

Research Ireland Investigators Programme: Stage 2 – Full Proposal Application Handbook

Stage 2 Key Dates

Launch	April 7th 2026
Submissions Deadline	May 28th 2026 - 13:00 Dublin local time
Outcome Notification	December 2026

Please read both the Stage 2 Handbook and the Call Document carefully

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1 Full Proposal Checklist

This Full Proposal checklist is provided as a summary guide for applicants. However, please read this entire handbook and call document carefully. More details on each item in the checklist are provided later in this Handbook and in the Call Document.

Proposal Checklist		
Section	Description	Requirements
Proposal Summary	Title	From EOI Stage*
	Duration of Grant	48 Months (only)
Resubmission	Resubmission statement (if relevant)	Max. 1000 words
Research Alignment	Primary Research Area	From EOI Stage*
	Secondary Research Area	From EOI Stage*
Lead Applicant Details	Complete mandatory SESAME Profile information	Mandatory profile fields marked in red
	ORCID iD	Link SESAME profile to ORCID iD
	Location of Applicant at time of Submission	Drop-down list of countries
	Commitment %	Insert time commitment
	Narrative CV	Max. 5 pages. Must use Narrative CV template provided on Investigators webpage ¹
	Supervisory Experience	Enter details
	Joint Appointment	Select Yes/No Details Required if 'Yes'
	Emerging Investigator **	Applicants applying under the Emerging Investigator category should provide a statement detailing how they are eligible to apply under the category.
Co-Applicant Details*** (If applicable from EOI stage)	Complete mandatory SESAME Profile information	Mandatory profile fields marked in red
	ORCID iD	Link SESAME profile to ORCID iD
	Commitment %	Insert time commitment
	Narrative CV	Max. 5 pages. Must use Narrative CV template

¹ <https://www.researchireland.ie/funding/investigators/>

Proposal Checklist		
		provided on Investigators webpage ¹
Research Funding (both Lead and Co-Applicant)	Funding Diversification	Completed Table
	Research Overlap	Completed Statement
Collaborator Details	Collaborator List	Completed Table
	Collaborator CVs	Max. 2 pages (each) – does not have to use Narrative CV; optional
	Collaborator Letters of Support	Max. 2 pages (each); optional
Main Body of Proposal	Keywords	From EOI Stage*
	Research Abstract	From EOI Stage*
	Lay Abstract	From EOI Stage*
Ethics	Ethics Declaration	Answer questions regarding ethical issues (e.g. Use of Animals, Research involving Human Participants, Biological Material or Identifiable Data) - no documentation required at this stage
Sex/Gender Dimension in Research	Sex and Gender Dimension in Research Statement	Complete section on Sex and Gender considerations for your research proposal (max. 1000 words)
Budget	Details of all relevant costs	Budget Table in SESAME
Budget Justification	Budget Justification Document	Max. 3 pages. Must articulate how the proposed budget represents value for money
Programme Documents	Research Programme	Max. 8 Pages
	Research Programme References	Max. 2 pages
	Data Management Plan	Max. 2 pages
	Impact Statement	Max. 3 Pages
Infrastructure, facilities, services and space to be provided by Research Body	Description of the infrastructure, facilities, services and space provided by Research Body	Max. 1 Page (optional)
Letters of Support	Host Research Body of the Lead Applicant (and Co-Applicant if in the same Research Body)	Max. 2 pages (mandatory)

Proposal Checklist		
	Host Research Body of Co-Applicant if in a different Research Body	Max. 2 pages (mandatory)
	Collaborators (Academic, Industry)	Max. 2 pages each (optional)

**These were submitted as part of the EOI stage and should not be changed significantly at this stage. See Section 4 for more details.*

***Applicants can only apply as Emerging Investigators if they do not have a Co-Applicant already associated with the application.*

****Co-applicants cannot be added or removed at this stage of the competition*

2 Eligibility Summary

Applicants who have been invited to submit a full proposal were required to adhere to the eligibility criteria below, as of the Stage 1 deadline (September 17th, 2025). The host research body (or bodies, where different), of the Lead and Co-Applicant (where relevant) will be required to confirm these requirements in their Letter of Support (See Section 4.6).

Please note that if an applicant was not eligible under any of the following criteria as of September 17th, 2025, they will be made ineligible at Stage 2.

Lead /Co-Applicant Eligibility Summary			
Section	Description	Requirements	Call Document Section / Link
Employment	Status	Independent Investigators Only. Applicants had to be <u>Independent at time of EOI submission</u> , September 17 th , 2025.	3.6.1 (‘Who Can Apply’ - https://www.researchireland.ie/funding-policies/eligibility)
	Research Body	Research Ireland Eligible Research Bodies Only.	3.7 (https://www.researchireland.ie/about/policies/eligible-research-bodies/)

Lead /Co-Applicant Eligibility Summary			
Independent Researcher - Contract Status	Contract Status	<p>Independent Researcher that holds a permanent contract or holds a contract that covers the duration of the proposed research programme at submission or where the host research body provides a guarantee that a contract that covers the duration of the proposed research proposal will be provided by the research body if the grant is successful.</p> <p>Contract held (or guaranteed) must be a minimum 50% Full Time Equivalent contract with the host research body.</p>	<p>3.6.1</p> <p>(‘Who Can Apply’ - https://www.researchireland.ie/funding-policies/eligibility)</p>
	Infrastructure/ Research Space	For all conditions above, the host research body must commit to providing the appropriate office and (if applicable) research space for at least the duration of the grant.	3.6.1
	Contract Duration	For application purposes please use the following date: Applicants must hold (or be guaranteed) a contract until (at least) November 30th 2030 .	
	Post-Doctoral Researchers	Post-Doctoral Researchers are not eligible to apply for this programme.	3.6.1
	Joint/Secondary Appointment	<p>Holders of Joint or Secondary Appointments are eligible to apply but should see the relevant contract conditions in the Who Can Apply policy.</p> <p>Any Joint Appointments MUST be declared in the Full Proposal application form</p>	<p>‘Who Can Apply’ (https://www.researchireland.ie/funding-policies/eligibility)</p>

Lead /Co-Applicant Eligibility Summary			
Other Applicant Criteria	PhD Age	Must have PhD (or equivalent) qualification for 3 years at the EOI submission date. (Date on Certificate is at least 3 years as of September 17th 2025).	3.6.2
	Publications	No requirements.	N/A
Other Grants	Existing Research Ireland Grants	See Call Document for requirements for if (and when) you may apply, if you hold a current Research Ireland, SFI, or IRC grant.	3.6.3
	Applications Under Review or Pending Review	You may not apply for to the Investigators Programme if you have an application under review for the Research Professorship Programme , the Global Talent Ireland Programme , and/or the Pathway Programme . If you have an funding application, outside of Research Ireland, and this application has significant research overlap with your Investigators application, you will have to state this in your application form. You may not be eligible to apply. Please contact investigators@researchireland.ie if you have any questions on this.	3.6.3
	Same Grant Funded Elsewhere	If you have received funding for an application with significant research overlap to your Investigators Application, either with Research Ireland or another funding agency, you will not be eligible to apply. You should contact investigators@researchireland.ie as soon as possible.	3.6.3

Applications will be evaluated for eligibility following submission. The following table outlines requirements for documentation and the action that will be taken.

Application Documents		
Document(s)	Requirements	Outcome
Funding History (Lead and Co-Applicant)	All applicants must complete these sections, and where an applicant has no previous funding and no pending funding, a clear statement must be provided to indicate this.	Missing Funding History for either applicant will result in the application being made ineligible.
Narrative CV (Lead and Co-Applicant)	Template must be used for Lead and Co-Applicant; cannot include ANY publication or journal metrics; ² cannot include additional material that deviates from guidance on the Narrative CV ³ (e.g., lists of awards, grants or IP, exceeding the number of publications allowed).	Not using the Narrative CV template, and/or including publication or journal metrics, and/or deviating from Narrative CV guidance, and/or including hyperlinks or URLs in the Narrative CV will result in the application being made ineligible.
Research Programme, References, Impact Statement, Data Management Plan, Budget Justification	Must be included in your application and must adhere to page limits/format requirements.	Missing documentation or issues with page limits/format of documents will result in the application being made ineligible.
Infrastructure Statement, Collaborator CV(s), Collaborator LoS	Optional	Reviewers will be informed that this is an optional requirement; please note that the role of any collaborators and the quality of institutional support both form part of the review criteria (see Appendix A).
Research Body LoS	Mandatory for Lead Applicants and Co-Applicants (where relevant). Can be a single letter if both	Missing Research Body LoS(s) will result in the proposal being made ineligible. Missing eligibility table contents will

² The use of journal and publication metrics, such as impact factors, and/or research performance metrics, in the Narrative CV is not permitted. Referring to the total number of publications is also not permitted. Research performance metrics include, but are not limited to, H-index, i10-index, G-index, H(2)-index, HG-index, Q2-index, AR-index, M-quotient, M-index, W-index, Hw-index, E-index, A-index, R-index, W-index, J-index, FWC-index. Furthermore, altmetrics that are attributed to publications are not permitted, since the quality and robustness of these types of metrics have as yet to be determined. The inclusion of such metrics in other parts of the application (outside of the Narrative CV template) is not in keeping with the spirit of DORA.

³ See <https://www.researchireland.ie/funding-policies/narrative-cv/> for full guidelines.

Application Documents		
	applicants are represented by the same Research Body. Eligibility table must be fully completed and clear for both Applicants.	result in the application being made ineligible.

3 Proposal Submission Requirements (SESAME)

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

Please note, the Application form will be available on SESAME in mid-late April 2026. Applicants will be notified when the form is available and will be invited to update their existing Expression of Interest. The creation of a new application on the SESAME system will not be required.

Access to SESAME is controlled by staff at the Research Office of your host Research Body. SESAME is accessed using the internet; no additional software needs to be installed. You can access SESAME online from any location. SESAME supports Microsoft Edge, 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>

Please see the SESAME Researcher User Guide (available on SESAME) for further information.

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 submitted online through SESAME to Research Ireland by the Research Office of the Lead Applicant's Research Body:

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 2.5 cm. 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. Page size must be A4 only.
- Appendices or other unsolicited documentation **are not permitted**.
- File sizes of attachments should be **less than 2 GB**.
- **Hyperlinks and/or URLs included in the Narrative CV of either the Lead or Co-Applicant will result in the proposal being made ineligible and removed from the review process.**
- Hyperlinks and URLs are only allowed when specifically noted in call documents or SESAME 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. 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 so 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 and Co-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.

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 Lead 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 handbook and to review the proposal document prior to submission in SESAME.

Please communicate with your research office as early as possible, regarding submission timelines. Applications not submitted before the deadline will not be considered for review under any circumstances.

Please note that proposal eligibility checks will be completed by Research Ireland staff.

Applications cannot be withdrawn and subsequently modified for re-submission in the same call.

3.1 ORCID ID

ORCID⁴ 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.

Both **Lead Applicants and Co-Applicants** are required to link their SESAME Research Profiles to an ORCID iD **before an application can be submitted**.

4 Proposal Summary

In the preparation of your Full Proposal, please be cognisant of the objectives of the Investigators Programme. See the Programme Website and Call Document for a description of these objectives. (<https://www.researchireland.ie/funding/investigators/>)

A number of the sections in the full proposal application form will be pre-populated from the Expression of Interest (EOI) application form. The expectation is that any edits will be minor to take into account any feedback given at the EOI review stage. It is expected that the Proposal Title, Keywords, and Research Areas are **not** edited. **Doing so may result in your application being made ineligible and withdrawn from review. Full proposal applications that deviate significantly in content from the EOI will be withdrawn without review.**

While reviewer feedback from Stage 1 can be incorporated into the Full Proposal, **this feedback (narrative OR scores) should not be referenced in your Full Proposal application**. Stage 2 reviewers will not receive this feedback or your EOI application as part of the Stage 2 review process (see Appendix A).

⁴ <http://orcid.org/>

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

- **Proposal Title (max. 30 words)**
The Proposal Title will be carried over from your EOI Application and should not be edited.
- **Duration of Grant Requested**
Please note that ALL grants funded through the Investigators Programme will have a duration of 48 months.
- **Research Area (Primary)**
The Research Area (Primary) will be carried over from your EOI Application and should not be edited.
- **Research Area (Secondary)**
The Research Area (Secondary) will be carried over from your EOI Application and should not be edited.

4.1 Lead Applicant Details

- Please complete the **mandatory fields** in your SESAME Profile.
- ORCID iD. Please link your SESAME profile to your ORCID iD (see Section 3.1 for details).
- **Time Commitment to Grant**
Indicate the Lead Applicant's time commitment to the proposed research project as a percentage of their total working time. **The time committed should reasonably reflect the amount of funding being requested. Research Ireland reserves the right to request additional detail on commitment levels.** Commitment deemed insufficient may result in ineligibility.
- **Lead Applicant Narrative CV (Upload)**
The Lead Applicant must use the Narrative CV template provided in the Downloads section of the Investigators Programme website.⁵ This 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 periods of leave from research if relevant. Please consult the Guidance and FAQs for Applicants on the Narrative CV⁶ if you require assistance in preparing your Narrative CV; this is strongly recommended. **References to metrics such as journal impact factor, h-index, and total numbers of publications are not permitted. This is not an exhaustive list; please consult with the Narrative CV**

⁵ <https://www.researchireland.ie/funding/investigators/>

⁶ <https://www.researchireland.ie/funding-policies/narrative-cv/>

Guidance. If these or any excluded metrics or any hyperlinks or URLs are included in the Narrative CV template, your application will be made ineligible.

- **Does the Lead or Co-Applicant (where applicable) hold a Joint Appointment**
 - Yes/No. If Yes, the Applicant(s) will be requested to provide details of the appointment including a breakdown of time commitments. If you hold a joint appointment, please refer to the *Who Can Apply Policy*⁷ to confirm eligibility.
- **Emerging Investigator Category**
 - Please indicate if you are applying under the Emerging Investigator category (Yes/No). **Please note that if you applied with a Co-Applicant at Stage 1, you are not permitted to apply as an Emerging Investigator.**

As outlined in Section 3.5 of the Call document, an Emerging Investigator, in addition to meeting all eligibility criteria, must either:

- Have not previously held a SFI, IRC, or Research Ireland research grant of over €500,000 in direct costs;

OR

- Have had a period of eligible leave from research (e.g., following time spent in industry, statutory maternity leave, statutory adoptive leave, statutory parental leave, statutory paternity leave, carer's leave, long-term medical illness, conscription).

Although an applicant may meet the criteria of an Emerging Investigator, there is no obligation to apply under this category. See Section 3.2 of the Call Document and Appendix A of this handbook for details of the score weighting applied to Emerging Investigators.

- **Lead Applicants applying under the Emerging Investigator category must upload a statement detailing how they are eligible to apply under the category.** If the Lead Applicant is applying under this category due to eligible leave, evidence of this leave may be requested.
- Reviewers will not be made aware if an applicant is applying under the Emerging Investigator category and will not have access to the Emerging Investigator statement, however, all Investigators Programme applicants are requested to detail any periods of leave from research in their CV – this will be taken into account by reviewers when assessing the track record of applicants.

⁷ <https://www.researchireland.ie/funding-policies/eligibility> ('Who Can Apply')

- **Supervisory Experience**
 - Provide summary information on supervisory experience to date for the Applicant(s).
- **Research Funding History**
 - The Lead Applicant and Co-Applicant (where relevant) 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. Please complete the requested details for each expired, current, or pending financial support. **Fields coloured red are mandatory.**
 - 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. This only applies to funding where the applicant is/was the Principal Investigator/Lead Applicant or Co-Investigator/Co-Applicant. It is not necessary to detail funding history where an Applicant acted as a collaborator.
 - For each current and pending grant listed, the Applicant(s) 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. **Where applicants have indicated that pending grant funding has overlap with the research proposal for their Investigators application, they are required to contact investigators@researchireland.ie should their pending funding be awarded.**
 - This section of the proposal will be reviewed as part of the applicant's track record. Applicants with a number of expired grants over the previous ten years may choose to be selective with which funding grants to include in this section. Grants that are most relevant to the proposed research should be included.
 - **Research Ireland may conduct audits to verify any of the information provided in this section and reserves the right to withdraw proposals where details are not accurate or have not been a fair reflection of the applicant's responsibility.**

Applicants **must** complete the textbox detailing potential overlap between current and pending funding, and the proposed research in this application. For each current and pending grant listed, the applicant **must clearly indicate any research overlap with this application, based on the methodologies being employed, and the stated objectives of the funded/pending project(s). Failure to do so will make the proposal ineligible.**

4.2 Co-Applicant Details

Please note that you cannot add OR remove a Co-Applicant at Stage 2. If you had added a Co-Applicant at Stage 1 and they no longer wish to participate your application will be withdrawn, and you should contact investigators@researchireland.ie as soon as possible.

If there is a Co-Applicant on the proposal, **they must login to SESAME complete the same applicant details as the Lead Applicant (see Section 4.1).**

SESAME does not permit two individuals to concurrently modify a proposal. The Lead Applicant must close the proposal to allow the Co-Applicant to make modifications, and vice versa.

Please note that Collaborators are not mandatory. See Section 3.5 of the Call Document for definition of the Collaborator role.

4.3 Collaborator Details

- **Addition of Collaborators**

Applicants can include Collaborators as part of their Research Ireland Investigators Programme application. There are no limits on numbers of collaborators, but their role within the research programme must be clearly defined. Include the name, contact information and other requested details of Collaborator(s), if any. Please see Section 3.5 of the Call Document for further information on the role of Collaborators e.g. Academic vs. Industry Collaborators and details on Societal Collaborators. There is no formal ‘Mentor’ role in the Investigators Programme, but applicants can include one if they wish (as an Academic Collaborator). 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 5.1 in the Call Document, regarding State aid and Research Ireland Grant funding where an Industry Collaborator is involved.

- CVs (max. 2 pages each) may be uploaded for all collaborators. Inclusion of Collaborator CVs are not mandatory, however, failure to provide a supporting CV may disadvantage an application during the review process. See Appendix A for more details on the Stage 2 review process. The use of a template is not mandatory for Collaborator CVs; however, we recommend that the Collaborator Narrative CV template available in the Downloads section of the Investigators Programme webpage is used.⁸

⁸ <https://www.researchireland.ie/funding/investigators/>

- Letters of Support (LoS) (max. 2 pages each) may be uploaded for all collaborators. Inclusion of Collaborator LoS are not mandatory, however, failure to provide them may disadvantage an application during the review process. Letters from Academic Collaborators should provide full details of the intended intellectual and/or technical input to the proposal. In addition, Academic Collaborators, international or otherwise, seeking funds through the grant must describe how these funds will be utilised. Letters from Industry Collaborators (including Societal Collaborators) should provide full details of the intended input and, where relevant, the level of financial (cash, in-kind or both) contribution to the research programme. If applicable, a letter of support from a Mentor should include a statement outlining how the mentor will support the applicant, and provide added value to the proposal, bearing in mind that the applicant is already an independent researcher.
- Collaborator letters of support that do not originate from officially listed Collaborators will be removed from the proposal.

4.4 Main Body of Proposal

The following outlines the Investigators Stage 2 (Full Proposal) proposal requirements. Please see Appendix A for details on the review process.

Assessment of the Applicant(s) will be conducted at this stage so personal and/or institutional information can be included throughout, as required.

- **Keywords (max. 15)**
Keywords will be carried over from your EOI Application and should not be edited.
- **Research Abstract (max. 200 words)**
This should be a succinct and accurate summary of the proposed work when separated from the application. The Research Abstract will be carried over from your EOI Application. Edits to the Research Abstract are permitted, however, any changes should be minor, and the content should be similar to that which was submitted and reviewed at EOI stage.
- **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. The Lay Abstract will be carried over from your EOI Application. Edits to the Lay Abstract are permitted, however, any changes should be minor, and the content should be similar to that which was submitted and reviewed at EOI stage.
- **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.⁹

- **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.⁹ Clinical trials and investigations requiring approval by the Health Products Regulatory Authority (HPRA) will not be permitted through the Research Ireland Investigators programme.
- **Sex and Gender Dimension in Research Statement (max. 1000 words)**
 In accordance with the Research Ireland External Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy 2023-2028,¹⁰ 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 Issues⁹ and Section 5.4 of the Call Document 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. Feedback from Stage 1 can be incorporated, but should not be directly referenced, as reviewers will **not** receive the Stage 1 – EOI Application or its reviews.

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.

⁹ <https://www.researchireland.ie/funding-policies/ethical-policies>

¹⁰ <https://www.researchireland.ie/funding-policies/equality-diversity-and-inclusion>

- 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). The **roles of the Applicant, Co-Applicant (where relevant), any requested team member(s), and any listed 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. **Images/Figures/Tables are acceptable**. In the latter case, this should be included within the research programme as evidence that the Applicant(s) has/have a track record in the field of the proposed research.
- **References (upload; max. 2 Pages)**
Appropriate references and citations for the proposed research must be provided in a separate PDF document. A two-page limit is permitted for uploaded references. This space cannot be used to provide additional or alternative content – doing so will result in ineligibility.
- **Data Management Plan (upload; max. 2 pages)**
Good data governance and stewardship are key components of good research practice. Applicants to the Research Ireland Investigators 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.¹¹ See Section 5.4 of the Call Document for further guidance.
- **Impact Statement (upload; max. 3 pages)**
To obtain funding through the Research Ireland Investigators 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.

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

¹¹ <https://www.researchireland.ie/funding-policies/open-research/>

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)? If there is a training component to the research programme, it is important to highlight the added value that will be provided from this training.
- How will the proposed research impact on society, culture and the quality of life for Ireland's people and internationally?
- How will the potential impacts of your research be best realised?
- If applicable, how will collaborators increase the likelihood of potential impacts?
- Will the research have potential to leverage success in European and International funding programmes?
- 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 deployed to assess the likely or potential longer-term benefits of the research.

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:

- Advances to the state of knowledge within a field
 - Training and development of others, including wider curricular/teaching and learning benefits
 - Stakeholder/external interest in their past or current work
 - Collaborative projects
 - Documented changes to public policy, guidelines or services
 - Improvements in public health / welfare / quality of life
 - Changes to behaviours or opinions
 - Enhancing culture and creativity
 - Operational or organisational change (e.g., processes and procedures)
 - Non-exchequer funding obtained
 - Problems / challenges solved or new insights gained
- **Infrastructure and Services Provided by Research Body (upload; max. 1 page)**

The Applicant(s) may describe the infrastructure, facilities and space to be provided by the Research Body/Bodies. This can include details of the office or research spaces, available equipment or resources (excluding those requested in this application), that may help reviewers understand existing capacity. Services such as IP/technology transfer services provided by the Research Body may also be discussed. This statement is not mandatory, however, failure to provide this information may disadvantage an application during the review process.

Inclusion of any unsolicited documentation in your application **will make your application ineligible.**

4.5 Budget

Applicants are advised to request a moderate, well-justified budget that is proportionate to the scale and ambition of the proposed work and reflects the level of resources they can clearly demonstrate the capacity to manage. Applicants should ensure that their requested budget represents good value for money and that all costs are necessary and appropriate for the proposed activities. The budget should align clearly with the research plan and be consistent with the applicant's experience.

As part of the review process, assessors will consider whether the budget is clearly justified, appropriate to the proposed work, and proportionate to the scope and aims of the project. Proposals that do not present a sufficiently reasoned and balanced budget may not be supported in full.

The costs eligible for grant support under the Research Ireland Investigators 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 Lead Applicant's Research Body. Please refer to the Research Ireland General Terms and Conditions¹² and the latest version of the Research Ireland Grant Budget Policy.¹³

Research Ireland Investigators grants are funded to a **maximum** value of **€625,000 direct costs** for a fixed term period of **48 months**. In addition to direct costs, Research Ireland also makes an indirect or overhead 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.

Costs covered by collaborators should not be included in the proposed budget.

Guidance on completing your budget on SESAME can be found in the SESAME User Guide (Module 7), available on SESAME.

- **Staff**

Applicant (Lead or Co-), or collaborator salary is **not** an eligible cost for the Research Ireland Investigators Call.

The programme is intended to support a spectrum of excellent research projects across the range of disciplines and provide excellent training and development opportunities for postgraduate and postdoctoral team members. The programme aims to support at least two PhD students on each grant awarded. It is expected, however, that applicants will request budget for the team that best suits the delivery of their research programme.

Team members can be requested for Lead or Co-Applicants only (not Collaborators), and the Research Ireland Team Member Salary Scale can be found on the Research Ireland Website.¹³

Staff recruitment costs are **not an** eligible request.

¹² <https://www.researchireland.ie/funding-policies/grant-terms-conditions/>

¹³ <https://www.researchireland.ie/funding-policies/financial/>

All other information required to complete the Staff section can be found in the latest Research Ireland Grant Budget Policy (GBP).¹³

- **Teaching Buyout**

All applicants who require teaching buyout due to significant teaching loads, will be eligible to request teaching buyout as part of their budget. In the Budget Justification document, clear justification will need to be provided on why the applicant requires teaching buyout. This request will need to be supported by their host research body in the letter of support (see Section 4.6). Teaching buyout is available to Lead and Co-Applicants only, and requests are subject to review by Research Ireland, should the application be funded.

Teaching buyout costs should be calculated on the basis of hiring a temporary lecturer (e.g., at point 1 on the Assistant Lecturer salary scale, or equivalent point on the institutional scale) regardless of the seniority of the prospective applicant. Requests must be pro-rata and proportional to the time commitment.

Salary scales used, and total value of the teaching buyout are the responsibility of the applicant, with guidance from their research and finance offices. Research Ireland reserves the right to request information regarding scales or values requested.

- **Equipment**

Information required to complete the Equipment section can be found in the latest GBP.¹³

Where significant (costing **in excess of €50,000**) items of equipment are proposed, timelines for purchasing and installation, and management plans for the equipment, must be clear and aligned with the timelines of the research programme.

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**

Information required to complete the Materials and Consumables section can be found in the Research Ireland Grant Budget Policy (GBP).¹³

Costs relating to Education and Public Engagement activities, organisation of conferences/symposia/workshops, the hosting of visiting researchers and fieldwork should be included in this budget category as outlined in the GBP. These costs must be directly related to the research programme. These costs must be clearly justified and costed.

Costs to support and facilitate participants to be part of data collection, e.g., via workshops, interviews, focus groups, can be included but must be fully justified. Strong rationale and justification must be provided for these costs. A maximum of €100 per person per annum is the guideline. For greater amounts, strong rationale and justification must be provided in order to be considered. All costs sought must be sufficiently detailed and justified in the proposed budget and must align with the milestones and deliverables in the project proposal. Any such costs must comply with your host institution's financial policies and procedures regarding Research Participation.

- **Travel**

All information required to complete the Travel section can be found the latest GBP.¹³

- **Personal Support and Assistive Technology**

Please see the latest GBP¹³ for information on budget requests for Personal Support and/or Assistive Technology.

Before requesting budget for Assistive Technology, please refer to the Disability Policy and the Disability Guidance Document¹⁴ for information about eligible and ineligible costs.

Please do not include personal health information relating to an Applicant or team member in any correspondence with Research Ireland, or in your application documents.

- **Budget Justification (upload, max. 3 pages)**

Guidance on how to complete the Budget Justification can be found in **Section 7** of the GBP.¹³

Your budget justification should clearly explain how your proposed budget represents **value for money**.

In particular, you should:

- Show how the requested costs align with your proposed research plan and directly support the activities you intend to undertake.
- Demonstrate that the budget is proportionate to the scale and ambition of your project.
- Explain how the requested resources reflect what you can reasonably manage and deliver, based on your previous experience in managing budgets.

¹⁴ <https://www.researchireland.ie/funding-policies/disability/>

4.6 Letters of Support

Letters of Support (LoS) from the host Research Body must be provided for each Applicant (Lead and Co-), on an application. If a Co-Applicant is from the same research body as the Lead Applicant, the host Research Body may submit a single letter containing the details of **both** applicants.

- The Letter of Support should detail the employment status of the applicant(s), including how the applicant(s) meet the eligibility criteria for this call as detailed in the Eligibility Summary (Section 2). In order to provide the details of the required eligibility criteria, please use the table provided below. **This table must be present in the letter of support from the host Research body. Failure to include the Eligibility Table will result in an application being made ineligible.**
- The letter should also comment on the infrastructure and services available and should contain a brief description of the institutional policy regarding the management of conflicts of interest.
- **If the letter of support is for an applicant who does not currently have a contract of sufficient duration in place, the host research body must clearly state that a contract of sufficient duration will be provided to the applicant in the event of the application's success. Applications will be made ineligible if this is not provided.**
- If the applicant (or applicants) is requesting teaching buyout, the rationale must be briefly and clearly explained here, and the request expressly endorsed by the host Research Body.
- The Letter of Support must be on formal letter on headed notepaper, signed by an authorised institutional representative.

LoS Eligibility Table

Application Eligibility Criteria	Response (to be filled out by research body)
What is the Applicant's job title?	
Does the Applicant have a permanent contract? (YES/NO)	
If NO , please provide the Applicant's current contract start and end dates	
If the contract does not extend to November 30 th 2030, <i>or</i> if the applicant did not have a contract at time of application, will a contract of sufficient duration be provided in the event of the application's success?	
Was the Applicant an Independent Investigator (as described in the Who Can	

Apply Policy ¹⁵) as of September 17 th 2025? (Yes/No)	
Is the date on the Applicant's PhD Certificate before September 17 th 2022? (Yes/No)	
Will the Applicant be provided with an independent office and research space at the host research body, for which the Applicant will be fully responsible throughout the duration of the proposed grant? (Yes/No)	
Has the Applicant requested teaching buyout? (Yes/No)	
If YES , please explain briefly why this is needed, and confirm the Research Body's endorsement of the request	
Does the Applicant hold a joint appointment with any other research-performing organisation, or have a non-full time contract position with the host research body? (Yes/No)	
If 'Yes', please describe the Applicant's contract details and/or joint appointments (including FTE where relevant).	

4.7 Applicant Acknowledgement of Terms and Conditions

Submission of an application confirms that [Research Ireland's General Terms & Conditions](#) 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 their own work. Failure to comply with requirements outlined in this handbook and the relevant call document, will deem an application ineligible resulting in its withdrawal prior to expert 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.

¹⁵ <https://www.researchireland.ie/funding-policies/eligibility> ('Who Can Apply')

4.8 Research Body Approval

Please note that at Stage 1, an official Letter of Support (LoS) from the host research body was not required, but endorsement of an EoI application on SESAME by the Research Office was considered an acknowledgement of eligibility of **both** the applicant(s) and application.

Full Proposal submissions must be approved by an authorised Research Body representative. In particular, the host Research Body is endorsing (See Call Document sections 3.6 & 3.7):

- The eligibility of the applicant(s)
- Applicants have a signed contract of employment in place that covers the duration of the requested Grant
- OR the applicants will be guaranteed a contract of employment in place that covers the duration of the requested Grant if their application is successful
- That the proposed research programme has not been funded by other sources
- That the requested budget, including salaries/stipends, equipment, travel and consumables, is in line with accepted institutional guidelines and appropriate to the intended time commitments
- 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 has been or will be sought and must be granted prior to the award commencing
- That the relevant licences will be in place at the time of award
- That the details provided in relation to the applicants' research funding history (i.e., current, pending or expired grants, as detailed in the application) 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.
- That the Narrative CV guidance has been complied with as outlined in this handbook and on the Research Ireland website¹⁶, i.e., it has been used by the Lead and Co-Applicant, does not contain any journal or publication metrics, performance indicators, hyperlinks or URLs.

Submission of an application through SESAME serves as the Research Body's endorsement of the eligibility of the Applicant(s) and confirms the validity and accuracy of the details provided in relation to all eligibility requirements. This includes compliance with guidance regarding the Narrative CV, i.e., it has been used by the Lead and Co-Applicant, does not contain any journal or publication metrics, performance indicators, hyperlinks or URLs.

¹⁶ <https://www.researchireland.ie/funding-policies/narrative-cv/>

4.9 Proposal Submission

A PDF of the proposal is available on 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(s) in this regard.** A submission is made initially to the Research Office of the Lead Applicant for approval, prior to final submission by the Research Office to Research Ireland.

Please note that the Co-Applicant and/or the Lead Applicant may choose to complete sections or upload documentation that are common to both applicants (e.g., research summaries, research descriptions, etc.); **however, only the Lead Applicant can submit an application to the Research Body for submission.**

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

After the submission deadline, applications will not be accepted by SESAME. Therefore, they will not be reviewed by Research Ireland.

Applicants will receive a notification from SESAME periodically when the status of their proposal changes. Alternatively, the status of a proposal (e.g., where a proposal is pending Research Office approval or is under review at Research Ireland) is displayed in SESAME.

Appendix A: Stage 2 (Full Proposal) Review Process

The following Appendix outlines the review process for Stage 2 – Full Proposal of the Investigators Programme. For details on the Stage 1 (Expression of Interest) Review Process, please refer to the Stage 1 Handbook.

For Stage 2 of this review process international peer reviewers will be recruited and assigned based on the submissions received and each will receive a number of proposals, up to six, to review at Step 1. Due to the virtual panel used in this process, reviewers should be considered more generalist in nature. As such **reviewers may not be experts in the exact subject area of all the proposals which have been assigned to them.**

Please consider this when writing your application, and please review the review criteria (**Appendix A**) to understand how your application will be assessed.

The Stage 2 review process comprises two steps, shown in Figure 1.

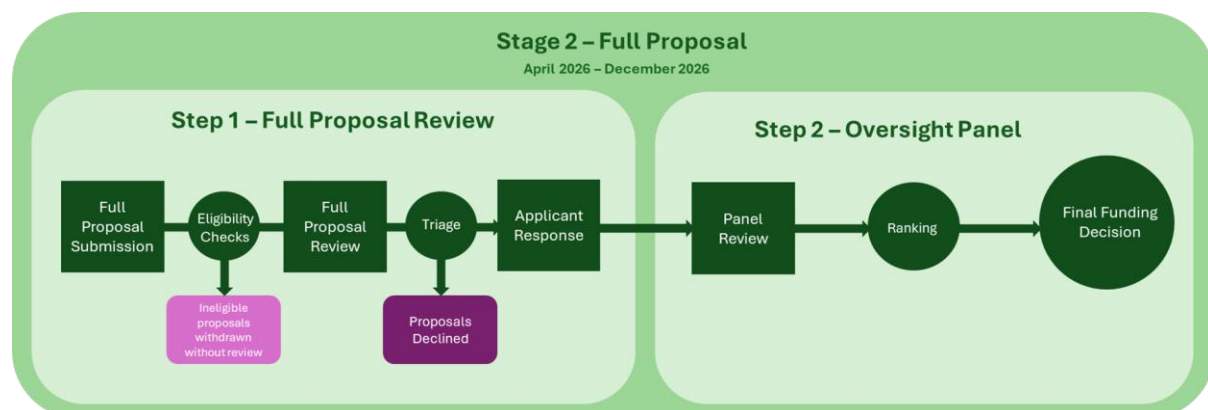


Figure 1 Research Ireland Investigator Programme Stage 2 Review Process and Indicative Timeline

Step 1: Full Proposal Review

Step 1 consists of a virtual review comprising of a panel of international reviewers; all eligible proposals received will be assessed in adherence to the review criteria set out below with each reviewer receiving multiple applications for evaluation. The panel members will exhibit a broad range of expertise relevant to the proposals under review.

At Step 1, each proposal will receive up to three written evaluations and ratings under the following three review criteria:

- **Applicant:** Reviewers will assess the quality, significance and relevance of the applicant(s)'s key achievements and research track record, as demonstrated in their narrative CV, commensurate with their career stage and research discipline, and taking any periods of leave into account. The following areas will be

considered in evaluating the Applicant(s)'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.

- **Research Programme:** Reviewers will assess the quality, significance and novelty of the research programme. Reviewers will consider points such as: novelty, importance, timeliness of the intended research; appropriateness of approach and methodologies; communication and description of the research; comprehension of the current state of the art; quality of institutional support; clearly delineated roles of the team, collaborators and students; suitability and achievability of the programme based on the experience of the applicant(s) and team; value for money, appropriate use of the requested budget, the sex and gender dimension in research; data management etc.
- **Potential Impact:** Reviewers will review an Impact Statement and from this assess the applicant's ability to demonstrate the potential impact and value to Ireland in the short, medium or longer term. Reviewers will consider points such as: Appreciation of how research may be developed and exploited; realistic and convincing evaluation of the benefits that will result from a successful project (including advances to the state of knowledge and training and development); potential to leverage success in European and International funding programmes; areas and fields where impacts are likely to be made.

The Step 1 reviewers will also be asked to comment on the Budget and Team but will not provide a score (see Review Form Template below). Comments will be considered by the final oversight panel (Step 2) in their consideration of Value for Money.

Questions pertaining to Budget & Team

- ***Is the budget appropriate/realistic given the track record of the applicant(s)? Does the budget align clearly with the research plan and is it consistent with the applicant(s) experience? Is the budget clearly justified, appropriate to the proposed work, and proportionate to the scope and aims of the project? Please comment on the appropriateness of the skills, composition and size of the team requested (including collaborators), and the appropriateness of the resources requested.***

As outlined in the call document an applicant may apply as an Emerging Investigator where they meet the eligibility described in Section 3.5 of the Call Document and in Section 4.1 of this Handbook. In this scenario, the weighting of scores will be adjusted to increase the emphasis on the Research Programme over the Applicant's track record (see Table 1).

Score Weighting System

Stage	Category	Weighting	Emerging Investigator Weighting
Stage 2 (Full Proposal)	Applicant	30%	10%
	Research Programme	55%	75%
	Potential Impact	15%	15%

Table 1 Score Weighting at Stage 2- Full Proposal

Weighted scores will be rounded to the nearest quarter point, as required by Research Ireland. **Research Ireland reserves the right to modify the rounding levels, depending on number and quality of applications.**

Applicant Response

Applications will be ranked following the virtual panel review. The highest-ranked applications will proceed to the final oversight panel review. Applicants not proceeding 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 Step 2. **Research Ireland reserves the right to choose the threshold required for progressing to Step 2 of the review process, based on the quality of the applications received.**

Anonymous reviewer comments will then be made available to those Applicants proceeding to Step 2, who 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).

Step 2 – Oversight Panel

The final oversight panel, comprising international reviewers with generalist expertise will be convened to review the Applicant response and oversee the fairness of the written reviews. The oversight panel will provide a final overall panel score for each review criterion (Applicant, Research Programme and Impact) and will make a funding recommendation to Research Ireland.

They will also assess whether the proposal represents value for money, providing a Yes/No recommendation. When ranking applications, in the event of applications receiving the same final score, Research Ireland may give priority to applications that represent good value for money. Research Ireland also reserves the right to use additional tiebreakers, including a randomised 'lottery' process to determine funding.

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

Review Form Template:

Review Type	Full Proposal Review (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),¹⁷ 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.¹⁸ 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 2022-2030¹⁹ and a signatory of Plan S²⁰, 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 Assessment²¹ and is a member of the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA).²²</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 and co-applicant’s (if relevant) key achievements and research track record as demonstrated in the CV(s), commensurate with their career stage and research discipline, taking any periods of leave into account. Please include in your review comments how the applicant(s) has addressed each of the following areas commensurate with their career stage and research discipline:</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, co-applicant(s), and collaborator(s), if</p>

¹⁷ <https://sfdora.org/>

¹⁸ Contributor level membership

¹⁹ [National Action Plan | National Open Research Forum \(norfi.ie\)](https://www.norfi.ie/)

²⁰ <https://www.coalition-s.org/>

²¹ https://coara.eu/app/uploads/2022/09/2022_07_19_rra_agreement_final.pdf

²² <https://coara.eu/>

relevant, are appropriate given their proposed contribution to the research programme.

There are **two stages** to the scoring of the applicant(s):

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):

- 1) Generation of Knowledge,
- 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 lead applicant's and co-applicant's (if relevant) key achievements and research track record, commensurate with their career stage and research discipline, taking any periods of leave into account. Please consider the quality and relevance of the collaborators, if relevant. This score will be the final score used to assess the applicant(s).

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)

Within this applicant category, please do not assess the applicants(s) based on the possible outcome of the research. Please provide assessment based on the applicant(s)' history of achievements as outlined in their CV. The Narrative CV categories correspond with the scoring categories to help this process.

Question pertaining to Research Programme

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 proposed research; appropriateness of approach and methodologies; communication and description of the research; comprehension of the current state of the art; quality of the institutional support; clearly delineated roles of the team; suitability and achievability of the programme based on the experience of the applicant; value for money and appropriate use of the available budget, the Sex and Gender Dimension, Data Management Plan 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
- 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?

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.

- 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

Question pertaining to Impact

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 (including advances to the state of knowledge and training and development); potential to leverage success in European and International funding programmes; areas and fields where impacts are likely to be made.

Please rate the applicant's ability to demonstrate the potential impact and value to Ireland

Half scores are permitted.

- 1 = Very low impact potential
- 2 = Low impact potential
- 3 = Good impact potential
- 4 = High impact potential
- 5 = Outstanding impact potential

Questions pertaining to Budget & Team

Is the budget appropriate/realistic given the track record of the applicant(s)? Please comment on the appropriateness of the skills, composition, and size of the team (including collaborators) and the appropriateness of the resources requested.

Is the budget appropriate/realistic given the track record of the applicant(s)? Does the budget align clearly with the research plan and is it consistent with the applicant(s) experience? Is the budget clearly justified, appropriate to the proposed work, and proportionate to the scope and aims of the project?

Please comment on the appropriateness of the skills, composition and size of the team requested, and the appropriateness of the resources requested.

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.