the grant should not be included here; only grants where the Applicant is either the Principal Investigator or Co-Investigator should be listed.
- The Applicant should include details of any financial support pending or received, over the previous ten years. This should include competitive research funding received from funding agencies (international and national), charities, industry, etc.
- The Applicant must include details of any financial support currently provided, or currently being sought. Applicants must detail the total funding allocated to the grant and **the amount of this funding that is allocated to the Applicant.**
- **Research Ireland will not support research currently being funded through another source.**
- For each current and pending grant listed, the Applicant should provide a brief description of the research. Applicants must also indicate their time commitment to these other projects, as a percentage of their total working time.
- For pending grants, please include the expected decision date in the description box.

¹⁵ An Independent Researcher, sometimes referred to as an "Independent Investigator" or "Established Researcher", is an individual who conducts research independently, identifies research problems and opportunities, selects appropriate methodologies and approaches, advances a research agenda, and has the ability to establish collaborative relationships. They will have secured significant independent funding in their name and will have full autonomy to conduct their research. They will be affiliated with an Eligible Research Body, who in turn, will recognise and support them as an Independent Researcher (adapted from the [European Commission's definition for "Established Researchers"](#)).

- Please complete the requested details for each expired, current, or pending financial support. Fields coloured red are mandatory. Certain field labels are underlined and contain further information concerning the details that are required; hover the mouse pointer over these labels to view this information.
- The portion of research funding claimed in an Applicant's name must be an accurate and fair reflection of their responsibility in the projects listed and will be verifiable as such. Research Ireland may conduct audits to verify such claims and reserves the right to reject proposals where the above principle of proportionality is not observed.
- **This section of the proposal will support Research Ireland in determining the eligibility of the Applicant** and will also be reviewed as part of the Applicant's track record.

Research funding may be added directly to the application or added from the Applicant's profile in SESAME.¹⁶ If this section is left blank it will indicate that the Applicant has NO expired, current or pending funding.

Please ensure that research funding added to the profile of the Lead Applicant has been included in the application via SESAME.

The Applicant should complete the textbox detailing potential overlap between current and pending funding and the proposed research in this application, where relevant. For each current and pending grant listed above, the Applicant must clearly indicate any overlap with this application, based on the methodologies being employed and the stated objectives of the funded project(s).

3.6 Collaborator and Mentor Details

- **Addition of Collaborators**

Applicants can include Collaborators as part of their Research Ireland Pathway Programme application. It is expected that the number of collaborators is kept to a minimum and that their role within the research programme is **clearly defined**. Include the name, contact information and other requested details of Collaborator(s), if any. Please see Section 2.4 for further information on the role of Collaborators. Once details regarding the name and institution of the Collaborator have been added and saved, which is achieved by clicking on the "Save Draft" button at the bottom of the application form, it will be possible to upload the Collaborator CV (**maximum of two pages**) by clicking on the appropriate button. Please see Section 6.1 on State aid and Research Ireland Grant funding where an Industry Collaborator is involved.

CVs (max. 2 pages) must be uploaded for all Academic Collaborators. CVs may also be provided for other Collaborators, where relevant. Where a non-academic collaborator has been included, failure to provide a supporting CV may disadvantage an application during the review process. The use of a template is not mandatory for Collaborator CVs, however we recommend that the Narrative Collaborator CV template available on the programme webpage is used.¹⁷ **References to metrics such as journal impact factors, h-indices and total numbers of publications are not permitted. If these metrics are included, they will be redacted prior to expert review.**

¹⁶ <https://www.ResearchIreland.ie/funding/award-management-system/>

¹⁷ <https://www.researchireland.ie/funding/pathway/>

Collaborator letters of support **must** be provided; further details are provided in Section 3.10 of this document.

- **Addition of a Mentor**

Information about the Mentor must be included in this section. Clicking on the “Add” button will open a form into which details about the Mentor should be completed. Ensure that “Mentor” is selected in the ‘Collaborator Type’ drop-down menu. Only one Mentor may be assigned in the proposal. Once details regarding the name and institution of the Mentor have been added and saved, which is achieved by clicking on the “Save Draft” button at the bottom of the application form, it will be possible to upload the Mentor’s CV (**max. 2 pages**) by clicking on the appropriate button.

CVs (max. 2 pages) for Mentors **must** be uploaded. The use of a template is not mandatory for the Mentor or Collaborator CVs, however we suggest that the Narrative Collaborator CV template available on the programme webpage is used.¹⁸ **References to metrics such as journal impact factors, h-indices and total numbers of publications are not permitted. If these metrics are included, they will be redacted prior to expert review.**

Mentor letters of support **must** be provided; at proposal stage – further details are provided in Section 3.10 of this document.

3.7 Main Body of Proposal

The following section outlines the Research Ireland Pathway Programme proposal requirements.

- **Keywords (max. 15)**

These should be descriptors that best characterise the proposed research.

- **Abstract (max. 200 words)**

This should be a succinct and accurate summary of the proposed work when separated from the application.

- **Lay Abstract (max. 100 words)**

This should be a succinct and accurate summary in lay, non-technical language of the proposed work when separated from the application.

- **Ethical Issues**

- **Use of Animals**

Applicants must indicate whether animals are to be involved in any of the research planned. Further details can be found on the Research Ireland Ethical Policies webpage.¹⁸

- **Research Involving Human Participants, Biological Material or Identifiable Data**

Applicants must complete the questionnaire indicating whether their research programme will involve human participants, human biological material or the use of identifiable (or potentially identifiable) human data. Further details can be found on the Research Ireland Ethical Policies webpage. Clinical trials and investigations requiring approval by the Health Products Regulatory Authority (HPRA) will not be permitted through the Research Ireland Pathway programme.

¹⁸ <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/ethical-and-scientific-issues/>

- **Sex and Gender Dimension in Research Statement (max. 1000 words)**

In accordance with the Research Ireland External Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy 2023-2028,¹⁹ all Applicants must complete a statement articulating the consideration of biological sex and/or social gender variables in their planned research. Please consult the Guidance for Applicants on Ethical and Scientific Issues²⁰ and Section 5.4 for resources on how to address the sex and/or gender dimension of research in your grant.

- **Research Programme (upload; max. 8 pages)**

Applicants are requested to **provide sufficient detail** for peer reviewers to comment on the quality of the proposed ideas. It should be noted that a lack of appropriate and sufficient detail within the research programme is a recurring issue raised by reviewers.

The following points should be considered when describing the proposed research:

- Describe clearly and concisely **the specific aims and objectives** of the proposal. These aims should be coherent, well planned and should be linked with real deliverables.
- Explain the **background** and **significance** of the problem – does the study address an important research problem? How and why is the proposed work important for the field? What is the current state of the art in the area? Describe and explain how the proposed work, if successful, will advance the state of the art. The background section should reference the state of the art in this research field.
- Are the concepts described **novel**? Ensure that the novelty of the approach is clearly explained, again with reference to the state of the art.
- The **methodology** of the proposed programme should be well developed, and how this proposed methodology advances the current state of the art should be described in detail. Is the proposed approach (including the competencies and activities of the team members) feasible and realistic?

The application should also include:

- **Appropriate timelines, milestones** and **expected outputs** for the proposed research (e.g., a Gantt chart), and the **roles of the Applicant, PhD student** and **Collaborators** in the work programme need to be **clearly described**.
 - Relevant **preliminary data**, if available, which may either take the form of (a) supporting reference(s) from the Applicants' previous research, or (b) a summary of results where the data has yet to be published. In the latter case, this should be included within the research programme as evidence that the Applicant has a track record in the field of the proposed research.
- **References (upload; max. 1 page)**
Appropriate references and citations for the proposed research must be provided in a separate PDF document. A one-page limit is permitted for uploaded references.

¹⁹ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/gender/>

²⁰ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/ethical-and-scientific-issues/>

- **Data Management Plan (upload; max. 2 pages)**

Good data governance and stewardship are key components of good research practice. Applicants to the Research Ireland Pathway Programme are required to provide a short Data Management Plan (DMP) as part of their full proposal application. In preparing this plan, consideration should be given to [Research Ireland's Guidance on Data Management Plans](#).²¹ See Section 5.4 for further guidance.

- **Impact Statement (upload; max. 2 pages)**

To obtain funding through the Research Ireland Pathway Programme, it is essential to demonstrate and articulate the potential impact and benefits of the proposed research. Impact embraces the diverse ways in which research-related knowledge and skills benefit individuals, organisations and nations and can be described as the demonstrable contribution that excellent research makes to the society and economy and higher education.²²

The Impact Statement should articulate the planned and potential impact of the proposed research. Research Ireland recognises that depending on the nature of the research, the impacts may be realised in the short, medium or longer term. In many cases impact is unforeseen; as such, it is not possible to predict all impacts at the time of submission. Applicants are advised, however, to make full use of the space provided to make a strong, unambiguous, and **realistic** plan outlining the **pathway** to impact with appropriate plans, milestones and deliverables.

The Impact Statement should be written primarily in lay, non-technical language and should be as specific and comprehensive as possible. It should describe the *potential* benefits of the proposed research including (but not limited to) societal, economic, cultural, knowledge, political, health, technological, environmental and educational impacts by answering the following overarching questions:

- **Who will benefit from this research and how?**
- **How will you engage with relevant beneficiaries and stakeholders?**
- **What plans will you put in place to increase the chances of impact from the proposed research?**
- **Over what timeframe might the benefits from your research be realised?**
- **How will the impact be demonstrated (what evidence will you collect)?**

In critically appraising various possible impacts, the following points should also be considered:

- Are there potential beneficiaries / stakeholders within the public sector, private sector, third-level sector or any others (e.g., professional or practitioner groups, charities or patient groups)?
- Are there potential international beneficiaries or collaborations with international organisations?
- How will the proposed research impact on the education, training and career of Ireland's students and research team members? Will there be infrastructural benefits for further research and education (e.g., facilities and instrumentation)? Applicants should note that all Pathway programmes will offer training opportunities of some

²¹ <https://www.researchireland.ie/about/policies/>

²² <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/award-management/research-impact/>

degree, therefore it is important to highlight the **added value** that will be provided from the training provided under your grant.

- o How will the proposed research impact on society, culture and the quality of life for Ireland's citizens and internationally?
- o How will the potential impacts of your research be best realised?
- o If applicable, how will collaborators increase the likelihood of potential impacts?
- o What benchmarks or metrics can be applied to clearly demonstrate in the future that the various impacts outlined in the Impact Statement are both realistic and achievable?

The statement should consider some or all of the points above to give confidence to reviewers that clear thought and realistic ambition have been employed to assess the likely or potential longer-term benefits of the research, including, and going beyond, the training aspects for both the Applicant and the associated PhD student.

Applicants should briefly outline previous indicators of impact to provide reviewers with confidence that the potential impacts described can be realised. These may include, but are not limited to:

- o Advances to the state of knowledge within a field
- o Training and development of others, including wider curricular/teaching and learning benefits
- o Stakeholder/external interest in their past or current work
- o Collaborative projects
- o Documented changes to public policy, guidelines or services
- o Improvements in public health / welfare / quality of life
- o Changes to behaviours or opinions
- o Enhancing culture and creativity
- o Operational or organisational change (e.g., processes and procedures)
- o Non-exchequer funding obtained
- o Problems / challenges solved or new insights gained

For more information and guidance on how to successfully articulate impact, detailed information including a webinar on research impact is available on the [website](#).²³ Applicants are encouraged to refer to this information in advance of preparing their Impact Statement.

3.8 Budget

The costs eligible for grant support under the Research Ireland Pathway Programme are those costs that can, uniquely and unambiguously, be identified with the proposed research programme. Applicants must give details of all relevant costs, including staff, equipment, materials and consumables, and travel. Applicants should ensure that the final total provided includes all costs. All grants are made directly to the Applicant's Research Body. Please also refer to the [Research Ireland General Terms and Conditions](#)²⁴ and also the [Research Ireland Grant Budget Policy](#) (Version June 2025).²⁵

Research Ireland Pathway grants are funded to a maximum value of **€535,000** direct costs for a period of four years. In addition to direct costs, Research Ireland also makes an indirect or overhead

²³ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/award-management/research-impact/>

²⁴ <https://www.researchireland.ie/about/policies/grant-terms-and-conditions/>

²⁵ <https://www.researchireland.ie/about/policies/financial/>

contribution to the host Research Body, which is reflected as a percentage of the direct costs (excluding equipment). Overheads are payable as a contribution to the Research Body for the indirect costs of hosting research programmes funded by Research Ireland and are intended to enable the Research Body to develop internationally competitive research infrastructure and support services. General overheads should not be included in the requested budget.

See notes for completion of the budget table in the [SESAME Researcher User Guide](#).

- **Staff**

The Staff budget requested **must** include a contribution to the Applicant's salary, which Research Ireland will provide over the duration of the grant. The maximum contribution to the Applicant's salary each year must be set at a point on the Experienced Postdoctoral Researcher scale (Level 2B) of the [Research Ireland General Team Member Budgeting Scale](#). Applicants are permitted to start (Year 1) at any point on Level 2B (that is, either at Point 1, Point 2, Point 3 or Point 4, but not at an intermediate value between these points). It is permissible to progress to the next point on the Level 2B scale in subsequent years, up to Point 4. However, it is also permissible to remain at the same point over consecutive years; reductions in salary contributions over consecutive years are not expected. Note that at no stage in the lifetime of the grant may the salary contribution be greater than Point 4 of the Level 2B scale. Regardless of how the salary contributions are planned, it is important to explain the reasoning for the chosen plan in the budget justification (see Section 3.9). Please see the [Research Ireland Grant Budget Policy](#) for full details, and note that the Applicant's salary contribution includes pension contributions and PRSI.

The requested budget should cover the fees and stipend of the PhD student as detailed in the [Research Ireland Grant Budget Policy](#).

It is important to note that researchers funded by Research Ireland are employees of the host Research Body. Research Ireland makes a *contribution* to the overall staff budget for the programme. Please refer to the guidance above and the salary scales provided as part of the [Grant Budget Policy](#) with regard to the funding of Applicant's salary (noting the 'Cost to Grant' figures).²⁶ Salaries for Collaborators are not permitted. It is advised to seek guidance from the Applicant's nominated Mentor and the host Research Office when preparing the requested budget.

- **Equipment**

As Applicants will have an identified Mentor who will provide laboratory space and necessary equipment to both the Applicant and the PhD student (where relevant), it is not expected that Applicants will include significant items of equipment within their budget request. Therefore, requests for equipment in proposals should be very carefully considered, and full justification should be provided. Small equipment of a value of **less than €2,000** should be included in the Materials and Consumables section. The exception to this is costs associated with computers/laptops, which must be listed in the Equipment section regardless of cost.

- **Materials and Consumables**

An outline of all materials and consumables that will be used in the research programme should be provided. Examples of Materials and Consumables costs include the following: books and journals; animal costs; laboratory fees; workshop/focus group organisation; recruitment fees; survey costs; training; etc.

A contribution to access charges may be sought for the use of infrastructure, including knowledge-based resources such as collections, archives, collections/archives of scientific data, e-infrastructures

²⁶ <https://www.researchireland.ie/about/policies/financial/>

such as data and computing systems and communication networks. Access charges may also be sought for the use of infrastructure where Research Ireland pre-approved access charge plans are in place. Note that these may include, with Research Ireland approval, access to facilities and services not available to the Applicant within their host institution, such as the costs associated with accessing international databases or commissioning specific experiments in national facilities.

Access charge requests must be included as a separate line item in the budget and, where relevant, must include the grant code and name of the infrastructure to be used. A rationale for the amount of use proposed must be provided in the budget justification.

Costs associated with organising small conferences, workshops, and focus groups for the purpose of data collection or field work should also be included under Materials and Consumables as outlined in the Research Ireland Grant Budget Policy (version June 2025).

- **Travel**

Only travel costs for journeys directly related to the progress of the research programme may be requested as a direct cost on the research grant. The Applicant should outline the details of travel expenses directly related to, for example, conferences, collaboration on the research programme, workshops / focus groups, or learning special research techniques. Where possible, please supply the conference name and location. In the case of working visits, the rates sought for subsistence and other allowances may be no more than those which the Research Body's permanent staff may claim. Please refer to the [Research Ireland Grant Budget Policy](#) (Version June 2025) for guidance.

3.9 Budget Justification

The Applicant must upload a Budget Justification as a PDF document. Justification for requested salary, stipend, fees, equipment, consumables and travel should be provided in **no more than two pages**. Only Eligible Research Bodies will be entitled to receive direct funding through the grant, and all funding will be administered through the Applicant's Research Body. If funding is sought for overseas services, this should be clearly justified and the rationale for not carrying out this activity in Ireland must be explained. As noted in Section 3.8, the Applicant's salary contribution over the lifetime of the proposed grant should be well justified.

Clear indication should be given where funding is apportioned to Collaborators. Please note that Collaborators outside Ireland or those not located within eligible Research Bodies in Ireland are not eligible to receive funding through the Programme.

3.10 Letters of Support

The following letters of support **must** be included:

- A letter of support from the **Mentor** outlining the support offered to the Applicant over the duration of the grant, commitment to the co-supervision of the PhD student, and the availability of laboratory space (where relevant) and infrastructure available to the Applicant and student is required. The letter should include a statement outlining the Applicant's potential to become an independent investigator and their ability to lead a research programme. Where relevant, the Mentor letter should also detail specific resources being committed, such as access to clinical samples or other finite resources.
- A letter of support from the **host Research Body**. In recognition of the career stage of the Applicant and to demonstrate the commitment of the Research Body, the proposal must

include one letter of support from the Vice President for Research (or equivalent organisational official) of the nominating Research Body. The letter should be on headed paper and should:

- Describe the Research Body's support for the Applicant's career and professional development (e.g., teaching, professional development, training, etc.).
 - Outline the measures that will be taken to ensure that the Applicant is not overburdened with teaching commitments in the early part of their appointment and should describe the candidate's maximum teaching commitment, if successful.
 - Contain a brief description of the institutional policy regarding the management of conflicts of interest.
 - Provide a brief description of the Department's/School's/Institution's research/academic strategy and describe how the Applicant will be integrated into this strategy.
 - Describe the support and facilities (both building and equipment) which the Department/Research Body will provide for the Applicant and PhD student. This could include, but is not limited to, commitments for instrumentation, laboratory facilities and research support.
 - Confirm that for the duration of the grant, a successful Applicant will be eligible to apply and compete for any and all permanent faculty positions that arise within this institution, where they are appropriate to their field of research.
 - Confirm of the date of award of the PhD degree.
 - Confirm that the Applicant has not previously held or is currently employed on a faculty contract greater than or equal to **36 months in duration**. Where the Applicant has been employed on a faculty contract, details should be provided in the Research Body Letter of Support.
 - Confirm that the Applicant is currently not an independent investigator.
 - State whether the candidate, if successful, will be the formal primary supervisor of the recruited PhD student, in line with the expectation of Research Ireland.
 - Provide details on the host Research Body's position on the independence that will be afforded to the applicant should they receive a Pathway grant.
- **Letters of support from Collaborators:**
 - Letters from Academic Collaborators should provide full details of the intended intellectual and/or technical input to the proposal. In addition, Academic Collaborators seeking funds through the grant must describe how these funds will be utilised.
 - Letters from other collaborators including Industry, public bodies, civil society / non-governmental organisations and other entities should provide full details of the intended intellectual input and, where relevant, the level of financial (cash, in-kind or both) contribution to the research programme. Similarly, letters of support from International Academic Collaborators should provide details of any cash and/or in-kind contributions.
 - Letters of support that do not originate from officially listed Collaborators will be removed from the proposal, as will letters from listed Collaborators that merely provide theoretical or general support without specifically describing a meaningful and impactful contribution to the proposal.

Letters of support may be a maximum of two pages in length; extraneous pages will be removed from the letter and the proposal. Letters of support may not be included from other bodies and individuals who are not Collaborators. Unsolicited letters of support will be removed from the proposal.

3.11 Applicant Acknowledgement of Terms and Conditions

Submission of an application confirms that Research Ireland's General Terms and Conditions²⁷ have been read and understood; that the Applicant meets eligibility requirements; that the project is in full agreement with all legal and regulatory matters governing research in Ireland; that no aspect of this project is already being funded from another source and that all details provided are correct; that the information supplied in the application is correct and the research proposal is the Applicant's own work. Failure to do so, or to comply with requirements outlined in this call document, will deem an application ineligible resulting in its withdrawal prior to review.

Research Ireland's Grant Conditions shall govern the administration of Research Ireland grants and awards to the exclusion of this and any other oral, written, or recorded statement.

3.12 Submission to Research Office

Once all sections of the application form have been completed, Applicants must submit their proposal to their Research Office by clicking on the "Submit for RO Review" button. Following submission, it will not be possible to edit the proposal while its status is given as "*Full Proposal - Pending RO Approval*". The Research Office may require Applicants to make revisions to their proposals before they submit the application to Research Ireland; a notification will be sent to Applicants where such revisions are mandated, and the status of the proposal in SESAME will revert to "*Full Proposal – In Preparation*", thus allowing the required revisions to be made.

A PDF of the proposal is available in SESAME and should be reviewed prior to submission to enable validation of an application. The responsibility for verifying that the proposal is ready for submission lies with the Applicant in this regard.

It is the responsibility of Applicants to ensure that their Research Office has successfully submitted their proposal to Research Ireland before the stated deadline of 13:00 on the 7th May 2026. After the submission deadline, applications will not be accepted by SESAME. Therefore, they will not be accepted by Research Ireland.

Please contact the Research Office well in advance of the deadline, to become familiar with any internal Research Body submission deadlines.

Applicants will receive a notification from SESAME periodically when the status of their proposal changes. Alternatively, if you wish to track the status of your proposal (e.g., when the proposal is pending Research Office approval or under review with Research Ireland), this information will be displayed in SESAME.

3.13 Research Body Approval

The submission of an application may only be made by an authorised Research Body representative and reflects that Research Ireland's General Terms and Conditions have been read and understood by all relevant parties. Further, the Research Body is confirming:

- The eligibility of the Applicant.
- That the requested budget including salaries/stipends, equipment, consumables and travel is in line with accepted institutional guidelines.

²⁷ <https://www.researchireland.ie/about/policies/grant-terms-and-conditions/>

- The availability of infrastructure within the institution as outlined by the Applicant in the research proposal.
- That the proposed research programme has not been funded by other sources.
- That relevant ethical approval will be in place prior to the grant or relevant component of the research programme commencing.
- That the relevant licences will be in place at the time of grant.
- That the details provided in relation to research funding history (i.e., current, pending or expired grants, as detailed in the application) are valid and accurate.
- That the details provided in relation to previous employment history are valid and accurate.
- That permission from all team members and collaborators has been obtained, such that Research Ireland may receive their personal information, and may process such data for the purpose of peer review.

For Research Ireland Pathway Programme applications, the Research Body is also approving:

- The suitability and willingness of the Mentor to host the Applicant.
- That the Research Body is responsible for supporting the Applicant and PhD student, if successful in the application.
- That, if successful, the Applicant will have a contract of employment in place that accounts for 100% of the Applicant's time and covers the duration of the requested Grant.
- That the candidate, if successful, will be the formal primary supervisor of the recruited PhD student (where this is not the case, the Research Body must describe the alternative arrangements).

Submission of an application through SESAME serves as the Research Body's endorsement of the eligibility of the Applicant as well as approval of the budget requested, the infrastructure to be provided by the Research Body, and furthermore, confirms the validity and accuracy of the details provided in relation to the current, pending and expired grants as detailed in the application and in relation to the Applicant's year of PhD.

3.14 Deadlines

Applicants selected by their intended Research Body must ensure that their proposal is submitted to Research Ireland no later than **7th May 2026 at 13:00** by their Research Office. **Applications cannot be submitted through SESAME after this deadline.**

3.15 Proposal Checklist

Section	Description	Requirements
Proposal Summary	Title	Up to 30 words
Proposal Summary	Duration of Grant Requested	48 months
Resubmission	Resubmission statement (if relevant)	Max. 1000 words
Research Alignment	Research area (Primary and Secondary)	Select from list for each
Research Alignment	Alignment to programme remit	Max. 250 words
Lead Applicant Details	Complete mandatory SESAME Profile information	Mandatory profile fields marked in red
Lead Applicant Details	ORCID iD	Link SESAME profile to ORCID iD
Lead Applicant Details	Percentage Time Commitment	Insert time commitment (%)
Lead Applicant Details	Narrative CV	Max. 5 pages (use template provided)
Lead Applicant Details	Statement of eligibility and career development plan	Max. 750 words
Lead Applicant Details	Supervisory Experience	Enter details
Lead Applicant Details	Research Funding History	Enter details
Mentor (Collaborator) Details	Name/Contact details etc.	Add contact name, details etc.
Mentor (Collaborator) Details	CV (Research Ireland recommend using the 2-page Narrative CV template provided) Letter of support also required (see section below)	Upload CV (max. 2 pages)
Collaborator(s) Details	Name/Contact details etc.	Add contact name, details etc.
Collaborator(s) Details	CV for each collaborator (Research Ireland recommend using the 2-page Narrative CV template provided) Letters of support also required (see section below)	Upload CVs (max. 2 pages)
Main Body of Proposal	Keywords	Max. 15 words
Main Body of Proposal	Abstract	Max. 200 words
Main Body of Proposal	Lay Abstract	Max. 100 words
Ethical Issues	Answer questions regarding ethical issues (Use of Animals, Research involving Human Participants, Biological Material or Identifiable Data)	Select relevant answers
Sex & Gender Dimension	Sex & Gender Dimension in Research Statement	Max. 1000 words
Programme Documents	Research Programme	Max. 8 pages
Programme Documents	References	Max. 1 page
Programme Documents	Data Management Plan	Max. 2 pages
Programme Documents	Impact Statement	Max. 2 pages
Budget	Details of all relevant costs	Budget Table in SESAME
Budget	Upload the budget justification	Upload (max. 2 pages)
Letter(s) of Support	Mentor	Max. 2 pages
Letter(s) of Support	Host Research Body	Max. 2 pages
Letter(s) of Support	Collaborator Letter of Support	Max. 2 pages
Declaration	Acknowledgement of Research Ireland Terms and Conditions	Tick box to agree

4 Review Process

The Research Ireland Pathway Programme employs a review process in which eligible proposals are evaluated in two stages. Stage 1 consists of a virtual review comprising of a panel of international reviewers with generalist expertise; all eligible proposals received will be assessed in adherence to the review criteria set out in Section 4.1 with each reviewer receiving multiple applications for evaluation. The panel members will exhibit a broad range of expertise relevant to the proposals under review. All applications will be ranked following the virtual panel review. The highest-ranked applications will proceed to the Stage 2 oversight panel review. Anonymous reviewer comments will then be made available to Applicants and those Applicants proceeding to Stage 2 will be afforded the opportunity to submit a response to the reviewers' comments. A Stage 2 oversight panel involving international reviewers with generalist expertise will be convened to review the Applicant response and oversee the fairness of the written reviews. Panel reviewers will provide a final score for each criterion and make a funding recommendation to Research Ireland.

A schematic of the review process is provided on the following page. Full details on the review process are provided in Appendix A.

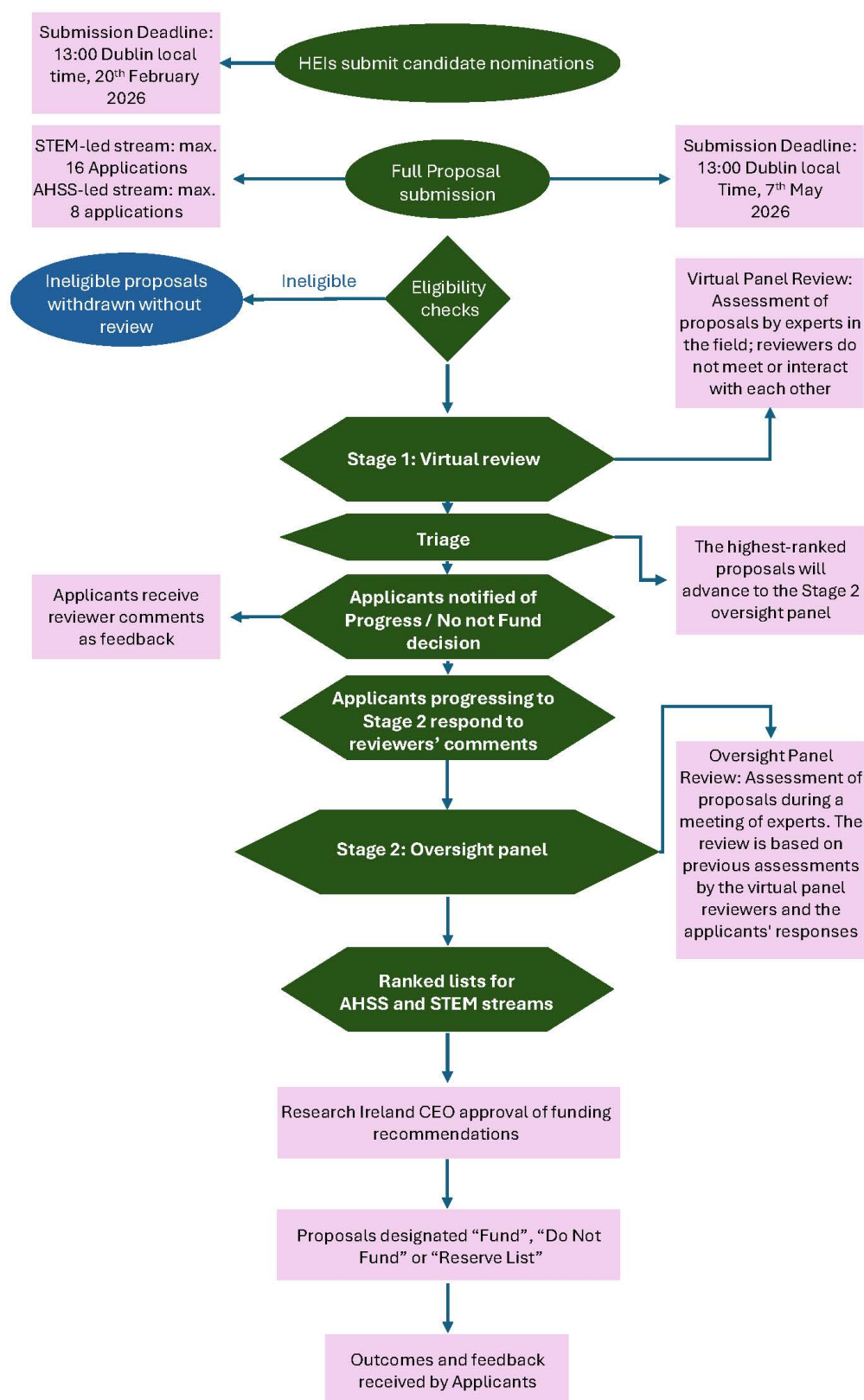
4.1 Proposal Review Process and Evaluation Criteria

All proposals will be assessed by international peer reviewers under the review criteria described below. These criteria will be applied at each stage of the review process.

- **Quality, significance and novelty of the research plan (weight 40%)**
 Novelty, importance, timeliness of the intended research; communication and description of the research; comprehension of the current state of the art; clearly delineated roles of the Applicant and the PhD student; suitability and achievability of the programme based on the experience of the Applicant; appropriate use of the available budget, the sex and gender dimension, etc.
- **Quality, significance and relevance of the Applicant's key achievements, research track record and career development plan, considering the research discipline and commensurate with their career stage and years of research experience, taking any periods of leave into account (weight 30%)**
 Applicant's track record and career development goals described in their personal statement and submitted Narrative CV. The following areas will be considered in evaluating the Applicant's track record: 1) Generation of Knowledge, 2) Development of Individuals and Collaboration, 3) Supporting Broader Society & the Economy and, 4) Supporting the Research Community and higher education.
- **Potential impact, and value to Ireland (weight 15%)**
 Appreciation of how research may be developed and exploited in the short, medium or longer term; realistic and convincing evaluation of the benefits that will result from a successful project; areas and fields where impacts are likely to be made; etc.
- **Quality of institutional and mentor support and infrastructure provided (weight 15%)**
 Support for the candidate's career and professional development; necessary space and equipment in place to carry out the programme of research; assurance from the support letters that the team will be looked after appropriately, clear rationale for the Applicant and mentor

working together; coherent plan between Applicant and mentor; confidence that the Applicant will have significant independence and that it will be respected by the Mentor, etc.

Research Ireland Pathway Programme Review Process



Weighted scores will be rounded to the nearest quarter point.²⁸ When ranking applications, in the event of applications receiving the same final score, ties will be decided based on the quality, significance and novelty of the research plan followed by the quality, significance and relevance of the Applicant's key achievements.

Experts engaged to carry out reviews are required to abide by the Research Ireland Reviewer Code of Conduct.²⁹ The submission of an application to Research Ireland shall be construed as consent by the Applicant to participate in the peer-review process. Research Ireland reserves the right not to **review applications that fail to meet the eligibility criteria**.

All appeals will be conducted in accordance with Research Ireland's Appeals Policy.³⁰

Other Review Information

The identity of international experts who conduct reviews shall remain confidential and will not be disclosed to the Applicants. Research Ireland shall not be liable for the release of information concerning proposals to third parties by those international peer reviewers involved in the merit review process.

Research Ireland reserves the right to modify the review process. Applicants will be notified of any relevant modification to the review procedure. The final funding decisions are at the sole and exclusive discretion of Research Ireland.

The final funding decisions are at the sole and exclusive discretion of Research Ireland.

5 Research Ireland Policies and Positions

In addition to complying with the [General Terms and Conditions](#), applicants are expected to be familiar and consult with Research Ireland policies/positions and with all relevant national policies when preparing their application to any programme. All members involved in the funded research should be apprised of the following non-exhaustive list of relevant policies. Please note that some policies are being updated to reflect the expanded remit of Research Ireland and in the interim, the existing policies of the legacy agencies should be followed.

- **Animal Usage**
- **Research Integrity**
- **Maternity, Paternity and Adoptive Leave Policy**
- **Appeals Process**
- **Child Protection**
- **Data Protection Policy**
- **Open Research**
- **Data Management**
- **Grant Budget Policy**
- **Disability Policy**

²⁸ Research Ireland reserves the right to adjust this rounding based on the number of applications received. Applicants will be made aware of any changes to the review process.

²⁹ https://www.researchireland.ie/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Research_Ireland_Reviewer_Code_of_Conduct.pdf

³⁰ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/review/>

5.1 State Aid and Research Ireland Grant Funding

As per Research Ireland's Grant Conditions (inclusive of Research Ireland's General Terms and Conditions,³¹ Letters of Offer and Research Ireland policy documents³²), all Research Ireland funding granted is subject to, and must be compliant with, State aid legislation based on Article 107(1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU).³³

Namely, research activities undertaken as part of a grant awarded under the Research Ireland Pathway Programme, and agreed to subject to Research Ireland's General Terms and Conditions, must be "non-economic" in nature and be designed to ensure that any funding received does not, directly or indirectly, give rise to the granting of State aid.

Where an application for funding involves an 'undertaking'³⁴ or industry party, recipients of Grant funding under the Research Ireland Pathway programme are required to demonstrate compliance with the conditions of "effective collaboration" and the conditions relating to the allocation between the parties of the results and/or intellectual property rights arising from the collaboration comply with one of the conditions set out in paragraphs 29 and 30 (as appropriate) of the 2022 Framework for State aid for research, development and innovation (2022/C 414/01) (the "Framework").³⁵

Research Ireland has set out guidance to support how the programme of research or project is developed and undertaken in accordance with these conditions. See 'Guidance on State aid for Applicants to, and recipients of, Research Ireland Grant funding' for further information.³⁶ To support compliance with "effective collaboration", Applicants must complete and return an "Industry Collaboration Form" (ICF) to Research Ireland on or before the date that the Collaborative Research (or Intellectual Property Rights) Agreement (CRA) has been 'agreed' with, or signed by, the relevant (industry) partner(s). The ICF should be used by Applicants to assist in defining the relationship with the industry partner(s). Further, a copy of each CRA arising from the grant must be held on file by the relevant Research Body. Research Ireland may request a copy of the signed CRA to be provided (as advised in the General Terms and Conditions) to be held on file by Research Ireland for audit purposes. The ICF and related guidance, inclusive of an FAQ document, can be found on the Research Ireland website.³⁷ Applicants are advised to seek independent legal advice in advance of applying to Research Ireland for funding where further clarification is sought.

5.2 Research Ireland's External Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy 2023-2028

Research Ireland is committed to enhancing equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) within the Irish research and innovation sector. The Agency recognises that excellent research stems from diverse and inclusive teams, which reflect our society and the communities we serve. As such, Research Ireland aspires to proactively lead in driving the EDI agenda forward through the research and research teams that it funds.

³¹ <https://www.researchireland.ie/about/policies/grant-terms-and-conditions/>

³² <https://www.researchireland.ie/about/policies/>

³³ [Commission Notice on the notion of State aid as referred to in Article 107\(1\) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union TABLE OF CONTENTS \(europa.eu\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=uriserv:OJ.C_.2022.414.01.0001.01.ENG)

³⁴ The concept of an "undertaking" under EU competition law rules is an entity that is engaged in an "economic activity" regardless of its legal status or the way that it is financed. An activity is economic in nature when it involves offering goods or services on a market.

³⁵ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=uriserv:OJ.C_.2022.414.01.0001.01.ENG

³⁶ <https://www.researchireland.ie/about/policies/>

³⁷ <https://www.researchireland.ie/about/policies/state-aid/>

In Research Ireland's External Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy 2023-2028,³⁸ increasing the number of women and other members of Historically Underserved Communities³⁹ in Applicant Teams are key objectives. As such, women and members of Historically Underserved Communities are strongly encouraged to apply to this programme. Further details on application submission and success rates by gender (binary) can be found for historic programmes on the Research Ireland website.⁴⁰

Gender data fields on Research Ireland's Grants and Awards Management System, SESAME, have been expanded to encompass more inclusive gender identifiers. These expanded gender identifier fields support those objectives described in Research Ireland's External EDI Strategy, which aims to be a key driver of an inclusive research culture, lead in minimising barriers to participation in the research endeavour and ensure that its investment reflects the input of researchers that are representative of society, and thus the outputs are relevant to society. Gender data gathered will inform the diversity of the Applicant group. It will help to inform future iterations of this and similar programme calls. The data gathered will also inform how we can best improve the representation of other Historically Underserved Communities, including individuals from underrepresented genders, in our portfolio of grants awarded.

Furthermore, as part of its EDI Strategy, Research Ireland also aims to increase awareness of the sex and gender dimension in research, by requesting that researchers demonstrate that they have considered any potential biological sex and/or socio-cultural gender aspects in their proposed research activities.

5.3 Declaration of Research Assessment (DORA) Principles

Research Ireland is a signatory of the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA),⁴¹ and as such are aligning their review and evaluation processes with DORA principles. Research Ireland has reinforced its commitment to the core principles by joining DORA as a member.⁴² To this end, all types of research output are recognised, and Research Ireland is committed to assessing the quality and impact of research through means other than journal-based indicators/metrics and research-performance-based indicators/metrics such as impact factors and h-indices. In the spirit of supporting open research and as a signatory to Ireland's National Action Plan for Open Research 2022-2030 and a signatory of Plan S,⁴³ Research Ireland will also consider a commitment to making data and other types of research open and accessible. To complement these activities and further reinforce Research Ireland's commitment to the overarching objectives of the Narrative CV, Research Ireland is a signatory to the Agreement on Reforming Research Assessment⁴⁴ and is a member of the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA).⁴⁵

5.4 Data Management and Sex and Gender Section Guidance

Good data governance and stewardship are key components of good research practice. Applicants to the Research Ireland Pathway Programme are required to provide a short (2-page) Data Management

³⁸ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/gender/>

³⁹ For the purposes of this Strategy, Historically Underserved Community encompasses a broad and diverse range of historically marginalised groups including but not limited to the nine protected grounds established in the [Equal Status Acts 2000-2018](#) and socioeconomic status.

⁴⁰ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/gender/>

⁴¹ <https://sfidora.org/read/>

⁴² Contributor level membership

⁴³ <https://www.coalition-s.org/>

⁴⁴ https://coara.eu/app/uploads/2022/09/2022_07_19_rra_agreement_final.pdf

⁴⁵ <https://coara.eu/>

Plan (DMP) as part of their full proposal application. In preparing this plan, consideration should be given to [Research Ireland's Guidance on Data Management Plans](#).⁴⁶ The DMP is a living document, which details the procedures for careful handling of data and other research outputs. A DMP follows the data through the lifecycle of the programme of research,⁴⁷ from collection to analysis and interpretation, sharing and dissemination, and long-term storage.

DMPs will be evaluated by reviewers to ensure that they contain sufficient information on practices and standards as guided below; this assessment will be incorporated into the overall scoring criteria for the Research Programme section of the application. Although practices and standards vary across disciplines, Research Ireland recommends the use of [Science Europe DMP templates and guidelines](#).⁴⁸

Each DMP should include a high-level summary of the following, as appropriate to the programme or project:⁴⁹

1. Data description and collection or re-use of existing data
2. Documentation and data quality
3. Storage and backup during the research process
4. Legal and ethical requirements, codes of conduct
5. Data sharing and long-term preservation
6. Data management responsibilities and resources including institutional or project-specific resources dedicated to managing data and ensuring adherence with the [FAIR](#) principles (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Re-usable).

Sex and Gender Dimension in Research Statement

In line with Research Ireland's External Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy 2023-2028,⁵⁰ all Applicants must complete a statement articulating the consideration of biological sex and/or social gender variables in their planned research. Applicants must consider how the sex and/or gender dimension impacts your research. Please consult the Guidance for Applicants on Ethical and Scientific Issues for resources on how to address the sex and/or gender dimension of research in your grant.

Do not include information on how you have addressed gender equality, diversity and inclusion in your research team/environment; this should be addressed in Section 1B of your CV, should you choose to highlight this.

To complete this section, please consider the following questions:

1. Is sex as a biological variable taken into account in the research design, methods, analysis and interpretation, and/or dissemination of findings?
2. Is gender as a socio-cultural factor taken into account in the research design, methods, analysis and interpretation, and/or dissemination of findings?

⁴⁶ <https://www.researchireland.ie/about/policies/>

⁴⁷ Research Ireland-funded research programmes, as described in call documents, can range from a single research project to a collection of research projects encompassed in several work packages. The data management plan should reflect the relevant standards for individual research projects while describing a cohesive approach to managing data across the overall programme of research as appropriate.

⁴⁸ <https://www.scienceeurope.org/our-priorities/research-data/research-data-management/>

⁴⁹ Based primarily on guidance provided by Science Europe: <https://www.scienceeurope.org/our-resources/practical-guide-to-the-international-alignment-of-research-data-management/> and supplemented by guidance from the European Research Council of the European Commission: https://erc.europa.eu/sites/default/files/document/file/ERC_info_document-Open_Research_Data_and_Data_Management_Plans.pdf

⁵⁰ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/gender/>

If the answer is yes, please describe how sex and/or gender considerations will be integrated into your research proposal. If no, please explain why sex and/or gender are not applicable to your research proposal.

As noted, Research Ireland's policies are under development and will be added to the Research Ireland website once finalised. For information on other policies:

- Visit <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/> **for information relating to Science Foundation Ireland (SFI)**
- Visit <https://research.ie/about-us/policies/> **for information relating to the Irish Research Council (IRC)**

For any questions concerning Research Ireland, SFI or IRC policies, please contact by email at researchpolicy@researchireland.ie.

6 Further Information

All information related to the Research Ireland Pathway Programme is available on the programme webpage:

<https://www.researchireland.ie/funding/pathway/>

For all additional queries please contact pathway@researchireland.ie

Appendix A: Research Ireland Pathway Programme Review Process

The review criteria detailed in Section 4 will be applied at all stages of the review process. In addition, a weighting and scoring system will be applied.

Score Weighting System:

Review Criteria	Weighting
Research programme	40%
Applicant	30%
Impact	15%
Mentor / Institutional support	15%

Weighted scores will be rounded to the nearest quarter point.⁵¹ When ranking applications, in the event of applications receiving the same final score, ties will be decided based on the quality of the proposed research followed by the quality, significance and relevance of the Applicant's key achievements. Lastly, in the event of applications receiving the same final weighted score, unweighted Research Programme score and unweighted Applicant score, ties will be decided based on a randomly assigned number in ascending order. Following the conclusion of Stage 1, each proposal progressing to Stage 2 will be randomly assigned a number. For transparency, this process will be carried out under the observation of the sitting panel chairs.

Research Ireland Pathway Programme Review Process

All proposals submitted to the Research Ireland Pathway Programme will be assessed for eligibility and proposals meeting the eligibility requirements will be reviewed as outlined below.

Stage 1 Review

The assessment will be carried out by **'virtual panels'** comprised of a large number of international reviewers, where each member of the virtual panel receives a number of proposals, typically six, to review. The panel members will exhibit a **broad range of expertise** relevant to the proposals under review. All proposals will be forwarded to a minimum of three distinguished international peer reviewers for written evaluation and rating under the review criteria outlined below. A copy of the review form is provided in the table below.

⁵¹ Research Ireland reserves the right to adjust this rounding based on the number of applications received. Applicants will be made aware of any changes to the review process.

Review Type	Virtual Panel review
Review Questions	<p>Question pertaining to Applicant(s)</p> <p>Research Ireland is a signatory of the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA),⁵² and as such are aligning their review and evaluation processes with DORA principles. Research Ireland has reinforced its commitment to the core principles by joining DORA as a member.⁵³ To this end, all types of research output are recognised and Research Ireland is committed to assessing the quality and impact of research through means other than journal-based indicators/metrics and research-performance-based indicators/metrics such as impact factors and h-indices. In the spirit of supporting open research and as a signatory to Ireland's National Action Plan for Open Research 2022-2030⁵⁴ and a signatory of Plan S⁵⁵, Research Ireland will also consider a commitment to making data and other types of research open and accessible. To complement these activities and further reinforce Research Ireland's commitment to the overarching objectives of the Narrative CV, Research Ireland is a signatory to the Agreement on Reforming Research Assessment⁵⁶ and is a member of the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA).⁵⁷</p> <p>Please take these positions into account during your assessment of the Narrative CV(s) submitted by the applicant(s).</p> <p>Please comment on the quality, significance and relevance of the applicant's key achievements, research track record and career development plan, as demonstrated in the CV and personal statement, commensurate with their career stage and research discipline, years of research experience and taking any periods of leave into account. Please include in your review comments how the applicant(s) has addressed each of the following areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Generation of Knowledge, 2) Development of Individuals and Collaborations, 3) Supporting Broader Society & the Economy and, 4) Supporting the Research Community. <p>With your review, please also consider whether the expertise and experience of the lead applicant is appropriate given their proposed contribution to the research programme.</p> <p>There are two stages to the scoring of the applicant(s):</p> <p>First, please score the quality, significance and relevance of the applicant's key achievements and research track record with regard to the individual categories in the CV(s):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Generation of Knowledge,

⁵² <https://sf-dora.org/>

⁵³ Contributor level membership

⁵⁴ [National Action Plan | National Open Research Forum \(norfi.ie\)](https://www.norfi.ie/)

⁵⁵ <https://www.coalition-s.org/>

⁵⁶ https://coara.eu/app/uploads/2022/09/2022_07_19_rra_agreement_final.pdf

⁵⁷ <https://coara.eu/>

2) Development of Individuals and Collaborations,

3) Supporting Broader Society & the Economy,

4) Supporting the Research Community. Half scores are permitted.

- 1 = Applicant(s) not internationally competitive for this category
- 2 = Applicant(s) track record has considerable weaknesses for this category
- 3 = Applicant(s) track record lacking in one or two critical aspects for this category
- 4 = High-quality applicant(s) in nearly all respects for this category
- 5 = Outstanding applicant(s) for this category

Second, taking into account the four categories referred to above, please use your judgement to provide one overall score based on the quality, significance and relevance of the applicant's key achievements, research track record and career development plan, as demonstrated in the CV and personal statement, considering the research discipline and commensurate with their career stage, years of research experience and taking any periods of leave into account. This score will be the final score used to assess the applicant. Half scores are permitted.

- 1 = Applicant(s) not internationally competitive
- 2 = Applicant(s) track record has considerable weaknesses
- 3 = Applicant(s) track record lacking in one or two critical aspects
- 4 = High-quality applicant(s) in nearly all respects
- 5 = Outstanding applicant(s)

Question pertaining to Research Plan

Please comment on the quality, significance and novelty of the research plan. In your assessment, please consider points such as: novelty, importance, timeliness of the intended research; communication and description of the research; comprehension of the current state of the art; clearly delineated roles of the applicant and the PhD student; suitability and achievability of the programme based on the experience of the applicant; appropriate use of the available budget, the sex and gender dimension etc.

Data Management Plan

Drawing upon your subject matter expertise, please indicate whether the data management plan (DMP) is sufficient or insufficient (lack of information or deemed incorrect).

- Is the data management plan sufficient? Yes / No
- If the data management plan is **not sufficient**, please explain.

Sex and Gender Dimension in Research

This section should not include information on gender equality, diversity and inclusion in the research team/environment.

- Has the applicant adequately addressed the sex and/or gender dimension/s in their proposal? Yes/No

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the applicant has not included a sex and/or gender dimension/s in their research proposal, are you satisfied that they have justified this position sufficiently? If not, please explain. • If the applicant has included a sex and/or gender dimension/s in their research proposal, is the design/analysis described sufficiently rigorously to test for differences between the sexes and/or genders? If not, please explain. • If the applicant is only studying one biological sex and/or gender, has the applicant provided sufficient justification with reference to the literature, preliminary data, or other relevant consideration in their proposal? <p>Please rate the quality, significance and novelty of the research plan, including the Sex and Gender Statement aspects and data management plan (half scores are permitted)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 = Research proposed is not worthy of funding • 2 = Research proposed has serious deficiencies • 3 = Research proposed is lacking in one or more critical aspects; key issues need to be addressed • 4 = High-quality research programme in most respects • 5 = Outstanding research programme in all respects <p>Question pertaining to Impact</p> <p>Please review the Impact Statement prepared by the applicant(s) and comment on the applicant's ability to demonstrate the potential impact and value to Ireland. In your assessment, please consider points such as: Appreciation of how research may be developed and exploited in the short-, medium- or longer- term; realistic and convincing evaluation of the benefits that will result from a successful project; areas and fields where impacts are likely to be made.</p> <p>Please rate the applicant's ability to demonstrate the potential impact and value to Ireland (half scores are permitted)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 = Very low impact potential • 2 = Low impact potential • 3 = Good impact potential • 4 = High impact potential • 5 = Outstanding impact potential <p>Question pertaining to institutional and mentor support, and infrastructure</p> <p>Please review the letters of support and comment on the quality of institutional and mentor support and infrastructure provided. In your assessment, please consider points such as: support for the applicant's career development; necessary space and equipment in place to carry out the programme of research; assurance from the support letters that the team will be looked after appropriately, clear rationale for the applicant and mentor working together; coherent plan between applicant and mentor; confidence that the applicant will have significant independence and that it will be respected by the mentor, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 = Mentor and/or institutional support is not appropriate • 2 = Mentor and/or institutional support is weak • 3 = Mentor and/or institutional support is lacking in one or two critical aspects • 4 = Mentor and / or institutional support is high-quality
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 = Mentor and / or institutional support is outstanding <p>Question pertaining to Budget & Team Is the budget appropriate/realistic given the track record of the applicant? Please comment on the appropriateness of the skills, composition of the team (including collaborators) and the appropriateness of the resources requested.</p> <p>Question pertaining to Ethical Issues Please comment on any ethical issues, particularly related to any aspects of the proposed research that involves animals, human participants, human biological material, or identifiable/potentially identifiable data.</p>
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Applicant Response

Applications will be ranked following the virtual panel review. The highest-ranked applications will proceed to the Stage 2 oversight panel review. Applicants not proceeding to the Stage 2 review will be informed that their application was unsuccessful. Applications with a very high standard deviation or vastly deviating reviewer opinions may also be selected to progress to Stage 2. **Research Ireland reserves the right to choose the threshold required for progressing to Stage 2 of the review process, based on the quality of the applications received.**

Anonymous reviewer comments will then be made available to Applicants and those Applicants proceeding to Stage 2 will be afforded the opportunity to submit a **response** to the reviewers' comments. Applicants will be given a defined period of time in which to respond (advanced notice of dates and guidelines relating to the response will be indicated to Applicants).

Stage 2 Oversight Panel Review

An oversight panel involving international reviewers with generalist expertise will be convened to review the Applicant response and oversee the fairness of the written reviews. Panel reviewers will receive the written reviews and scores following Stage 1 along with the Applicant's response to those reviews. Panel reviewers will provide a final score for each criterion and make a funding recommendation to Research Ireland

Weighted scores will be rounded to the nearest quarter point.⁵⁸ The outcome of the panel meeting is a ranked list of applications in a series of bands. Within each band, the ranking will be based on the Research Programme score (non-weighted), followed by the Applicant score (non-weighted). In the event of an application(s) receiving the same final weighted score, unweighted Research Programme score and unweighted Applicant score, ties will be decided based on a randomly assigned number in ascending order. Each proposal progressing to Stage 2 will be randomly assigned a number. For transparency, this process will be carried out under the observation of the sitting panel chairs. Two ranked lists will be generated: one composed of applications submitted under the STEM-led stream and another composed of applications submitted under the AHSS-led stream. Research Ireland will fund down the STEM and AHSS

⁵⁸ Research Ireland reserves the right to adjust this rounding based on the number of applications received. Applicants will be made aware of any changes to the review process.

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ranked lists until the programme funding is exhausted. Please note that the threshold for funding for each stream may differ as the partition of funding for the overall programme budget will vary for each stream. Applicants will receive the panel's report as feedback.

Appendix B: Research Areas

Primary Research Area (for selection in SESAME)

Primary STEM Research Areas (Available under the STEM led stream)	Primary AHSS Research Areas (Available under the AHSS led stream)
Agriculture	Anthropology
Astronomy	Archaeology
Biochemistry	Business and Management
Biomedicine	Celtic Studies
Chemistry	Classics
Computational and Mathematical Biology	Cultural Studies
Computer and Information Sciences	Economics
Earth and Environmental Sciences	Education
Energy	Environmental Studies
Engineering	Equality Studies
Food Science	Film Studies
Genetics and Genomics	Folklore Studies
Immunity and Infection	French
Materials Science	Geography
Mathematics	German
Microbiology	History
Molecular and Cell Biology	Irish Language Studies
Networking and Communications Systems	Italian
Neuroscience and Behaviour	Languages
Physics	Law
	Linguistics
	Literature
	Media
	Musicology
	Philosophy
	Politics
	Psychology
	Sociology
	Spanish
	Theatre Studies
	Theology

Secondary Research Area (for selection in SESAME)

Secondary STEM Research Areas (available under either stream)	Secondary AHSS Research Areas (available under either stream)
Age-Related Research	Accounting
Agriculture	Aging
Algorithms	Ancient Greek and Latin Literature and Art
Applied Mathematics	Ancient History
Artificial Intelligence	Animal Communication
Astronomy	Archaeology
Bacteriology	Archaeometry
Biochemistry	Asset Prices
Bioengineering	Banking
Bioinformatics	Behavioural Economics
Biomedicine	Childhood Studies
Biophysics	Classics
Biosensors	Cognitive and Experimental Psychology
Cancer	Colonial and Post-colonial History
Cardiovascular	Communication Networks
Cell Cycle Regulation and Apoptosis	Comparative Law
Cellular Biotechnology	Competitiveness
Chemical Engineering	Constitutions
Chemistry	Corporate Finance
Civil and Environmental Engineering	Criminology
Communication Protocols	Cultural Dimensions of Classification and Cognition
Computational and Mathematical Biology	Cultural Diversity
Computational Chemistry	Cultural Heritage
Computer and Information Sciences	Cultural History
Computer Graphics and Visualisation	Cultural Memory
Computer Vision and Image Processing	Cultural Studies
Cryptography	Democratisation
Developmental Biology	Design
Devices	Development
Diagnostics	Development and Architecture
Distributed Systems	Discourse Analysis
Drug Formulation and Delivery	Early Modern History
Earth and Environmental Sciences	Econometrics

Ecology	Economic Growth
Electronic and Electrical Engineering	Entangled Histories
Energy	Environmental Change and Society
Energy Conservation and Waste	Environmental Regulations and Climate Negotiations
Energy Storage	Epistemology and Logic
Engineering	Evolution of Mind and Cognitive Functions
Enzymes/Catalysts	Family and Fertility
Films and Coatings	Financial Markets
Financial Mathematics	Formal, Cognitive, Functional and Computational Linguistics
Food Science	Gender Studies
Gastrointestinal	Geo-information and Spatial Data Analysis
Gene Structure and Expression	Global and Transnational Governance
Gene Therapy	Global and Transnational History
Genetic Engineering	Governance Legal Studies
Genetics and Genomics	Government
Geotechnologies	Health and Society
Glasses and Ceramics	Health Promotion
Glycobiology	Historiography
Hematology	History of Art and Architecture
High Performance and Grid Computing	History of Collective Identities and Memories
Human Disease and Pathology	History of Economic Thought
Imaging and Microscopy	History of Ideas
Immunity and Infection	History of Literature
Inflammation Research	History of Music
Information Security	History of Philosophy
Information Systems and Web Science	History of Sciences and Techniques
Inorganic Chemistry	Households
Language Technologies	Human Life-span Development
Lasers and Plasmas	Human Rights
Magnetism	Identity
Materials Science	Income Distribution and Poverty
Mathematics	Industrial Organisation
Mechanical and Structural Engineering	Inequalities
Medicinal Chemistry	Information Society
Metabolism	Infrastructure
Microbial Pathogenesis	Innovation
Microbiology	Institutional Economics

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Modelling and Virtual Science	Intellectual History
Models of Disease	Interethnic Relations
Molecular and Cell Biology	International Development
Molecular Evolution	International Finance
Nanoscience	International Studies
Nanotechnology	International Trade
Networking and Communications Systems	Kinship
Neurodegeneration	Labour Economics
Neurophysiology	Land Use
Neuroscience and Behaviour	Landscape Archaeology
Optics and Photonics	Language Pathologies
Organic Chemistry	Law and Economics
Parasitology	Lexicography
Patterning and Lithographic Techniques	Library and Information Studies
Pharmacology	Literary Styles
Physical Chemistry	Literary Theory and Comparative Literature
Physics	Macroeconomics
Plant Science	Marketing
Polymer Science	Media
Population Genetics	Medieval History
Protein Structure	Microeconomics
Proteomics	Migration
Pulmonary and Respiratory	Mobility, Tourism, Transportation and Logistics Spatial
Quantum Information	Modern and Contemporary History
Regenerative Biology and Stem Cells	Museums and Exhibitions
Renewables	Music and Musicology
Reproductive Biology	Myth
RNA Processing and Regulation	Neuropsychology
Semiconductors	Organisation Studies
Sensor Networks	Palaeography and Epigraphy
Sensors	Pedagogy
Signal Processing	Perception, Action, and Higher Cognitive Processes
Signal Transduction	Performing Arts
Software Engineering	Philosophy
Spectroscopy	Philosophy of Mind
Spintronics	Political Economy
Statistics	Political Science

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Structural Biology	Political Systems and Institutions
Theory of Computation	Political Theory
Theoretical Physics	Population Dynamics
Tissue Engineering	Pragmatics
Toxicology	Prehistory and Protohistory
Vaccines	Psycholinguistics and Neurolinguistics
Virology	Public Economics
Wireless Networks	Quantitative Economic History
	Regional Planning
	Regional Studies
	Religious Studies
	Research and Development
	Resources and Sustainability
	Ritual
	Second Language Teaching and Learning
	Sex/Gender
	Sex/Gender History
	Social and Clinical Psychology
	Social and Economic Geography
	Social and Economic History
	Social and Industrial Ecology
	Social Geography
	Social Mobility
	Social Movements
	Social Policy
	Social Structure
	Social Studies of Science and Technology Environment
	Social Work
	Sociolinguistics
	Statistical Methods
	Symbolic Representations
	Systems and Institutions
	Teaching and Learning
	Terminology
	Textual Philology
	Theory and Methods of History
	Theory and Strategy

	Typological, Historical and Comparative Linguistics
	Urban Studies
	Violence, Conflict and Conflict Resolution
	Visual Arts
	Women's Studies
	Work and Welfare