

Innovate for Ireland 2025 Programme

Call for Submission of Proposals



Key Information

Expression of Interest Deadline

19th February 2025, 13:00 Dublin local time

Full Proposal Deadline

19th March 2025, 13:00 Dublin local time

Outcome

End Q2/early Q3 2025

For further information on the Innovate for Ireland Programme not included in this call document, please contact: i4i@researchireland.ie.

Terms of reference

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1 Overview of the Innovate for Ireland Programme

It is widely recognised internationally that successfully addressing future challenges and capitalising on emerging opportunities requires a State to invest in talented and highly skilled individuals. Additionally, to continue attracting foreign direct investment (FDI) and bolster indigenous companies, Ireland needs a talent pool that combines deep technical skills with innovation, entrepreneurship, collaboration, and leadership training.

In January 2024, the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS) launched Global Citizens 2030, Ireland's international further and higher education, skills, research, innovation, and science strategy. Global Citizens 2030 places talent and innovation at the heart of Ireland's global footprint and will develop the competencies of Irish-educated learners, researchers, and innovators to work as global citizens in multi-national, multi-cultural and diverse workforces, at home and abroad. **Innovate for Ireland** has been specified as a '*Flagship Initiative*' of the Global Citizens 2030 strategy.

The objective of Innovate for Ireland is to attract the world's leading research and entrepreneurship talent to Ireland to conduct advanced, multidisciplinary PhD research to address the world's global sustainability challenges. This international talent pool will undertake ground-breaking PhD research and will be equipped with a unique set of entrepreneurship, leadership, innovation and collaboration skills, to deliver a step-change in Ireland's innovation ecosystem. The initiative will become a sovereign calling card for Ireland – a distinctive and compelling addition to Ireland's global positioning as an innovative leader of sustainability solutions, and the home of a dynamic, inclusive, and highly-skilled workforce.

Over the next decade, it is envisioned that Innovate for Ireland will fund up to 1,200 doctoral scholarships at a level, and with additional benefits, that will attract excellent students who may otherwise not have considered pursuing a PhD or, indeed, considered Ireland as a research destination for their doctoral studies. These students will be known as Innovate for Ireland **iScholars**. In order to deliver upon the vision outlined above, **three pillars** of activity will comprise the Innovate for Ireland Initiative, which all iScholars will participate in fully.

1. **Innovate for Ireland PhD Research Scholarship Programme:** iScholars will undertake advanced doctoral research at Higher Education Institutions throughout Ireland that will deliver world class PhD research training and supervision as part of agreed research projects that will address global challenges.
2. **Innovate for Ireland Entrepreneurial, Leadership & Innovation Programme:** iScholars will undertake a world class, nationally delivered, multi-year, experiential personal and professional development programme to equip them to thrive as entrepreneurial leaders and collaborators who are catalysts for innovation and sustainable growth.
3. **Innovate for Ireland Innovation Ecosystem:** iScholars will participate in a cross-sectoral community of innovation leaders – building academic, professional, and community networks that will amplify the social and economic impact of the Innovate for Ireland initiative. This will include an ambitious, diverse, and vibrant cross-sectoral innovation network, including but not limited to an extensive range of informal learning activities such as mentorship and menteeship schemes, inspiration sessions, community activities, hackathons, cultural engagement, industry events and consultation groups, international conferences, and awards programmes.

Academic excellence in the global context and entrepreneurial potential will be the primary criteria in the selection of the students, with a vision that these exceptional candidates will collectively form the community of iScholars. The initiative will create a rich, diverse research and innovation community that develops solutions to complex global problems and supports students with the necessary skillsets and career development support for evolving workplaces.

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Innovate for Ireland will be delivered by Research Ireland and Global Innovators Ireland (GII), in partnership with academic and industry partners. Research Ireland will solely oversee State funding for Innovate for Ireland and is responsible for managing the administration of the Innovate for Ireland Doctoral programme and delivering the Entrepreneurial, Leadership & Innovation Programme. GII is a not-for-profit CLG founded to design and deliver Innovate for Ireland. GII's role includes responsibility for corporate fundraising and corporate engagement with the initiative, global promotion, supporting the design of the Entrepreneurial, Leadership & Innovation Programme with Research Ireland and delivering the Innovate for Ireland Innovation Ecosystem.

In line with the outlined vision for the Innovate for Ireland programme, the key objectives of the programme are to:

- Provide a mechanism for Ireland to attract, develop, and retain PhD students who have world-class academic and entrepreneurial capacity.
- Focus on innovation, by supporting cutting-edge research projects, promoting interdisciplinary collaboration, and leveraging the latest technologies and methodologies.
- Equip iScholars to become industry-ready innovators who will be catalysts for job creation, business and social innovation, to achieve sustainable prosperity for all.
- Facilitate the development of retention strategies and pathways for iScholars as proactive members of the national innovation ecosystem.
- Deliver solutions to global grand challenges, positioning Ireland as a leading force in sustainability research.

The Innovate for Ireland Programme operates with **two different streams**:

- **Thematic Cohort stream** – for applications to host a Cohort of iScholars working on research related to **specific thematic areas** (see below) under the overall Innovate for Ireland Programme.
- **Industry Partnership stream** – for applications to host one or more iScholars working on research related to **any of the thematic areas** under the overall Innovate for Ireland Programme.

For **both streams**, iScholars will participate in a common Entrepreneurial, Leadership & Innovation Programme, and in the Innovation Ecosystem. Under the Industry Partnership stream, the PhD Research Scholarship Programme may have greater involvement of an Industry Partner.

The Grants awarded under the Industry Partnership stream of the Innovate for Ireland Programme will operate under European Commission State aid rules and in particular, will be subject to the General Block Exemption Regulation (GBER).¹ GBER sets out a number of conditions under which research, development and innovation funding is exempt from the obligation of prior notification to the European Commission.

¹ [EU Commission Regulation \(EC\) No. 651/2014](#) as amended by [Commission Regulation \(EU\) 2023/1315](#) (referred to collectively as the "GBER").

2 Features of the Innovate for Ireland 2025 Programme

2.1 Programme remit

2.1.1 Overall remit of Innovate for Ireland

The overall Innovate for Ireland Programme supports research in the broad thematic areas outlined in the Figure below.

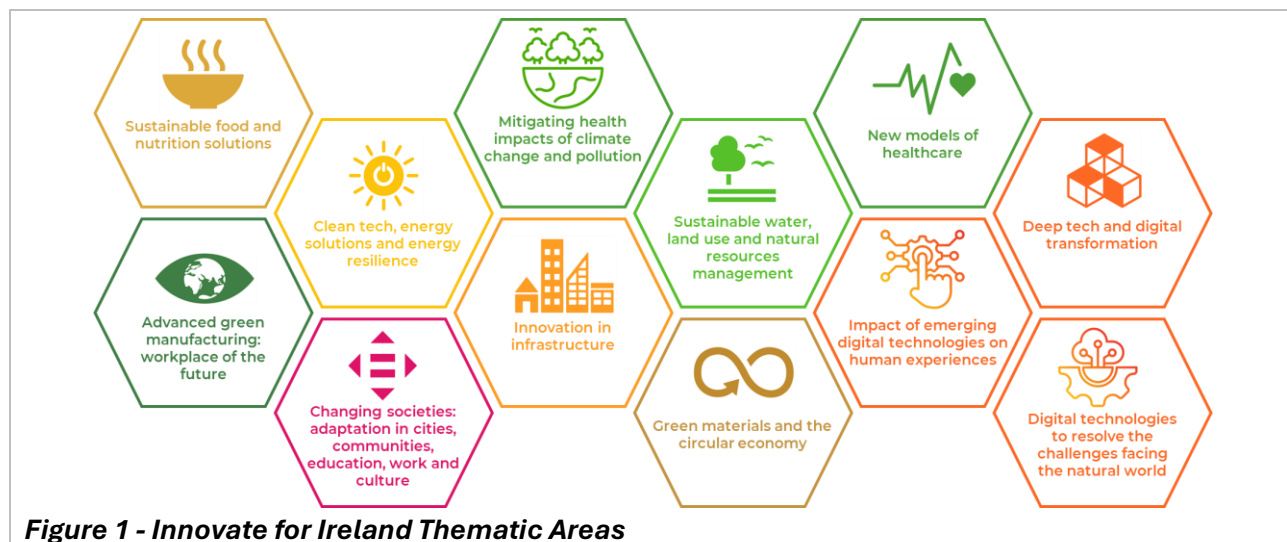


Figure 1 - Innovate for Ireland Thematic Areas

2.1.2 Thematic areas for the Innovate for Ireland 2025 Programme Thematic Cohort Stream

For the **Thematic Cohort stream**, applications will be accepted to host cohorts of students working within the **following specific thematic research areas**. Applications must adhere to the requirements for number of iScholars per intake and number of intakes shown for each theme. For this stream of the call, Research Ireland intends to make **one award under each theme**.

Table 1 – Innovate for Ireland 2025 Programme – Thematic Cohort stream research themes

| Primary thematic description | Sub-thematic areas | Programme thematic alignment (main themes) | Number of iScholars per intake | Number of intakes supported | Philanthropic partner |
|--|--|---|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| Climate Change Mitigation | - Decarbonising the built environment, transport and agriculture. - Sustainable finance. - Low carbon economy. | - Sustainable water, land use and natural resources management - Green materials and the circular economy - Innovation in infrastructure | 10 | 3 ² | AIB |
| Sustainable Aviation & Energy Transition | Topics regarding the policy, economic, and technology implications of aviation's transition to a carbon constrained world. | - Clean tech, energy solutions and energy resilience - Innovation in infrastructure - Advanced green manufacturing: workplace of the future | 5 | 1 | Avolon |

² Please note that for the **Climate Change Mitigation** theme, support for the second and third intake of students on an award will be dependent on continued funding being confirmed from the philanthropic partner.

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2.1.3 Thematic areas for the Innovate for Ireland 2025 Programme Industry Partnership Stream

For the **Industry Partnership stream**, applications will be accepted to host one or more iScholars working within **any** of the Innovate for Ireland thematic research areas, but **at least 50% of the funding requested must be provided by an industry partner**, with the remaining budget being provided by Research Ireland. Please note the special requirements for industry partner participation in the Innovate for Ireland Programme, which are detailed in **Section 2.3.4** below.

2.2 Guiding Principles for the Innovate for Ireland 2025 Programme

Innovate for Ireland has a number of defining principles which characterise the programme. These include, but are not limited to:

- **Research Project and Environment** – iScholars will undertake advanced doctoral research that will deliver world-class PhD research training and supervision, as part of agreed research projects that will address global challenges. iScholars will be embedded in environments of research excellence.
- **Entrepreneurial, Leadership and Innovation Programme** – iScholars will undertake a multi-year, personal and professional development programme to equip them to thrive as entrepreneurial leaders who are catalysts for social and business innovation, as well as sustainable growth.
- **Innovation Ecosystem** – iScholars will participate in a nationwide, vibrant, cross-sectoral innovation network.
- **Supervision and Career Support** – iScholars will receive excellent development opportunities and be robustly supported by supervisors and mentors.
- **Placements** – these may be arranged for iScholars in enterprise and/or other non-academic establishments, commensurate with the stream being participated in and the specific needs of the PhD project.

More information on each of these principles can be found in **Appendix I** of this document.

2.3 Eligibility and requirements for participation

2.3.1 Eligibility and requirements of Lead Applicants, Co-Applicants and Named Supervisors

The eligibility criteria set out below in **Table 2** must be met by the Lead Applicant, Co-Applicants, and Named Supervisors on the closing date for submissions.

Table 2 – Innovate for Ireland 2025 Programme applicant team definitions and eligibility requirements

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Lead Applicant | <p>Definition:</p> <p>The Lead Applicant will serve as the primary point of contact for Research Ireland on the application, during the review process and, if successful, during the course of the award. They will have primary responsibility and accountability for delivery of the Innovate for Ireland Programme within the funding limits awarded and in accordance with the terms and conditions of Research Ireland. In the case that Co-applicants are located at a different Research Ireland eligible Research Body than the Lead Applicant, the grant will be administered through the Research Body of the Lead Applicant.</p> <p>Lead Applicants must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be academic members of staff at the Research Body, recognised as independent researchers with their own independent office and research space.• Have held a PhD for a minimum of 5 years (i.e. the PhD must have been conferred in or before 2020). |
|-----------------------|--|

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold a minimum of five senior-author, peer-reviewed, primary-research publications. • Have previously secured one independent research grant that includes support for at least one full-time equivalent staff member (travel awards and fellowships do not apply). • Have a proven track record of mentoring and supervising postgraduate research students. • Be able to commit sufficient effort to lead the Innovate for Ireland cohort or individual iScholars, particularly if they are in receipt of other significant awards from Research Ireland or other funders. <p>Lead applicants may be included as a Lead or Co-Applicant on only one application under this call. They may be included as Named Supervisors on other applications.</p> |
| <p>Co-Applicant</p> | <p>Definition: A Co-Applicant has a well-defined, critical and continuing role in the proposed programme of research and training. For applications that involve more than one Research Body (which is allowed and encouraged for applications to the Thematic Cohort stream), a Co-Applicant from each must be included. A Co-Applicant will be expected to work closely with the Lead Applicant on the management and direction of the Innovate for Ireland cohort or iScholar groups.</p> <p>Eligibility: The same eligibility requirements apply as for the Lead Applicant.</p> <p>Co-Applicants may be included as a lead or co-applicant on only one application under this call. They may be included as Named Supervisors on other applications.</p> |
| <p>Named Supervisor</p> | <p>Definition: A named supervisor is an academic member of staff who will supervise an iScholar. Named Supervisors will have budgetary responsibility for the research expenses for that postgraduate student’s <i>research</i> project. Budgetary responsibility for the <i>training</i> expenses will remain with the Lead Applicant/Co-Applicant(s).</p> <p>Requirements for the <u>Thematic Cohort</u> stream: At the time of application, it is expected that a sufficient number of Named Supervisors are included to demonstrate the capacity of the applicant group to accommodate the requested number of iScholars. However, during the course of the award, additional Named Supervisors may be added to the Innovate for Ireland cohort. An appropriate process for the inclusion of new Named Supervisors must be put in place. New Named Supervisors must be approved by Research Ireland before inclusion in the Innovate for Ireland cohort. In addition, co-supervision by non-academic mentors may be permitted although these individuals are not to be listed as ‘Named Supervisors’.</p> <p>Requirements for the <u>Industry Partnership</u> stream: Named supervisors only need to be added to an application if the application is seeking funding for multiple iScholars who will not be supervised by the Lead Applicant/Co-Applicant(s) alone.</p> |

Research Ireland strongly encourages the inclusion of Named Supervisors from across diverse disciplines, from the outset of an application, in order to address the objectives of the agency and those of *Impact 2030: Ireland’s Research and Innovation Strategy*.

Eligibility:

- Upon receipt of an award, be a member of academic staff / contract researcher (with a contract that covers the period of supervision) at an eligible Research Body.
- Be recognised by the Research Body as an independent investigator with independent office and research space at the host Research Body for which he/she will be fully responsible for at least the duration of supervision.
- Have held a PhD for a minimum of 3 years (i.e., the PhD must have been conferred in or before 2022).
- Hold a minimum of three senior-author, peer-reviewed, primary-research publications.
- Have the authority to supervise postgraduate research students or be provided with appropriate supports and mentorship by the Innovate for Ireland Lead Applicant/Co-Applicant(s) to do this.

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

Research Ireland is committed to building 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 Strategy 2023-2028,³ EDI 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 Agency website.⁴

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 programme.

³ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/gender/>

⁴ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/gender/>

2.3.2 Eligibility and requirements of the Research Body

The Research Body must:

- Be a Research Ireland Eligible Research Body (ERB).⁵
- Have the authority to confer Doctoral degrees or must be associated with an organisation with the authority to do so.
- Adhere to best practice guidelines, including but not limited to the National Framework for Doctoral Education and QQI Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Research Degree Programmes.
- Be responsible for ensuring that the quality of the research meets the standards of the postgraduate research degree being undertaken by that student.
- Ensure that there is a fundamental research-related training component as part of the iScholar's studentship(s), which is embedded within the student's research project and involves standard training courses (for example, Epigeum training in research integrity).
- Ensure that appropriate time and access is given to allow the iScholar(s) to participate in the wider training and development activities that form part of the Innovate for Ireland Programme, including Entrepreneurial, Leadership & Innovation Programme activities and Innovation Ecosystem activities.
- Ensure that appropriate time and access is given to allow the iScholars(s) to participate in any placements in enterprise and/or other non-academic establishments that form part of the Programme.
- In the case that more than one Research Body is involved in an Innovate for Ireland award, it is expected that each one satisfies the above requirements and that all Research Bodies will have necessary agreements in place in advance of the award commencing, such that all students can undertake all elements of the described research and training programme. This may include but is not limited to the recognition of credits taken at other institutions, joint supervision where applicable, researcher exchange and placements, and joint monitoring of progression and quality assurance.

2.3.3 Eligibility and requirements of the PhD student candidates

An iScholar will need to have **entrepreneurial capacity and interest** along with outstanding **research ability and academic credibility**. They also need to be **passionate about sustainability**. The **selection process employed must align with delivering the three pillars and overarching objectives of the Innovate for Ireland programme**. To that end, the selection process for iScholars **must incorporate an assessment of their entrepreneurial, leadership and innovation (ELI) characteristics and capabilities**, as well as their academic excellence. In their application, the Applicant(s) and host Research Body will be expected to articulate their selection process and the profile of appropriately qualified experts who will support their selection process. A robust and rigorous ELI evaluation will be a pre-requisite for securing philanthropic funding. As part of ongoing reporting, Research Ireland may also seek evidence that this process is being adhered to.

The EU Joint Research Centre, in partnership with DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, has developed **EntreComp: The Entrepreneurship Competence Framework**.⁶ *EntreComp* describes entrepreneurship as a lifelong competence, identifies what are the elements that make someone entrepreneurial and describes them to establish a common reference for initiatives dealing with entrepreneurial learning. **Research Ireland recommends that any selection system be aligned with the *EntreComp* framework.**

⁵ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/eligibility-related-information/>

⁶ https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/entrecomp-entrepreneurship-competence-framework_en

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Appendix II contains an ELI questionnaire and scoring scheme that was developed by GII and Research Ireland, based on the *EntreComp* framework. This was used to assess candidates in the *Innovate for Ireland First Call*. The questionnaire and scoring scheme may be useful for assessing the entrepreneurial capacity of candidates.

Research Ireland will not assess the eligibility or suitability of the postgraduate students that will be recruited as iScholars to an Innovate for Ireland award. The selection will be the responsibility of the Applicant(s) and the host Research Body and must be carried out in accordance with good practice, relevant legislation, and the principles of academic freedom, and EDI. Applicants and the host Research Body should be cognisant of the Research Ireland External EDI Strategy⁷ and the Core Vision, Values and Goals of the strategy, particularly those related to PhD training.

The iScholars must be based at the host Research Body of the Lead Applicant (or Co-Applicant, where applicable). All iScholars will be expected to start their PhD in line with the start of the standard academic year – i.e. all iScholars will generally start their PhD in **September or October**. This is to ensure that participation in the training and development components of the Innovate for Ireland Programme is harmonised across groups of students. For any given year of an award, if students are not recruited and enrolled **by the end of the calendar year**, Research Ireland reserves the right to reprofile the award finances and decommit unused budget.

GII will be running a national and international promotion campaign during 2025 to generate interest in the programme. GII will engage with successful applicants to determine how their promotional activities can align with and support recruitment efforts. To engage with GII to consider these options in advance of finalising your proposal, please contact info@globalinnovatorsireland.com. Applicants should note that there is no pre-requisite to undertake this engagement in order to apply to the call.

2.3.4 Eligibility and requirements of the Industry Partner

Please note that Industry Partners are allowed to participate directly in the Innovate for Ireland 2025 Programme under the Industry Partnership stream only.

Eligible industry partner companies:

- Must be a research-active company, with a minimum of one employee engaged in research.
- Must be a private for-profit company located in Ireland.
- Must have the financial capacity to provide a *minimum* contribution of 50% of the total PhD costs. Please refer to **Sections 2.4, 2.5 and Appendix III** below for further details on the industry partner's contribution.
- Must possess the appropriate independent infrastructure, revenue and staffing, to provide appropriate working conditions and training to prospective iScholars
- Commercial semi-state companies such as the group of companies under CIE, EirGrid, ESB etc. are eligible industry partners.
- Academic spinouts are eligible industry partners provided they meet all other eligibility criteria, including the disclosure of any potential conflicts of interest.
- Must satisfy certain capital/debt eligibility criteria (see “undertaking in difficulty” section below).

⁷ <https://www.sfi.ie/research-news/news/sfi-edi-strategy/>

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Non-eligible industry partner companies include:

- Government-funded entities such as hospitals, technology transfer offices of public entities, Government departments or other agencies of the State.
- Charities and not-for-profit organisations.

Obligations to the overall Innovate for Ireland Programme

- If an industry partner has not already engaged with Global Innovators Ireland (GII) as part of the process of developing an application, they are directed to engage with GII in advance of submitting their application, in relation to supporting the fundraising, promotion, administration and delivery of the Innovation Ecosystem and other elements of the overall Innovate for Ireland Programme. Research Ireland will not have any role or responsibilities in relation to this engagement or any agreements made between GII and the industry partners.

Undertakings in Difficulty:

- Under State aid rules, Research Ireland cannot provide funding for applications involving industry partners that are ‘*undertakings in difficulty*’.⁸ Further information on ‘*undertakings in difficulty*’ can be found in **Appendix III**. Industry partners will be required to confidentially provide additional financial information/declarations to Research Ireland (see **Appendix IV**). These documents will be used by Research Ireland to determine the eligibility of the company to receive State aid.

Collaborative Research Agreement

- A Collaborative Research Agreement (CRA) must be signed between the industry partner and Research Body that is hosting the relevant Innovate for Ireland project(s). The CRA will clearly outline arrangements for access to and ownership of research results, including Intellectual property (IP) and for insurance, liability and warranties. It will typically contain a detailed statement of work for the research to be undertaken and includes a clause describing how the results of the project will be disseminated.

Under the Thematic Cohort stream, an industry partner is not permitted to participate in research projects and is not entitled to any preferential access to or ownership of research results, including IP. As such, there can be no conditionality attached to the grant donation made by industry in respect of preferential access to the research project or outcomes.

2.3.5 iScholar project requirements

- For applications to the **Thematic Cohort** stream, the iScholar projects **must be within the thematic areas outlined in Table 1**.
- For applications to the **Industry Partnership** stream, the iScholar projects may be within **any of the Innovate for Ireland thematic areas shown in Figure 1**.

2.4 Funding support available

Each Lead Applicant can request funding from Research Ireland (direct costs) for each student to be supported, following the below guidelines:

- The maximum budget for direct costs to support one student is €180,000 (inclusive of the industry partner contribution), or an average of approximately €45,000 per annum.
- The eligible student-related costs for the programme and relevant limits for individual cost types are shown in **Table 3** below. **Where indicated, fixed values must be adhered to in the requested budget.**

⁸ Article 2, no. 18 of [COMMISSION REGULATION \(EU\) No 651/2014 of 17 June 2014](#).

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- For the **Thematic Cohort stream**, **100% of costs** may be requested from Research Ireland.
- For the **Industry Partnership stream**, **up to 50% of costs** may be requested from Research Ireland. The remainder must be provided by the industry partner. The actual funding that can be requested from Research Ireland will vary depending on the size of the industry partner and the category of research being undertaken. See **Section 2.5 and Appendix III** for more details.

Table 3 – Innovate for Ireland Programme 2025 eligible costs

| Cost type | Specific allowances or limits |
|--|--|
| PhD stipend | Fixed value – €28,000 per annum per student. ⁹ |
| PhD registration fees | Contribution to fees of up to €5,500. |
| Travel expenses to conferences and meetings | Not exceeding €1,500 per annum per student. |
| Materials and consumables to support individual PhD projects, including access charges where required. | As required. |
| Equipment – laptop or desktop computers | One laptop or desktop computer per student. No other equipment may be requested. |
| Training costs – for general research skills and discipline-specific training requirements | As required. |
| Placement costs – travel and subsistence | As required. |
| Max. total cost allowed per student | €180,000 overall, or an average of €45,000 per annum. |

To enable the Host Research Institution(s) to deliver the most competitive programmes of research and training, overheads will be payable for hosting Innovate for Ireland iScholars. It is expected that overheads will be utilised for the payment of exceptional costs in the provision of services, training and support, **over and above the indirect costs of hosting students already covered by their fees**. This would include facilitation of strategic institutional collaboration, international collaboration, competitive recruitment of students, and to provide a demonstrable enhancement to the postgraduate student experience within the Innovate for Ireland Programme.

2.5 State Aid requirements

As per Research Ireland Grant Conditions (to include General Terms & Conditions,¹⁰ Letters of Offer and Research Ireland Policy documents),¹¹ 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).¹² Applicants applying to Research Ireland for funding are advised that funding awarded under the Innovate for Ireland 2025 Programme **Industry Partnership stream** will be subject to, and must comply with, State aid rules and the conditions of the EU Commission General Block Exemption Regulation (GBER).¹³ Funding for the **Industry Partnership** stream will be awarded to successful applicants under Article 25, in respect of aid for research and development projects. Funding for the **Thematic Cohort** stream must only be used for non-economic activities, such as fundamental research, and must not involve the participation of an industry partner in the research project. Further information on the levels of funding permitted, categories of research permitted, and financial declarations required from industry partners can be found in **Appendices III and IV**.

⁹ This level may be adjusted further, subject to the formal outcomes of the National Review of State Supports for PhD Researchers.

¹⁰ <https://www.researchireland.ie/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Research-Ireland-Grant-GTCs.pdf>

¹¹ <https://www.researchireland.ie/about/policies/>; <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/>

¹² [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52016XC0719\(05\)&from=EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52016XC0719(05)&from=EN)

¹³ [EU Commission Regulation \(EC\) No. 651/2014](#) as amended by [Commission Regulation \(EU\) 2023/1315](#) (referred to collectively as the "GBER").

3 Application Procedure

3.1 Submission of Expression of Interest

An Expression of Interest (EOI) template for the Innovate for Ireland – 2025 Programme is provided in **Appendix V**.

- An EOI is **mandatory** for submissions to the **Thematic Cohort** stream. Full applications to this stream will **not** be accepted from applicants from whom an EOI has not been received.
- An EOI is **recommended** for submissions to the **Industry Partnership** stream (but not mandatory).

EOIs should be submitted to i4i@researchireland.ie no later than **19th February 2025, 13:00 Dublin, Ireland local time**. EOIs will not be assessed for eligibility or quality and applications will not be declined at this stage of the process.

**Deadline for EOI submissions:
Wednesday 19th February 2025 at 13:00 Dublin local time**

EOI submission is mandatory for the Thematic Cohort stream and recommended for the Industry Partnership stream.

3.2 Submission of Full Application via SESAME

3.2.1 Access to SESAME

The full application for **both streams** must be submitted via SESAME, Research Ireland’s grants and awards management system. The Lead Applicant is responsible for ensuring that the application submitted on SESAME is submitted **through the correct stream**. 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.

SESAME is accessed via the following link: <https://grants.sfi.ie>

Please note that the application forms for both streams of the programme will be opened on SESAME during February 2025.

3.2.2 Submission of Full Application

Both the **Thematic Cohort stream** and **Industry Partnership stream** will run to a **fixed-call deadline**. Applications must be submitted to Research Ireland by the deadline below.

**Deadline for Full Application submissions:
Wednesday 19th March 2025 at 13:00 Dublin local time**

3.3 ORCID ID

- ORCID provides a unique identifier for all researchers which can then be linked to their different research works across different platforms. SESAME is integrated with ORCID making it possible for researchers with a SESAME Research Profile to connect directly to an ORCID ID from their profile. 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.
- Your ORCID ID is a unique identifier which distinguishes you from other researchers with a similar name.
- Using the ORCID ID assists in making your research works more visible to funders and publishers.
- 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 and Co-Applicants are required to link their SESAME Research Profiles to an ORCID ID before an application can be submitted.**

3.4 General 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.

Ensure that all protection and encryption is disabled for all PDF uploads, as your application may otherwise fail to pass checking.

- The number of pages in uploads must not exceed the specifications for any given section.
- Appendices or other unsolicited documentation are not permitted.
- File sizes of attachments should be less than 5MB.
- 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. 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.¹⁴ 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.

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

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 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.

3.5 Proposal Sections

3.5.1 Proposal Summary

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

- **Proposal title:** The proposal title should clearly convey the nature of the research to be undertaken, in up to 30 words. The title should not contain confidential details, given that the titles of funded proposals are published by Research Ireland. After entering the Proposal title and selecting “Save Draft” a Proposal ID is automatically generated by SESAME. Additional fields now appear in the SESAME application form.
- **Duration of Award Requested:**
 - **Thematic Cohort** awards must have a duration of 48 to 72 months (depending on which thematic area being applied for, as follows):
 - *Climate Change Mitigation* – 72 months (6 years, reflecting 3 intakes of iScholars).
 - *Sustainable Aviation & Energy Transition* – 48 months (4 years, reflecting 1 intake of iScholars).
 - **Industry Partnership** awards must have a duration of 48 months (4 years).
- **Resubmission statement:** Applicants must declare whether a new submission relates to a previous unsuccessful application to any Science Foundation Ireland, Irish Research Council or Research Ireland scheme. If the application is a resubmission, a statement 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 in the assessment of the eligibility of a revised application and will not be shared with reviewers. See Research Ireland Resubmission policy¹⁵ for further details.
- **Primary Priority Area:** Select the Priority Area which the proposed research most closely aligns with.
- **Secondary Priority Area:** If your proposal also aligns with another Priority Area, please select it here.
- **Research Area (Primary):** Select a primary Research Ireland research area from the drop-down menu, which best describes the proposed research.
- **Research Area (Secondary):** Select a secondary Research Ireland research area from the drop-down menu, which best describes the proposed research.
- **Justification for research alignment with the Innovate for Ireland programme (max. 250 words):** Identify which thematic area(s) of the Innovate for Ireland programme that the research is aligned with and provide a justification statement explaining why this is the case.
- **Keywords (max. 15 words):** Please list the keywords/phrases from the research discipline or sub-discipline that best describe the research proposed in the application.
- **Scientific abstract (max. 200 words):** This should be a succinct, stand-alone and accurate summary, in technical language, of the proposed work. Confidential information should not be included in the scientific abstract.
- **Lay abstract (max. 100 words):** This should be a succinct, stand-alone and accurate summary in lay, non-technical language of the proposed work. Confidential information should not be included in the lay abstract.

¹⁵ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/eligibility-related-information/>

3.5.2 Lead Applicant and Co-Applicant(s) Details

The below information must be provided for the Lead Applicant and any/all Co-Applicants on the proposal. If there is one or more Co-Applicants on the proposal, they must login to SESAME to upload their CV and insert their research funding history in the same way as the Lead Applicant. In addition, they must agree to the terms and conditions of the programme.

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

- **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.**
- **Supervisory Experience:** Provide summary information on supervisory experience to date for the Lead Applicant and Co-Applicant(s).
- **Lead Applicant and Co-Applicant(s) Narrative CV (Upload):** A CV of the Lead Applicant and Co-Applicant(s), using the template provided in the Downloads section of the programme webpage on the Research Ireland website, must be completed and uploaded (**upload: max. 5 pages**). **Please click on “Save Draft” after upload.** The current template allows for the provision of additional information such as periods of leave from research if relevant. Please consult the Guidance for Applicants on the Research Ireland Narrative CV and FAQs for resources to help you prepare your Narrative CV.¹⁶ **Reference to metrics such as journal impact factor, h-index and total number of publications are not permitted.¹⁷ If these metrics are included, they will be redacted prior to expert review.**
- **Does the Lead or Co-Applicant (where applicable) hold a Joint Appointment:** Yes or No. If ‘Yes’, the applicant will be requested to provide details of the appointment including a breakdown of time commitments. **If an applicant holds a joint appointment, they must contact i4i@researchireland.ie in advance of application submission with details of those appointments.** Please be aware that applicants holding joint or secondary appointments must refer to the most up to date Research Ireland policies relevant to these types of appointments, see **Section 2.3** for more details on applicant eligibility.
- **Research Funding History:** See below for details.

3.5.3 Expired, Current and Pending Support of Lead Applicant and Co-Applicant(s)

- The Lead Applicant and Co-Applicant(s) 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.
- 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.

¹⁶ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/narrative-cv-dora/>

¹⁷ Per the Guidance for Applicants on the Research Ireland Narrative CV and FAQs, the inclusion of information about citations, including Field Weighted Citation Impact (FWCI), is permitted, but this should complement the qualitative (narrative) information provided.

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- 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.
- If the applicant is a Collaborator on a research project, the grant should not be included here; only awards where the applicant is either the Principal Investigator or Co-Investigator should be listed.
- 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 be reviewed as part of the applicant's track record. Applicants with a number of expired grants over the previous ten years may be selective with which funding grants to include in this section. Grants that are most relevant to the proposed research should be included.

Research funding may be added directly to the application or added from the applicant's profile (see the SESAME Researcher User Guide). If this section is left blank it will be assumed that the applicant has NO expired, current, or pending funding. Both the Lead and Co-Applicant need to complete this section within SESAME. Please ensure that research funding added to the profile of the Lead Applicant, or the profile of the Co-Applicant, has been included in the application via SESAME.

3.5.4 Named Supervisors (Collaborators)

Named Supervisors should be added to the application on SESAME as **Academic Collaborators**. Provide their names, contact information and other details as required **and ensure that a Letter of Support (max. 1 page) and CV (max. 2 pages) is uploaded for each Named Supervisor**. The use of a template is not mandatory for Named Supervisor (Academic Collaborator) CVs; however, we recommend that the **Collaborator Narrative CV template** available on the programme webpage is used. **Also, references to metrics such as journal impact factor, h-index and total number of publications are not permitted.¹⁸ If these metrics are included, they will be redacted prior to expert review.**

Please note that for the **Industry Partnership** stream, named supervisors **only** need to be added to an application if the application is seeking funding for multiple iScholars who will not be supervised by the Lead Applicant/Co-Applicant(s) alone.

3.5.5 Company Information

For the **Industry Partnership** stream, provide the following information for the Industry Partner company:

- **Company name**
- **Annual turnover** – in euro.
- **Company size** – see **Appendix III** for more information on determining the industry partner company size.
- **Total number of employees** – in full-time equivalents (FTEs).
- **Number of employees in R&D** – in full-time equivalents (FTEs).
- **Independently owned premises** – for the purposes of hosting iScholar placements.
- **Irish owned** – being Irish owned is not a requirement and this data is only collected for information purposes.

¹⁸ Per the Guidance for Applicants on Narrative CVs and FAQs, the inclusion of information about citations, including Field Weighted Citation Impact (FWCI), is permitted, but this should complement the qualitative (narrative) information provided.

3.5.6 Ethical Issues Questions

- **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.¹⁹
- **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.¹⁸ Clinical trials and investigations requiring approval by the Health Products Regulatory Authority (HPRA) will not be permitted through the Innovate for Ireland programme.

3.5.7 Sex/Gender Dimension in Research Statement

In accordance with the Research Ireland External EDI Strategy 2023-2028,²⁰ all applicants must complete a statement (**max. 1000 words**) articulating the consideration of biological sex and/or social gender variables in their research programme. 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 the body of the proposal and/or in your CV, as appropriate.

To complete this section, please consider the following questions:

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

If the answer to either is yes, please describe how sex and/or gender considerations will be integrated into the research projects.

If no, please explain why sex and/or gender are not applicable to the research projects.

3.5.8 Budget

Prepare a budget table for the number of students and intakes being requested based on the guidance in **Section 2.4** above. A specific budget template is available on the programme webpage for each stream of the programme:

- Use the **Innovate for Ireland Thematic Cohort Budget Template** (*Excel file*) to prepare your detailed budget for the **Thematic Cohort** stream.
- Use the **Innovate for Ireland Industry Partnership Budget Template** (*Excel file*) to prepare your detailed budget for the **Industry Partnership** stream.

Please ensure that you follow these instructions when submitting your budget:

- a. **Transpose** the details from the **For SESAME - Summary tab** of your Excel template into the budget table on SESAME, adding columns as necessary for each year of your budget.
- b. **Copy the table, or a clear screenshot of it**, from the **PhD Student Budget** tab(s) into your proposal document (see **Section 3.5.9** and **Appendices VI and VII** below).
- c. **Upload** a copy of the completed Excel budget template onto your application on SESAME in the relevant upload field.

¹⁹ <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/ethical-and-scientific-issues/>

²⁰ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/gender/>

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Refer to the Research Ireland Grant Budget Policy²¹ for further details on eligible and ineligible costs. Provide a budget justification (**max. 3 pages**) to accompany your budget. See notes for completion of the budget in the SESAME Researcher User Guide²² and within SESAME.

3.5.9 Proposal Document

- For the **Thematic Cohort** stream – upload a **single Proposal Document** into the **Research Programme** field that includes the information requested in **Appendix VI**.
- For the **Industry Partnership** stream – upload a **single Proposal Document** into the **Research Programme** field that includes the information requested in **Appendix VII**.

3.5.10 Supporting Documents

- For the **Thematic Cohort** stream – upload all supporting documents requested in **Appendix VIII**.
- For the **Industry Partnership** stream – upload all supporting documents requested in **Appendix IX**.

3.5.11 Infrastructure, facilities and services available

The Applicant(s) must describe the infrastructure, facilities and space to be provided by the Research Body/Bodies (**max. 1 page**). This should include details of the office, laboratory, computing, animal or other facilities as necessary, where the research will be carried out, including all of the equipment that will be available, but excluding equipment requested in this application. Indicate what IP/technology transfer services are provided by the Research Body.

3.5.12 Letters of Support

A reminder that protection and encryption must be disabled for all PDF uploads – it is the responsibility of the applicants to check this for all Letters of Support before uploading them.

- **Primary Host Research Body Letter of Support:**
 - With reference to The National Framework for Doctoral Training, the letter of support should detail how the Host Research Body will put in place a mechanism for assuring the quality of academic training provided.
 - Training courses, career development supports, involvement of graduate studies offices, or any other relevant contributions to the provision of postgraduate education should be included here.
 - Overheads will be payable to Host Research Body to deliver the most competitive programmes of research and training. Overheads must be used for the provision of services, training and support over and above the costs of hosting students already covered by payment of their fees. Host Research Body must clearly describe how overhead income will be used to support the Innovate for Ireland cohort, recruitment of students and enhancement of the student experience.
 - The Host Research Body should also comment on how it will support the applicant(s) and describe the reporting structure which has been/will be put in place within the Research Body.
 - There is no limit to the length of this letter.
- **Secondary Host Research Body Letter(s) of Support:**
 - If **more than one** Host Research Body is involved in the application, each additional Host Research Body should provide a Letter of Support confirming their participation in the programme and highlighting their contributions in line with those provided by the Primary Host Research Body. There is no limit to the length of this letter(s).

²¹ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/budget-finance-related-policies/>

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

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- **Co-Supervisor Letters of Support:**
 - Provide a letter from each named Co-Supervisor confirming their participation in the programme and summarising their experience in training and developing students (**max. 1 page** letter for each co-supervisor).
- **Industry Partner Letter of Support:**
 - These are only required for applications under the **Industry Partnership** stream.
 - Provide a letter from the industry partner involved in the application. The industry partner should describe how they will provide the required infrastructure and capability to support the iScholars for the duration of the programme.
 - The industry partner's financial contribution(s) should be confirmed in the letter of support and correspond to the project budget submitted as part of the application.
 - If an industry partner has not already been engaged by Global Innovators Ireland (GII) as part of the process of developing an application, they are directed to engage with GII in relation to supporting the fundraising, promotion, administration and delivery of the Innovation Ecosystem and other elements of the overall Innovate for Ireland Programme (**see Section 2.3.4**).

3.5.13 Applicant Acknowledgement of Terms and Conditions

Submission of an application confirms that Research Ireland's Grant General Terms & Conditions²³ 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 do so, or to comply with requirements outlined in this 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.

3.5.14 Research Body Approval

Submissions must be approved by an authorised Research Body representative. In particular, the host Research Body is approving:

- Eligibility of each Lead Applicant/Co-Applicant and Named Supervisor.
- That the Lead Applicant and each Co-Applicant are recognised as an employee of the Eligible Research Body (or Bodies) for the duration of the award.
- That the requested budget including salaries/stipends, equipment, travel and materials/consumables are in line with accepted institutional and national guidelines.
- The availability of infrastructure within the institution as outlined by the applicant group in the research proposal.
- That the proposed research programme has not been funded by other sources.
- That relevant legal and ethical approval has been or will be sought and will 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 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.

²³ <https://www.researchireland.ie/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Research-Ireland-Grant-GTCs.pdf>

3.5.15 Proposal Submission

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(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 contact the Research Office well in advance in order to obtain registration details for SESAME and 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, 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.

3.5.16 Submission of Industry Partner Documentation

For the **Industry Partnership** stream, financial information/declarations must be separately submitted to Research Ireland as per the requirements detailed in **Appendix IV** below.

The forms should be confidentially provided by the industry partner directly to Research Ireland by emailing to i4i@researchireland.ie by one-week post-proposal submission deadline, referencing the relevant application ID in the email. Templates for the industry partner documentation are provided in Appendix IV.

4 Proposal Review Process and Criteria

4.1 San Francisco Declaration of Research Assessment (DORA)

Research Ireland is a signatory of the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA)²⁴ and, as such, is aligning its review and evaluation processes with DORA principles. Research Ireland has reinforced its commitment to the core principles by joining DORA as a member²⁵. 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-index. In the spirit of supporting open research and as a signatory to Ireland’s National Action Plan for Open Research 2022-2030²⁶ and a signatory of Plan S²⁷, 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 Assessment²⁸ and is a member of the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA)²⁹.

4.2 Review process

The submission of an application to Research Ireland shall be construed as consent by the applicants to participate in the peer review process.

Step 1: Research Ireland will assemble a panel comprised of international reviewers with domain specific expertise, as well as experts with experience in entrepreneurship, innovation, postgraduate research training and education. Each member of the panel will receive a number of proposals to review, and each proposal will be reviewed by at least three reviewers. Reviewers will appraise the application based on the review criteria set out below for each stream.

Step 2: The panel of reviewers will meet to discuss all proposals, with panel members afforded the opportunity to adjust their reviews and scores. The panel will agree a funding recommendation for each proposal. The fundable proposals will be ranked by their overall score across all criteria and this ranking will inform the final decision by Research Ireland as to which proposal(s) will be funded.

Selection of reviewers is at the sole and exclusive discretion of Research Ireland. The identity of experts who serve as reviewers shall remain confidential and shall not be disclosed to the applicants. However, decisions resulting from the evaluation will be provided to the applicants, including relevant review comments, following the conclusion of the Research Ireland review process. Research Ireland shall not be liable for the release of information concerning proposals to third parties by those individuals involved in the merit review process.

Should circumstances arise, Research Ireland reserves the right to modify the review process and use tiebreakers (such as a random number lottery) to decide which proposal(s) will be funded. 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.

²⁴ <https://sfdora.org/read/>

²⁵ Contributor level membership

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

²⁷ <https://www.coalition-s.org/>

²⁸ https://coara.eu/app/uploads/2022/09/2022_07_19_rra_agreement_final.pdf

²⁹ <https://coara.eu/>

4.3 Review Criteria for the Thematic Cohort stream

Applications to the Innovate for Ireland 2025 Programme – Thematic Cohort stream will be evaluated on the basis of the following high-level criteria. Each is weighted equally and accompanied by a more detailed description. Applicants should consider these carefully in the preparation of their application.

1. Quality, significance and relevance of the Applicant Group and Research Environment

- Quality, significance and relevance of the 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 and considering the quality and relevance of the collaborators and/or mentor, if relevant. The following areas will be considered:
 - Generation of Knowledge,
 - Development of Individuals and Collaboration,
 - Supporting Broader Society & the Economy and,
 - Supporting the Research Community.³⁰
- Quality and cohesiveness of overall applicant group including Named Supervisors.
- Quality of research environment, including critical mass of expertise, access to state-of-the-art facilities in area of research and to relevant international and intersectoral networks.

2. Quality of the Research Programme

- Importance, timeliness, and novelty of the proposed research.
- Quality of institutional support.
- Communication and description of the research.
- Comprehension of the current state of the art.
- Sex and gender dimension.
- Data Management Plan.

3. Quality, significance and relevance of the proposed vision, execution and delivery of the Innovate for Ireland Programme including the recruitment process and value for money

- Quality of the applicants’ vision for their Innovate for Ireland cohort and the ability of the applicant group to deliver this vision.
- Quality of recruitment plans for requested number of students, inclusion of national and international recruitment.
- **Use of a robust and appropriate selection framework to align with the goals of the Innovate for Ireland Programme, including profile of assessors (see Section 2.3.3).**
- Appropriateness of proposed management and governance structures.
- In multi-institutional applications, how will this aspect of the execution be managed.
- Quality of supports for supervisors.
- Quality of EDI plans.
- Value for money of requested budget from Research Ireland.

4. Quality, credibility and relevance of the Impact Statement

- The likelihood, scale and value of the societal and/or economic effect the proposed programme will have for Ireland.
- The relevance of the proposed stakeholders and beneficiaries identified in the Impact Statement.
- The plans that the Applicants have put in place to increase the potential for economic and/or societal impacts.
- The proposed timeframe for the benefits of the research to be realised.

5. Quality, significance and relevance of the proposed training programme

- Quality and innovativeness of training programme to deliver learning outcomes.
- Demonstrable added value over and above existing and established research postgraduate training opportunities.

³⁰ Examples are provided in the Applicant CV template, which is available on the programme webpage.

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- Quality of actions to ensure horizontal and vertical cohesion of the cohort.
- Quality of proposed career support provisions.
- Quality and relevance of proposed placement scheme.
- Access to relevant enterprise and international networks.

4.4 Review Criteria for the Industry Partnership stream.

Applications to the Innovate for Ireland 2025 Programme – Industry Partnership stream will be evaluated on the basis of the following high-level criteria. Each is weighted equally and accompanied by a more detailed description. Applicants should consider these carefully in the preparation of their application.

1. Quality, significance and relevance of the Applicant Group and Research Environment

- Quality, significance and relevance of the 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 and considering the quality and relevance of the collaborators and/or mentor, if relevant. The following areas will be considered:
 - Generation of Knowledge.
 - Development of Individuals and Collaboration.
 - Supporting Broader Society & the Economy.
 - Supporting the Research Community.³¹
- Quality and cohesiveness of overall applicant group including Named Supervisors (where applicable).
- Quality of research environment, including critical mass of expertise, access to state-of-the-art facilities in area of research and to relevant international and intersectoral networks.

2. Quality of the Research Programme

- Importance, timeliness and novelty of the proposed research.
- Quality of institutional support.
- Communication and description of the research.
- Comprehension of the current state of the art.
- Sex and gender dimension.
- Data Management Plan.

3. Quality of the recruitment process

- Quality of recruitment plans for requested number of students, inclusion of national and international recruitment.
- **Use of a robust and appropriate selection framework to align with the goals of the Innovate for Ireland Programme, including profile of assessors (see Section 2.3.3).**

4. Quality, credibility and relevance of the Impact Statement

- The likelihood, scale and value of the societal and/or economic effect the proposed programme will have for Ireland.
- The relevance of the proposed stakeholders and beneficiaries identified in the Impact Statement.
- The plans that the Applicants have put in place to increase the potential for economic and/or societal impacts.
- The proposed timeframe for the benefits of the research to be realised.

5. Quality of the Industry Partnership and its outcomes

- Coherence and feasibility of the work and training plan.
- Potential for benefit to all participants in the partnership (applicants, students and industry partner).
- Potential to shape and inform the future direction of the participants research activities.
- Potential for long-term collaboration and knowledge exchange between the participants.

³¹ Examples are provided in the Applicant CV template, which is available on the programme webpage.

5 Award Management

5.1 State Aid Monitoring for the Industry Partnership stream

For applications awarded under the **Industry Partnership** stream, Research Ireland will monitor and verify, on an on-going basis and as required, the Research Body's and/or Industry Partner(s) (as applicable) compliance with State aid law. Upon request, the Research Body and/or industry partner will provide the Foundation with all documentation reasonably required to satisfy Research Ireland that the Research Body and/or the industry partner complies with State aid law. The Research Body and/or industry partner are responsible for retaining such documentary records as are required to demonstrate compliance with State aid law, and ensure, where relevant, that all necessary third-party consents are procured to allow for such documentation to be disclosed to Research Ireland.

5.2 Progress Reporting Requirements

Please note that details for reporting requirements below will be updated further at the post-award stage. Applicants holding Innovate for Ireland awards and PhD students participating in the Innovate for Ireland programme should expect there to be other requirements for providing reporting and updates to the philanthropic donors supporting the programme via GII.

The State has made a significant investment via Research Ireland into research. The philanthropic donors (via GII) have also made a significant investment to support Innovate for Ireland. As such, it is the responsibility of Research Ireland to monitor the progress and outcomes of the awards made through this programme, on behalf of the state and all other partners. All Research Ireland grant holders are required to report on outputs and impacts arising from their research programme for the duration of their award and for up to five years after the award end (close) date. The progress reporting requirements for awards made under the Innovate for Ireland programme include the completion of an Annual Report and Research Ireland Research Outputs (formerly referred to as the SFI Census). The annual report is used to monitor the progress of individual awards against the overall objectives of the programme and associated Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). Each of the Innovate for Ireland programme objectives, with expected outputs, is discussed in turn below.

Objective: Provide a mechanism for Ireland to attract, develop and retain PhD students who have world-class academic and entrepreneurial capacity.

- **Outcomes:** High quality candidates will be recruited either nationally or internationally and will receive training that positions them as future leaders, innovators and entrepreneurs capable of tackling major national and global challenges. The iScholars will move on from their PhDs to continue making contributions in an academic, industry, or other sector roles, within Ireland.
- **Key Performance Indicators:**
 - Number of iScholar applications received and number of iScholars enrolled.
 - Retention and graduation rate of iScholars.
 - Percentage of iScholars who remain in Ireland post-graduation.
 - Next destination of iScholars.
 - Number of international applicants, number, and retention rate of accepted international iScholars.
 - Participation of iScholars in all pillars of the programme.

Objective: Focus on innovation, by supporting cutting-edge research projects, promoting interdisciplinary collaboration, and leveraging the latest technologies and methodologies.

- **Outcomes:** The research undertaken by iScholars will be world leading by objective measures, with an implicit focus on innovative approaches, going above and beyond the current 'state of the art' to address challenging problems facing human society.

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- **Key Performance Indicators:**

- Field weighted citation rate for outputs arising from the Innovate for Ireland Programme.
- Creation of new and innovative tools, models, databases, and methods for research.
- Patent filings, IP disclosures, and spinouts.
- Creation of new and innovative tools, models, systems, practices, services etc which have been adopted/applied in industry.
- Number of outputs from PhD research projects directly and indirectly applied in industry.

Objective: Equip iScholars to become industry-ready innovators who will be catalysts for job creation, business and social innovation and sustainable prosperity for all.

- **Outcomes:** iScholars will demonstrate enhanced entrepreneurial, leadership and innovation skills, and apply these in the medium- and longer-term post-graduation, to contribute broadly across various sectors. In the short-term, iScholars will be workplace-ready for industry roles outside of academia.

- **Key Performance Indicators:**

- Number of iScholars in next destinations outside of academia.
- Number of iScholars engaged in entrepreneurial, leadership, and innovation roles post-graduation.
- Number of iScholars directly progressing to business formation/start-up conceptualisation.

Objective: Facilitate the development of retention strategies and pathways for iScholars as proactive members of the national innovation ecosystem.

- **Outcomes:** iScholars will receive placements in industry-related settings (as appropriately structured for the relevant stream of the programme) and will take part in an extensive programme of professional network-building to secure their long-term retention within Ireland’s ecosystem of accelerators, incubators and entrepreneurial supports.

- **Key Performance Indicators:**

- Number of placements arranged.
- Duration of placements.
- Number of mentoring opportunities arranged.
- Duration of mentoring relationships.

Objective: Deliver solutions to global grand challenges, positioning Ireland as a leading force in sustainability research.

- **Outcomes:** The iScholar projects will focus on national and global grand challenges, with a strong emphasis on sustainability (e.g., climate change and climate adaptation; decarbonisation; energy resilience; etc.) and Digital Transformation including new and emerging technologies. In an approach that is unique globally, all the doctoral research projects will focus specifically on solving challenges and will include training in innovation, entrepreneurship and leadership.

- **Key Performance Indicators:**

- Number of Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) goals identified and tracked.
- Progress towards delivering tracked ESG goals.
- Reporting of ESG outcomes.
- Innovative outputs from research project applied in achieving ESG goals.

The Research Ireland Grants and Awards Management System, SESAME, is the primary conduit for annual reporting. Research Ireland Innovate for Ireland Programme award holders will be requested to submit their annual report by 31st January every year to report on activity during the previous calendar year (January – December). An additional final report must be submitted within 3 months of the expiration date of the award. In addition to the annual report, award holders are also obliged to keep their SESAME Research Profile updated, as the annual stocktake of Research Ireland Research Outputs

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is drawn directly from the data entered into the Research Profile; this must also be updated and completed by 31st January every year. Research Ireland reporting procedures³² and information³³ on the entry of data into the Research Profile are available on the Research Ireland website.

The reporting requirements for awards made under the Innovate for Ireland 2025 Programme must be adhered to. Individuals who hold the primary responsibility for reporting and who fail to comply with reporting requirements, run the risk of having their grant payments suspended and their eligibility to apply for funding in forthcoming Research Ireland calls affected.

5.3 Progress Reviews

Innovate for Ireland Awards may be subject to progress review assessment performed by international peer reviewers during the period of the award. These progress reviews are typically held at the midway point of the award. The panel is asked to assess the progress and direction of the research and training programme, the quality of the team and partnerships, the management of the budget and the potential impact of the research and training programme. The commitment of the Research Body as outlined in the letter of support along with progress against the objectives set out for the Innovate for Ireland Programme, will also be assessed. The outcome of such a review will be taken into consideration in the assessment of future applications to the Foundation. As stated in the Research Ireland Grant General Terms and Conditions, the agency reserves the right to terminate an award if, in the opinion of the agency, progress is not deemed to be satisfactory.

³² <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/award-management/reporting-procedures/index.xml>

³³ <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/award-management-system/>

6 Research Ireland Policies and Positions

In addition to complying with Research Ireland’s Grant General Terms and Conditions, applicants are expected to be familiar and consult with the following policies/positions and with all relevant national policies when preparing their application. All team members involved in the funded research should be apprised of the following non-exhaustive list of relevant policies, which may be revised from time to time. **The following policies and positions have been inherited from Science Foundation Ireland and are likely to be updated in due course with successor Research Ireland policies.**

Clinical Trials

Research programmes that include clinical trials as part of the study must adhere to the **Research Ireland Clinical Trial and Clinical Investigation Policy**,³⁴ as well as with the requirements set out by the Health Products Regulatory Authority (HPRA).

Animal Usage

Applicants intending to use animals in their research projects are obliged to comply with the **Use of Animals in Research Policy**³⁵ and should also ensure that their studies align with the HRA’s position on the use of animals in research.

Research Integrity

Research Ireland places paramount importance on ensuring that the highest standards of research integrity underpin all aspects of the research that it supports. To this end, Research Ireland endorses the **National Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland**;³⁶ that is, all institutions and Research Ireland award holders are expected to abide by this statement and the **European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity**,³⁷ in addition to their respective institutional policies and procedures for handling research misconduct allegations.

Doctoral Education

For postgraduate students funded by Research Ireland, the host Research Body is expected to adopt the principles, standards and good practice for doctoral education described in the **National Framework for Doctoral Education (2023)**.³⁸

Intellectual Property Management

Intellectual Property (IP) should be managed according to the policies set out in the Government publication: **Ireland’s National IP Protocol 2019** and must comply with State aid Regulations.³⁹ The IP arrangements are the responsibility of the Research Body and shall reflect the collaborative nature of the project and the level of cash and in-kind commitment made by the Industry Partner. IP arrangements should be explicitly described in collaborative research agreements (CRAs).

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

Research Ireland’s ambition is that Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2023-2028 will be a key driver of an inclusive, engaged research culture and, through this Strategy, Research Ireland will be an agent of change. As such, the Research Ireland EDI Strategy presents a vision and strategy for Research Ireland, as a leading research funder, to help reduce systemic barriers to participating in the research endeavour.

³⁴ <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/ethical-and-scientific-issues/>

³⁵ http://www.sfi.ie/resources/SFI-Policy-on-the-Use-of-Animals-in-Research_June_2016.pdf

³⁶ <https://www.iaa.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/National-Policy-Statement-on-Ensuring-Research-Integrity-in-Ireland.pdf>

³⁷ https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/european-code-of-conduct-for-research-integrity_horizon_en.pdf

³⁸ <https://hea.ie/assets/uploads/2023/02/National-Framework-for-Doctoral-Education-2023.pdf>

³⁹ <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/national-policies-sfi-positions/>

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Research Ireland has already demonstrated leadership in improving the representation of women in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) research more broadly in the entire education talent pipeline. Whilst gender remains a central tenet of the new EDI Strategy, Research Ireland will now proactively consider other areas of inequality or disadvantage to support an intersectional approach, in keeping with our values and best practice.

Research should fully consider potential biological sex and socio-cultural gender dimensions as key analytical and explanatory variables. As articulated in the Research Ireland EDI Strategy, applicants are advised to demonstrate that they have considered any potential sex/gender aspects in their proposed research programme.

Maternity Supplement

Research Ireland is committed to removing and mitigating any existing or perceived factors that may limit the participation of women in research and innovation careers. Research Ireland invites its grant holders to apply for a supplemental discretionary allowance to support their Research Ireland-funded grant when either a Research Ireland Grant holder or a team member, including PhD students funded by a Research Ireland grant, takes a period of maternity or adoptive leave.⁴⁰

Appeals Process

The Appeals Process policy establishes procedures and responsibilities for the appeal of the declination of a proposal by Research Ireland.⁴¹

State aid

Please refer to the **State aid** section (**Section 2.5**) above.

Child Protection

Where relevant, applicants and Research Bodies are required to comply with the provisions of the **Children First Act 2015**,⁴² and the **National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017**.⁴³ It is the responsibility of the Research Body to ensure that they are compliant with all applicable law.

Data Protection Policy

The General Data Protection Regulation⁴⁴ is a legal framework that sets out guidelines for the collection and processing of personal information of individuals within the European Union.⁴⁵ Applicants are advised that they must be compliant with this regulation if they collect or process personal data.

Research Ireland may collect, use and disclose personal data provided in the application and/or otherwise obtained under, or in connection with, the application for processing the submission, for the performance of its statutory powers and functions, and for the general activities of Research Ireland. Further details regarding Research Ireland's collection, use and disclosure of personal data, and the rights of individuals with respect to any personal data held by Research Ireland, are available in the **Research Ireland Privacy Statement**.⁴⁶

During peer review procedures, information may be sent to external experts in countries outside of the European Economic Area, including countries that are not recognised by the European Commission as

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

⁴¹ <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/review/>

⁴² <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2015/act/36/enacted/en/pdf>

⁴³ http://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Children_First_National_Guidance_2017.pdf

⁴⁴ <https://www.dataprotection.ie/>

⁴⁵ <https://gdpr.eu/>

⁴⁶ <http://www.sfi.ie/privacy/>

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having adequate data protection laws. By submitting an application to Research Ireland, the Research Body and members of the Research Team are agreeing that they consent to the processing and transfer of personal information in this way. During the application process or at any time thereafter, Research Ireland may contact the Research Body, the Principal Investigator, or any member of the Research Team with regard to funding opportunities, activities or events organised by Research Ireland or other relevant bodies, or for the purposes of monitoring and evaluation (including, but not limited to, the collection of scientific data or data relating to the application 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.

Conflict of Interest

Research Ireland recognises that applicants may have a prior relationship with an industry partner engaged in an application for funding to Research Ireland (e.g., industry consultancy role, founder of an academic spin-out company) which may be perceived as a conflict of interest. Where a potential conflict of interest exists, Research Ireland requires that it is disclosed by the applicant to Research Ireland and their Research Body and that any such situations are managed by the Research Body in accordance with the principles and mandates laid out in **Ireland's National IP Protocol 2019**.⁴⁷

Open access

In line with the principles espoused by Plan S⁴⁸ and as a signatory of the National Action Plan for Open Research 2022-2030,⁴⁹ Research Ireland is committed to ensuring that all publicly funded research articles are openly available. Where a research publication arises in whole or in part from Research Ireland-funded research (i.e., where at least one of the researchers concerned receives Research Ireland funds in support of their endeavours), the researcher(s) should adhere to **Research Ireland's Open Access policy**.⁵⁰ Research Ireland monitors compliance with this policy through scientific and financial reporting, financial audits and other reviews, and data gathered through Research Outputs.

Data Management

Good data governance and stewardship are key components of good research practice. Research Ireland is part of an initiative for the voluntary international alignment of research data management policies.⁵¹ Applicants may find it helpful to consult with this and Science Europe's framework for discipline-specific research data management if preparing a data management plan as part of their application for funding to Research Ireland.⁵² Applicants should review individual programme funding call requirements regarding data management plans and timelines as to when they are required to be submitted.

Current policies and positions are reviewed on a regular basis; applicants are advised to consult the policy information in advance of submission of a proposal.

⁴⁷ <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/national-policies-sfi-positions/>

⁴⁸ <https://www.coalition-s.org/principles-and-implementation/>

⁴⁹ <https://norf.ie>

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

⁵¹ <https://www.scienceeurope.org/our-resources/practical-guide-to-the-international-alignment-of-research-data-management/>

⁵² <https://www.scienceeurope.org/our-resources/guidance-document-presenting-a-framework-for-discipline-specific-research-data-management/>

7 Further information

Frequently asked questions (FAQs) will be published on the programme webpage on the Research Ireland website. For all additional queries please contact i4i@researchireland.ie. For general queries on the Innovate for Ireland initiative please contact: info@globalinnovatorsireland.com.

8 Appendices

Appendix I – Additional details on features and principles of the Innovate for Ireland Programme 2025

Student cohorts

- The iScholars recruited under the **Thematic Cohort** stream will follow a cohort-based PhD training model, providing sufficient scale and sustainability to allow for the development and delivery of innovative entrepreneurial training opportunities for students.

Research Project and Environment

- The core element of a postgraduate research programme is a significant and original contribution to the body of knowledge in a given domain through the completion of a research project.
- iScholars will be embedded in environments of research excellence where there exists a critical mass of supervisors conducting leading research in their fields and cutting-edge infrastructure.
- iScholars will undertake advanced doctoral research that will deliver world class PhD research training and supervision as part of agreed research projects that will address global challenges.
- Research by iScholars will deliver innovative solutions to global grand challenges, positioning Ireland as a leading force in sustainability research.
- The content and breadth of the research project undertaken by the iScholar must be such that it satisfies the requirements for the conferral of the research degree by the Research Body.
- iScholars will be empowered to select their supervisors and define their research projects, but these must be within the thematic areas outlined in the main section of the call document.

Training, Development and Career Support

- iScholars will undertake a multi-year, personal and professional development programme (the Entrepreneurial, Leadership & Innovation Programme) to equip them to thrive as entrepreneurial leaders who are catalysts for innovation and sustainable growth.
- iScholars will participate in a vibrant, cross-sectoral innovation network, including but limited to, an extensive range of informal learning activities such as mentorship schemes, inspiration sessions, community activity, hackathons, cultural engagement, industry events and consultation groups, international conferences and awards programmes.
- iScholars will gain a heightened appreciation for how their research contributes to society and the economy through engagement with a broad spectrum of stakeholder groups, such as enterprise, public agencies and end-users.
- In addition to bespoke training, iScholars will participate in established institutional training programmes in mandatory research skills (research integrity, ethics, etc.) and undertake discipline-specific research-related training as needed to meet the requirements of their research project.
- iScholars will be provided with a student-focused postgraduate research experience with appropriate supports and mentorship to facilitate students' career development.
- All students must develop, with appropriate guidance, an individual development plan. The student should have full ownership of this plan, which should be put in place at the beginning of the research and training programme and be reviewed at regular and defined intervals over the course of the programme.
- Career support should include making students aware of educational opportunities, career options and long-term career development.

Supervision

- Supervisory procedures must be clearly laid out for both students and supervisors. This will include the make-up and responsibilities of the supervision committee, procedures for selection of a supervisor, training and mentorship for supervisors, and feedback mechanisms. All supervisors must be adequately informed and engaged with the research and training programme set out in the Innovate for Ireland Programme and must provide postgraduate students under their supervision with the appropriate support and opportunity to complete all elements of the programme.

Placements

- As part of their development of and participation in the Innovate for Ireland programme, placements for iScholars may be arranged in enterprise and/or other non-academic establishments.
- Appropriate support should be provided to the student in the selection and organisation of a placement with clear consideration of the desired outcomes for the student.
- Additional funding requests to cover extensions to the duration of research degrees on the basis of having undertaken a placement are not permitted.
- Depending on which stream an application is made to, the following principles for Placements will apply:
- **Thematic Cohort stream:**
 - The primary purpose of a placement in this stream is to expose students to other sectors and career paths, to develop transferrable skills, and to begin to build their professional networks, with the ultimate goal of enhancing students' employability and mobility in academic and non-academic sectors.
 - Placements must be primarily **non-research orientated**, focused on professional development and designed to expose the students to the day-to-day workings and business operations of an enterprise or non-academic partner. They should be *experiential* in nature – providing the opportunity for students to observe, learn and develop skills that would be generally transferable to another enterprise or non-academic setting. **In summary, any placement occurring under the Thematic Cohort stream must be to the benefit of the student, rather than the placement partner.**
 - The expected duration of a placement will be no more than 12 weeks in total (either as a single consecutive period or distributed over a longer period, e.g., 2 days a week for 30 weeks).
- **Industry Partnership stream:**
 - Placements under this stream should also seek to achieve the purposes of exposing students to other sectors and career paths, developing transferrable skills, and to beginning to build their professional networks.
 - However, under this stream, the industry partner and the lead applicant(s)/student(s) and their host institution may develop a primarily **research-orientated placement**, where the student will spend time working directly on their project at the industry partner's premises.
 - The duration of the placement is expected to be commensurate with the requirements of the project and may be taken as a single consecutive period or distributed over a longer period.
 - The details of the placement must be set out in the CRA signed by both the host institution and the industry partner.

Appendix II – ELI Questionnaire and Scoring Scheme

A Word document copy of this appendix can be downloaded from the Research Ireland website.

Entrepreneurial, Leadership & Innovation (ELI) Questionnaire

| Section 1: Innovation | |
|---|---------------------|
| Q1) How do you generate ideas? | Max word count: 100 |
| | |
| Q2) How do you go about expressing or communicating ideas in a compelling way that encourages broad understanding and support? | Max word count: 100 |
| | |
| Q3) Have you ever come up with an innovative idea that had real world impact? Describe the idea, its execution and any relevant outcomes? | Max word count: 100 |
| | |
| Section 2: Leadership | |
| Q4) How do you respond in the face of challenges that need resolutions? | Max word count: 100 |
| | |
| Q5) How do you identify entrepreneurial opportunities that others may miss? | Max word count: 100 |
| | |
| Q6) How do you motivate people? How do they typically respond to you? | Max word count: 100 |
| | |
| Section 3: Entrepreneurship | |
| Q7) How would you navigate entrepreneurial risk? | Max word count: 100 |
| | |
| Q8) How do you collaborate to achieve ambitious outcomes? | Max word count: 100 |
| | |
| Q9) What does entrepreneurship mean to you and how do you embody it? | Max word count: 100 |
| | |
| Q10) How do you plan to use Innovate for Ireland as a launch pad for the rest of your career? | |
| | Max word count: 500 |
| | |

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ELI Questionnaire Scoring Scheme

The questionnaire is divided into four sections. Each question assesses specific applicant capabilities that are relevant to the *EntreComp* framework and to Innovate for Ireland’s ELI focus. Sections one to three each include three questions, which are marked separately. Section four features a single, overall question. The structure and the focus of the questions in each section is illustrated below.

| Section | Focus of questions |
|--|---|
| Innovation capacity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managing ambiguity; uncertainty; risk Working with others/collaboration Taking the initiative |
| Leadership capacity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perseverance Commercial acumen; identifying opportunities Mobilising and inspiring others; self-awareness |
| Entrepreneurial drive | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creativity Vision Maximising opportunities |
| Making the most of Innovate for Ireland | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ambition to harness the unique training and mentoring opportunities as a launch pad for a successful career |

Scoring scale

For each application a score may be assigned from **1 (for poor evidence) to 5 (for excellent evidence)**. The table below summarises the overall approach that may be used for deciding each score point.

| | Score = 1 Poor evidence | Score = 2 Fair evidence | Score = 3 Good evidence | Score = 4 Very good evidence | Score = 5 Excellent evidence |
|------------------|---|--|---|--------------------------------------|--|
| Structure | No structure apparent | Some attempt to structure response | Reasonably well structured | Clear structure apparent | Very clear and concise structure |
| Style | No enthusiasm and energy apparent | Lacks energy and enthusiasm | Some enthusiasm apparent | Clear enthusiasm apparent | Strong enthusiasm |
| Content | Responses do not sufficiently address the questions posed | Responses are unimaginative and unconvincing | Responses are relevant, with some good ideas proposed | Responses are strong and interesting | Responses are imaginative and compelling |

The pages below provide a detailed rubric to guide in assessing each question in each section of the questionnaire. The weighting assigned to each question is shown in the table below.

| Section | Question | Weight |
|------------------------------|---|--------|
| Innovation capacity | Q1) How do you generate ideas? | 1.0 |
| | Q2) How do you go about expressing or communicating ideas in a compelling way that encourages broad understanding and support? | 1.0 |
| | Q3) Have you ever come up with an innovative idea that had real world impact? Describe the idea, its execution and any relevant outcomes? | 1.5 |
| Leadership capacity | Q4) How do you respond in the face of challenges that need resolutions? | 1.0 |
| | Q5) How do you identify entrepreneurial opportunities that others may miss? | 1.0 |
| | Q6) How do you motivate people? How do they typically respond to you? | 1.0 |
| Entrepreneurial drive | Q7) How would you navigate entrepreneurial risk? | 1.0 |
| | Q8) How do you collaborate to achieve ambitious outcomes? | 1.0 |
| | Q9) What does entrepreneurship mean to you and how do you embody it? | 1.5 |
| Making the most | Q10) How do you plan to use Innovate for Ireland as a launch pad for the rest of your career? | 5.0 |

- Q3 and Q9 carry a slightly heavier weighting as they delve deeper into the entrepreneurial traits of the candidates.
- Q10 carries the heaviest weighting, reflecting its wider scope and more detailed response.
- Therefore, allowing for weighting of individual questions, the maximum score is **75**.

| Section 1: Innovation | | | | |
|--|--|---|--|--|
| Criteria | Evidence as to whether the applicant has Innovation skills. <i>Creativity; Generating Ideas; Spotting opportunities; Having vision</i> | | | |
| Please score each question from 1 - 5. Half-scores of 0.5 are also permitted. | | | | |
| Q1) How do you generate ideas? | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Poor evidence indicating the applicant can generate new, novel ideas | Fair evidence indicating the applicant can generate new, novel ideas | Good evidence indicating the applicant can generate new, novel ideas | Very good evidence indicating the applicant can generate new, novel ideas | Excellent evidence indicating the applicant can generate new, novel ideas |
| Q2) How do you go about expressing or communicating ideas in a compelling way that encourages broad understanding and support? | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Poor evidence indicating the applicant can express or communicate ideas to other people | Fair evidence indicating the applicant can express or communicate ideas to other people | Good evidence indicating the applicant can express or communicate ideas to other people | Very good evidence indicating the applicant can express or communicate ideas to other people | Excellent evidence indicating the applicant can express or communicate ideas to other people |
| Q3) Have you ever come up with an innovative idea that had real world impact? Describe the idea, its execution and any relevant outcomes? | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Poor evidence indicating the applicant has come up with an innovative idea and poor explanation of outcome of idea. | Fair evidence indicating the applicant has come up with an innovative idea and poor explanation of outcome of idea. | Good evidence indicating the applicant has come up with an innovative idea and poor explanation of outcome of idea. | Very good evidence indicating the applicant has come up with an innovative idea and poor explanation of outcome of idea. | Excellent evidence indicating the applicant has come up with an innovative idea and poor explanation of outcome of idea. |

| Section 2: Leadership | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|---|
| Criteria | Evidence that the applicant can lead, or aspires to be a leader <i>Motivation; perseverance; self-awareness; commercial acumen</i> | | | |
| Please score each question from 1 - 5. Half-scores of 0.5 are also permitted. | | | | |
| Q4) How do you respond in the face of challenges that need resolutions? | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Poor evidence that the applicant can react well when it becomes difficult to continue or to make progress. | Fair evidence that the applicant can react well when it becomes difficult to continue or to make progress. | Good evidence that the applicant can react well when it becomes difficult to continue or to make progress. | Very good evidence that the applicant can react well when it becomes difficult to continue or to make progress. | Excellent evidence that the applicant can react well when it becomes difficult to continue or to make progress. |
| Q5) How do you identify entrepreneurial opportunities that others may miss? | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Poor evidence that the applicant can identify opportunities others cannot see | Fair evidence that the applicant can identify opportunities others cannot see | Good evidence that the applicant can identify opportunities others cannot see and a good explanation as to how they can do this | Very good evidence that the applicant can identify opportunities others cannot see and a very good explanation as to how they can do this | Excellent evidence that the applicant can identify opportunities others cannot see and an excellent explanation as to how they can do this |
| Q6) How do you motivate people? How do they typically respond to you? | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Poor evidence outlining how the applicant can motivate people | Fair evidence outlining how the applicant can motivate people | Good evidence outlining how the applicant can motivate people and good evidence of a result from the motivation | Very good evidence outlining how the applicant can motivate people and good evidence of a positive result from the motivation | Excellent evidence outlining how the applicant can motivate people and good evidence of a very positive result from the motivation |

Section 3: Entrepreneurship

| | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|--|
| Criteria | Evidence that the applicant shows an Entrepreneurial ability Leadership Capacity section on Application Form <i>Taking initiative; taking risks; collaboration; enthusiasm</i> | | | |
| Please score each question from 1 - 5. Half-scores of 0.5 are also permitted. | | | | |
| Q7) How would you navigate entrepreneurial risk? | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Poor evidence that the candidate can navigate entrepreneurial risk | Fair evidence that the candidate can navigate entrepreneurial risk | Good evidence that the candidate can navigate entrepreneurial risk | Very good evidence that the candidate can navigate entrepreneurial risk | Excellent evidence that the candidate can navigate entrepreneurial risk |
| Q8) How do you collaborate to achieve ambitious outcomes? | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Poor evidence outlining how the applicant can work with other people to achieve ambitious outcomes | Fair evidence outlining how the applicant can work with other people to achieve ambitious outcomes | Good evidence outlining how the applicant can work with other people to achieve ambitious outcomes | Very good evidence outlining how the applicant can work with other people to achieve ambitious outcomes | Excellent evidence outlining how the applicant can work with other people to achieve ambitious outcomes |
| Q9) What does entrepreneurship mean to you and how do you embody it? | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Poor evidence indicating the applicant's enthusiasm for entrepreneurship | Fair evidence indicating the applicant's enthusiasm for entrepreneurship | Good evidence indicating the applicant's enthusiasm for entrepreneurship | Very good evidence indicating the applicant's enthusiasm for entrepreneurship | Excellent evidence indicating the applicant's enthusiasm for entrepreneurship |

How do you plan to use Innovate for Ireland as a launch pad for the rest of your career?

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|--|
| Criteria | Evidence of how the applicant will use Innovate for Ireland as a launch pad for the rest of their career <i>Ambition to maximise for all aspects of Innovate for Ireland.</i> | | | |
| Please score each question from 1 - 5. Half-scores of 0.5 are also permitted. | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Poor evidence indicating how the applicant will use Innovate for Ireland as a launch pad for the rest of their career. | Fair evidence indicating how the applicant will use Innovate for Ireland as a launch pad for the rest of their career. | Good evidence indicating how the applicant will use Innovate for Ireland as a launch pad for the rest of their career. | Very good evidence indicating how the applicant will use Innovate for Ireland as a launch pad for the rest of their career. | Excellent evidence indicating how the applicant will use Innovate for Ireland as a launch pad for the rest of their career. |

Appendix III – Additional information on State Aid requirements for the Industry Partnership stream

Overview

As per Research Ireland’s Grant Conditions (inclusive of Research Ireland’s General Terms & Conditions,⁵³ Letters of Offer and Research Ireland Policy documents),⁵⁴ 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).⁵⁵ Applicants applying to Research Ireland for funding are advised that funding awarded under the Innovate for Ireland 2025 Programme **Industry Partnership stream** will be subject to, and must comply with, State aid rules and the conditions of the EU Commission General Block Exemption Regulation (GBER).⁵⁶ Funding will be awarded to successful applicants under Article 25, in respect of aid for research and development projects. All participants in this programme are required to put in place a full economic costing model based on consistently applied and objectively justifiable cost accounting principles. Under the **thematic cohort stream**, an industry partner is not permitted to participate in the research projects and shall not be entitled to have any preferential access to or ownership of research results, including IP, so as to comply with State aid rules. Research projects under the thematic cohort stream should involve non-economic activities only (e.g., fundamental research).

Where Research Ireland funded participants in this programme carry out activities of both economic and non-economic nature⁵⁷, the costs, funding and revenues of each of the two activities must be clearly accounted for separately. Funding for PhD projects under the Industry Partnership stream (i.e., that involve industry partners) will be awarded in line with the conditions of GBER and Research Ireland will complete the necessary compliance checks at application stage, if relevant. Applicants are asked to complete the **Innovate for Ireland Industry Partnership Budget Template** (excel file) to supply the required information on each project that will be supported under the Innovate for Ireland award; this template can be downloaded from the programme webpage on the Research Ireland website.

Categories of Research permitted

Under the Innovate for Ireland 2025 GBER Programme, proposals must fall under one of the following categories of research as defined by the EU:⁵⁸

Industrial Research:

- Planned research or critical investigation aimed at the acquisition of new knowledge and skills for developing new products, processes or services or for bringing about a significant improvement in existing products, processes or services, including digital products, processes or services, in any area, technology, industry or sector (including, but not limited to, digital industries and technologies, such as supercomputing, quantum technologies, blockchain technologies, artificial intelligence, cyber security, big data and cloud technologies).
- Comprises the creation of component parts of complex systems and may include the construction of prototypes in a laboratory environment or an environment with simulated interfaces to existing systems as well as of pilot lines, when necessary for the industrial research and notably for generic technology validation.

⁵³ <https://www.researchireland.ie/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Research-Ireland-Grant-GTCs.pdf>

⁵⁴ <https://www.researchireland.ie/about/policies/>; <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/>

⁵⁵ [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52016XC0719\(05\)&from=EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52016XC0719(05)&from=EN)

⁵⁶ [EU Commission Regulation \(EC\) No. 651/2014](#) as amended by [Commission Regulation \(EU\) 2023/1315](#) (referred to collectively as the "GBER").

⁵⁷ See points 18 and 19 of the Framework for State aid for research and development and innovation available at https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=uriserv:OJ.C_.2022.414.01.0001.01.ENG

⁵⁸ The definition of the categories of research/studies as are described in Articles 2(84), (85), (86) and (87) of the GBER.

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Experimental Development:

- Means acquiring, combining, shaping and using existing scientific, technological, business and other relevant knowledge and skills with the aim of developing new or improved products, processes or services, including digital products, processes or services, in any area, technology, industry or sector (including, but not limited to, digital industries and technologies, such as supercomputing, quantum technologies, blockchain technologies, artificial intelligence, cyber security, big data and cloud or edge technologies).
- This may also encompass, for example, activities aimed at the conceptual definition, planning and documentation of new products, processes or services.
- May comprise prototyping, demonstrating, piloting, testing and validation of new or improved products, processes or services in environments representative of real-life operating conditions, where the primary objective is to make further technical improvements on products, processes or services that are not substantially set.
- This may include the development of a commercially usable prototype or pilot which is necessarily the final commercial product, and which is too expensive to produce for it to be used only for demonstration and validation purposes.
- Experimental development does not include routine or periodic changes made to existing products, production lines, manufacturing processes, services and other operations in progress, even if those changes may represent improvements.

Levels of Funding (aid intensities)

GBER stipulates the levels of funding support (grant aid) that can be provided by Research Ireland. The maximum funding level for which a project is eligible depends on the category of research the project falls under and the status of the industry partner company. As such, Research Ireland can only provide a fixed proportion of the total eligible project costs with the remaining funding to be met by the industry partner. For example, **the Research Ireland funding rate will vary from 25% to a maximum of 50% of total eligible project costs depending on the size of the industry partner and the category of research being undertaken.**

The baseline funding rate for each project is determined as follows:

- 50% of the total eligible costs for **Industrial Research**
- 25% of the total eligible costs for **Experimental Development**

For the Innovate for Ireland 2025 GBER Programme, the funding rate may be increased as set out below, subject to up to a **maximum aid intensity of 50%** of the total eligible costs:

- a. by 10% for medium-sized enterprises.
- b. by 20% for small enterprises.
- c. by a further 15% (available to all industry partners irrespective of company size) if **one** of the following conditions is satisfied:
 - i. the results of the project are widely disseminated through conferences, publication, open access repositories, or free or open-source software. Research Ireland will monitor awards to ensure outputs are widely disseminated.
 - ii. the beneficiary commits to, on a timely basis, make available licences for research results of aided research and development projects, which are protected by intellectual property rights, at a market price and on non-exclusive and non-discriminatory basis for use by interested parties in the EEA.
 - iii. the R&D project is carried out in an assisted region fulfilling the conditions of Art 107(3)(a) TFEU.

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The below table summarises the maximum aid intensity that will be granted by Research Ireland for the Programme.

Table 3 – industry partner sizes and aid intensity rates

| Category of Research: R&D Projects | Industry Partner Company Size | | |
|--|-------------------------------|--------|-------|
| | Small | Medium | Large |
| Industrial Research | 50% | 50% | 50% |
| Experimental Development | 45% | 35% | 25% |
| Category of Research: R&D Collaborative Projects plus at least one requirements of point c. above fulfilled | | | |
| Industrial Research | 50% | 50% | 50% |
| Experimental Development | 50% | 50% | 40% |

In any case, the maximum aid intensity that will be granted by Research Ireland will not exceed 50% - i.e. at least 50% of total eligible costs must be provided by the industry partner.

The applicants, in conjunction with their Research Office and Technology Transfer Office as appropriate, are responsible for selecting a research category which appropriately reflects the proposed project activities; however, Research Ireland reserves the right to the final assessment of project research categorisation.

Company Size

The size of the industry partner company determines the funding rate available under the call. The European Commission defines what qualifies as a small or medium-sized enterprise (SME). In general, the staff headcount and financial thresholds determine the enterprise categorisation.

Table 4 – company size limits

| Company Size | Number of employees AND | Annual Turnover OR | Annual Balance Sheet |
|---------------|-------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| Small | 1-49 | <€10 M | <€10 M |
| Medium | 50-249 | <€50 M | <€43 M |
| Large | >250 | >€50m | >€43 m |

These ceilings apply to the figures for individual firms only. A firm that is part of a larger group may also need to include staff headcount/turnover/balance sheet data from that group.⁵⁹

Industry partners will be required to provide Research Ireland with the latest set of financial records (P&L and balance sheet). SMEs will need to verify their status by submitting an SME Declaration.

The Lead Applicant and Host Institution must ensure that the Innovate for Ireland GBER Grant remains State aid compliant throughout its lifetime. This will include collecting appropriate information to demonstrate compliance with the conditions of GBER with respect to the individual PhD projects.

For all applications for funding that give rise to State aid, Research Ireland will notify the appropriate bodies at the point of awarding the grant as required by prevailing State aid regulations.⁶⁰ Additional financial reporting may be requested at intervals during the duration of the grant.

⁵⁹ https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/smes/sme-definition_en

⁶⁰ In line with the obligation to report to the Commission as set out in Article 11 of COMMISSION REGULATION (EU) No 651/2014 of 17 June 2014 as amended.

Additional guidance on State aid compliance is available in the relevant section of the Research Ireland website.⁶¹ Applicants are advised to seek independent legal advice in advance of applying to Research Ireland for funding, where further clarification is sought.

Undertakings in Difficulty

‘Undertakings in Difficulty’ mean an undertaking in respect of which (at least one) of the following circumstances occurs:

- In the case of a limited liability company (other than an SME that has been in existence for less than three years or, for the purposes of eligibility for risk finance aid, an SME within 7 years from its first commercial sale that qualifies for risk finance investments following due diligence by the selected financial intermediary), where more than half of its subscribed share capital has disappeared as a result of accumulated losses. This is the case when deduction of accumulated losses from reserves (and all other elements generally considered as part of the own funds of the company) leads to a negative cumulative amount that exceeds half of the subscribed share capital. For the purposes of this provision, ‘limited liability company’ refers in particular to the types of company mentioned in Annex I of Directive 2013/34/EU and ‘share capital’ includes, where relevant, any share premium.
- In the case of a company where at least some members have unlimited liability for the debt of the company (other than an SME that has been in existence for less than three years or, for the purposes of eligibility for risk finance aid, an SME within 7 years from its first commercial sale that qualifies for risk finance investments following due diligence by the selected financial intermediary), where more than half of its capital as shown in the company accounts has disappeared as a result of accumulated losses. For the purposes of this provision, ‘a company where at least some members have unlimited liability for the debt of the company’ refers in particular to the types of company mentioned in Annex II of Directive 2013/34/EU.
- Where the undertaking is subject to collective insolvency proceedings or fulfils the criteria under its domestic law for being placed in collective insolvency proceedings at the request of its creditors.
- Where the undertaking has received rescue aid and has not yet reimbursed the loan or terminated the guarantee or has received restructuring aid and is still subject to a restructuring plan.
- In the case of an undertaking that is not an SME, where for the past two years:
 - the undertaking’s book debt to equity ratio has been greater than 7,5 and
 - the undertaking’s EBITDA interest coverage ratio has been below 1,0.

⁶¹ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/state-aid/>

Appendix IV – Financial declaration templates for industry partner (Industry Partnership stream only)

Financial Declarations by Industry Partner

The industry partner will be required to provide financial information and declarations to Research Ireland at the initial application stage as follows:

- Declaration of financial resources (template provided).
- Declaration of SME status (for applications requesting increased grant intensity based on company size) (template provided).
- Declaration of solvency (template provided).
- Latest set of financial records (P&L and Balance Sheet). If the industry partner is not required to produce audited accounts, management accounts signed off by an accountant will suffice. SMEs will need to verify their status by submitting an SME Declaration.

These documents will be used to determine the eligibility of a potential industry partner pursuant to the State aid rules. To assess whether a State aid exemption applies, it may be necessary for Research Ireland to request further information, going beyond that provided in any application. Please note that where further information is requested, replies should be consistent with, and reconcile to, information already provided, including financials.

The forms should be confidentially provided by the industry partner directly to Research Ireland by emailing to i4i@researchireland.ie **within one week of submitting the full proposal on SESAME**, referencing the relevant application ID in the email. Templates for the industry partner documentation are provided below. ***Word document copies of these templates can be downloaded from the Research Ireland website.***

1) Declaration of Financial Resources - On Company Letterhead

DECLARATION OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES AVAILABILITY FOR THE PROJECT

I, _____, in my capacity as **Managing Director/Finance Director / (or equivalent)** of _____ (hereinafter called “the Industry Partner”) confirm to Research Ireland that the Industry Partner has access to an amount of _____ in place to meet the costs of the project outlined in the applicant’s grant application to the Innovate for Ireland Programme.

Managing Director/Finance Director

(or equivalent): (Print) _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

2) SME Declaration - On Company Letterhead

DECLARATION OF SME STATUS*

Industry Partner Identification:

| | |
|---|--|
| Name or Business Name | |
| Address (of registered office) | |
| Company Registration Number | |
| VAT Number | |
| Names & titles of the principal director(s) | |

Data used to determine the category of enterprise:

| | | |
|------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Reference period (**): | | |
| Headcount *** | Annual Turnover (€) **** | Balance Sheet Total (€) **** |
| | | |

Signature:

Name & position of the signatory authorised to represent the enterprise.

I declare that the information provided above is a true and accurate reflection of the size of the enterprise.

I declare that in case of change affecting the SME status of the enterprise, I will immediately inform the Research Body.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

*Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are defined in the [EU recommendation 2003/361](#).

**Data must be related to the last approved accounting period and calculated on an annual basis. In the case of a newly established enterprise whose accounts are not yet approved, the data should be derived from a reliable estimate made during the course of the year.

*** Headcount number of full-time equivalent employees.

**** Please submit a copy of your company's most recent financial and management accounts (Profit & Loss and Balance Sheet signed off by an accountant).

3) Declaration of Solvency - On Company Letterhead

DECLARATION OF SOLVENCY

I, _____, in my capacity as **Managing Director/Finance Director/(or equivalent)** of _____ (hereinafter called “the Industry Partner”) wish to assure Research Ireland that I am unaware at this time of any issue that could present a threat to the solvency of the Industry Partner.

I declare, based on my own judgement and on the information at my disposal, that the Industry Partner can meet its financial obligations and does not envisage any challenge to this situation in the immediate future. I believe the Industry Partner will continue to operate as a going concern.

Furthermore, I am not, at this time, aware of any undisclosed matter which could be damaging to the financial interests of the Industry Partner, including a pending litigation.

I commit to informing Research Ireland via the Research Body immediately should such a situation arise. In accordance with Commission Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 I declare that I am NOT:

- An undertaking subject to a recovery order following a previous Commission decision declaring an aid illegal and incompatible with the internal market,
- a limited liability company where more than half of its subscribed share capital has disappeared as a result of accumulated losses,
- a company where at least some members have unlimited liability for the debt of the company, where more than half of its capital as shown in the company accounts has disappeared as a result of accumulated losses,
- an undertaking which is subject to collective insolvency proceedings or fulfils the criteria under its domestic law for being placed in collective insolvency proceedings at the request of its creditors,
- an undertaking which has received rescue aid and has not yet reimbursed the loan or terminated the guarantee, or has received restructuring aid and is still subject to a restructuring plan,
- an SME regarding which, for the past two years, its book debt to equity ratio has been greater than 7,5 and its EBITDA interest coverage ratio has been below 1,0. I understand that any false, fictitious or fraudulent statements knowingly made by me to Research Ireland may result in the grant being revoked, demand for grant repayment and current and future grant applications being deemed ineligible by Research Ireland.

Managing Director/Finance Director

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix V – Expression of Interest template

A Word document copy of this template can be downloaded from the Research Ireland website.



Innovate for Ireland 2025 Programme

Expression of Interest

| | |
|--|--|
| Name of Lead Applicant | |
| Name(s) of Co-Applicant(s)* | |
| Host Research Body (or Bodies)* | |
| Proposed title (up to 30 words)* | |
| | |
| Abstract (up to 200 words)* | |
| | |
| Relevant Innovate for Ireland thematic area and alignment of the research programme with the thematic area (up to 200 words) | |
| | |

*All of these details can be amended further at the full application stage.

Expressions of Interest must be submitted directly to i4i@researchireland.ie.

**Deadline for EOI submissions:
Wednesday 19th February 2025 at 13:00 Dublin local time**

EOI submission is mandatory for the Thematic Cohort stream and recommended for the Industry Partnership stream.

Appendix VI – Proposal Document requirements for the Thematic Cohort stream

For the **Thematic Cohort** stream, the Lead Applicant should upload **one combined PDF document** on SESAME, addressing each of the following headings:

- **Research Programme, Applicant Group and Environment (max. 9 pages):**
 - Describe the overall research vision for the Innovate for Ireland cohort and provide an overarching description of the research programme and its thematic alignment with the Innovate for Ireland Programme.
 - Explain why the applicant group and research environment are equipped and well placed to deliver it.
- **Training and Development Programme (max. 3 pages):**
 - Describe the overall training vision for the Innovate for Ireland cohort and the training activities that an iScholar will undertake during their PhD programme.
 - Please include whether elements are mandatory/optional/cohort-based; how many European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) points would be associated with an activity, if applicable; when the student would likely undertake them; and what the expected learning outcomes will be.
 - Describe how the Innovate for Ireland Entrepreneurial, Leadership & Innovation Programme and Innovation Ecosystem will be integrated into the overall training model.
- **Recruitment, Management and Execution plan (max. 3 pages):**
 - Provide information on the number of iScholars that would be recruited and the number of intakes of students proposed.
 - Provide detailed information on the model that will be used (including profile of assessors) to ensure appropriate candidates are identified and recruited, noting that it must be robustly designed to meet the overall goals of the Innovate for Ireland Programme (see **Section 2.3.3** above).
 - Describe any management and governance structures that will be in place to support the iScholars. If more than one institution will be involved in the application, explain how this will be managed.
 - Describe what processes will be used to ensure that best practice is applied to recruitment with respect to achieving equality, diversity and inclusivity. Refer to the Research Ireland External EDI Strategy⁶² in preparing your response and the Core Vision, Values and Goals of the strategy, particularly those related to PhD training.
- **List of Supervisors (max. 1 page):**
 - Provide a tabular list of all supervisors, including their host institution and department, and the title of a project they might offer to an iScholar.
- **Individual Student Budget (max. 1 page):**
 - Paste in a copy of the table or clear screenshot of the ‘*PhD Student Budget*’ tab from your **Thematic Cohort Budget Template**.

⁶² <https://www.sfi.ie/research-news/news/sfi-edi-strategy/>

Appendix VII – Proposal Document requirements for the Industry Partnership stream

For the **Industry Partnership** stream, the Lead Applicant should upload **one combined PDF document** on SESAME, addressing each of the following headings:

- **PhD Projects:** For **each** PhD student that will be recruited, provide a project summary with the following details. **All project summaries should be combined into a single PDF document and uploaded to SESAME.**
 - **Scientific abstract (max. 200 words):** This should be a succinct, stand-alone and accurate summary, in technical language, of the proposed work. Confidential information should not be included in the scientific abstract.
 - **Lay Abstract (max. 100 words):** This should be a succinct, stand-alone and accurate summary in lay, non-technical language of the proposed work. Confidential information should not be included in the lay abstract.
 - **Research Project (max. 6 pages):** The proposal must be at maximum 6 pages in total (excluding references) and must be structured to include the following sections:
 - Background and significance of the research area.
 - Specific aims and objectives.
 - Research design and methodologies.
 - Timelines, milestones and expected outputs; a Gantt chart is encouraged.
 - Relevant preliminary data (if available).
 - **References (max. 1 page).**
 - **Project Budget (max. 1 page):** Paste in a copy of the table or clear screenshot of the 'PhD Budget' tab from your **Industry Partnership Budget Template**.
- **PhD Student CV(s) (max 2 pages per CV):** If one or more preferred iScholar candidates has been identified, provide a CV for each candidate.
- **Recruitment plan (max. 3 pages):**
 - If any candidates will be recruited, provide detailed information on the model (including profile of assessors) that will be used to ensure appropriate candidates are identified and recruited, noting that it must be robustly designed to meet the overall goals of the Innovate for Ireland Programme (see **Section 2.3.3** above).
 - Describe what processes will be used to ensure that best practice is applied to recruitment with respect to achieving EDI. Refer to the Research Ireland External EDI Strategy⁶³ in preparing your response and the Core Vision, Values and Goals of the strategy, particularly those related to PhD training.
- **List of Supervisors (where applicable, max. 1 page):**
 - Provide a tabular list of all supervisors, including their host institution and department, and the title of a project they might offer to an iScholar. Named supervisors **only** need to be added to an application if the application is seeking funding for multiple iScholars who will not be supervised by the Lead Applicant/Co-Applicant(s) alone.

⁶³ <https://www.sfi.ie/research-news/news/sfi-edi-strategy/>

Appendix VIII – Supporting Documents for the Thematic Cohort stream

For the **Thematic Cohort** stream, the Lead Applicant should upload the following **supporting documents** on SESAME:

- **List of References (max 1 page):**
 - Provide a list of references to support the research programme.
- **Impact Statement (max. 3 pages):**
 - The Impact Statement should be as specific as possible and provide information that reviewers will find helpful in assessing the potential impact of the Innovate for Ireland cohort. Appropriate milestones and deliverables associated with the potential impact should be indicated.
 - See **Section 5.2** above for more details on the objectives of the Innovate for Ireland programme and the Research Ireland website for more details on research impact.⁶⁴
- **Data Management Plan (max. 2 pages):**
 - Good data governance and stewardship are key components of good research practice. Applicants to the Innovate for Ireland programme are required to provide a short (2-page) **high-level summary** 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.⁶⁵ A 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,⁶⁶ 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.⁶⁷

Each DMP should include a **high-level summary** of the following, as appropriate to the research programme:⁶⁸

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).

⁶⁴ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/award-management/research-impact/>

⁶⁵ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/open-research/SFI-DMP-Guidance-FINAL-140322.pdf>

⁶⁶ 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.

⁶⁷ <https://www.scienceeurope.org/our-priorities/research-data/research-data-management/>

⁶⁸ 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

Appendix IX – Supporting Documents for the Industry Partnership stream

For the **Industry Partnership** stream, the Lead Applicant should upload the following **supporting documents** on SESAME:

- **Impact Statement (max. 3 pages):**
 - The Impact Statement should be as specific as possible and provide information that reviewers will find helpful in assessing the potential impact of the Innovate for Ireland cohort. Appropriate milestones and deliverables associated with the potential impact should be indicated.
 - See **Section 5.2** above for more details on the objectives of the Innovate for Ireland programme and the Research Ireland website for more details on research impact.⁶⁹
- **Data Management Plan (max. 2 pages):**
 - Good data governance and stewardship are key components of good research practice. Applicants to the Innovate for Ireland programme are required to provide a short (2-page) **high-level summary** 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.⁷⁰ A 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,⁷¹ 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.⁷²

Each DMP should include a **high-level summary** of the following, as appropriate to the research programme:⁷³

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).

⁶⁹ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/award-management/research-impact/>

⁷⁰ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/open-research/SFI-DMP-Guidance-FINAL-140322.pdf>

⁷¹ 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.

⁷² <https://www.scienceeurope.org/our-priorities/research-data/research-data-management/>

⁷³ 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

Appendix X – Full Proposal Checklists for both streams

| Section | Description | Requirements | Required for | |
|---------------------------------------|---|--|------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| | | | Thematic Cohort stream | Industry Partnership Stream |
| Proposal Summary | Title | Max. 30 words. | Yes | Yes |
| | Duration of Award requested | Thematic cohort: 48 – 72 months Industry Partnership: 48 months | Yes | Yes |
| Resubmission | Resubmission statement (if relevant) | Max. 1000 words. | Yes | Yes |
| Research Alignment | Priority Area and Alignment | Select from lists and checkboxes. | Yes | Yes |
| | Justification for research alignment with Innovate for Ireland programme | Max. 250 words. | Yes | Yes |
| Lead Applicant details | Complete SESAME information | Mandatory profile fields marked in red | Yes | Yes |
| | ORCID iD | Link SESAME profile to ORCID iD | Yes | Yes |
| | Percentage Time Commitment | Insert time commitment | Yes | Yes |
| | Lead Applicant Narrative CV | Max. 5 pages (use template provided) | Yes | Yes |
| | Joint Appointment | Select Yes or No. Details required if 'Yes'. | Yes | Yes |
| Co-Applicant(s) details | Supervisory Experience | Enter details. | Yes | Yes |
| | Complete SESAME information | Mandatory profile fields marked in red | Yes | Yes |
| | ORCID iD | Link SESAME profile to ORCID iD | Yes | Yes |
| | Percentage Time Commitment | Insert time commitment | Yes | Yes |
| | Co-Applicant(s) Narrative CV | Max. 5 pages (use template provided) | Yes | Yes |
| | Joint Appointment | Select Yes or No Details required if 'Yes'. | Yes | Yes |
| Research Funding | Supervisory Experience | Enter details. | Yes | Yes |
| | Research Funding History | Enter details. | Yes | Yes |
| Research Funding | Research Funding History | Enter details. | Yes | Yes |
| | Name/Contact details etc. | Add contact name, details etc. | Yes | Yes |
| | CV for each collaborator | Upload CVs (max. 2 pages each). | Yes | Yes |
| Collaborator details | Letters of support | Max. 2 pages each. | Yes | Yes |
| | Company Information | Provide details for industry partner | Enter details. | No |
| Main Body of Proposal | Keywords | Max. 15 words. | Yes | Yes |
| | Scientific abstract | Max. 200 words. | Yes | Yes |
| | Lay abstract | Max. 100 words. | Yes | Yes |
| | Company Information | Enter details. | No | Yes |
| Ethical Issues | Answer questions regarding ethical issues | Select relevant answers. | Yes | Yes |
| Sex/Gender Dimension | Sex/Gender Dimension in Research Statement | Max. 1000 words. | Yes | Yes |
| Budget | | | Yes | Yes |
| | Details of all relevant costs | Populate budget table in SESAME. | Yes | Yes |
| | Budget justification | Max. 3 pages. | Yes | Yes |
| Programme Documents | Budget Spreadsheet | Upload your completed Excel template. | Yes | Yes |
| | Research programme | Thematic Cohort: Max. 17 pages Industry Partnership: Unlimited (except limits on items within the proposal document). | Yes | Yes |
| | Research programme references | Max. 1 page. | Yes | No (include within proposal document) |
| | Impact statement | Max. 3 pages. | Yes | Yes |
| Infrastructure, Facilities & Services | Data Management Plan | Max. 2 pages. | Yes | Yes |
| | Description of the infrastructure, facilities, services and space provided by Research Body | Max. 1 page. | Yes | Yes |
| Letter(s) of Support | Primary Host Research Body | Unlimited length. | Yes | Yes |
| | Secondary Host Research | Unlimited length. | Yes | Yes |
| | Co-Supervisor(s) | Max. 1 page per co-supervisor. | Yes | Yes |
| | Industry Partner | Unlimited length. | No | Yes |