

# Innovate for Ireland – 2025 Programme

## *Frequently Asked Questions*

*Last updated 14/02/2025*

### **Applicants & Co-Applicants**

**Q: What is considered to be a qualifying award for a Lead/Co-Applicant? Does this include internal funding schemes or Co-Applicant/mentor roles on personal fellowships?**

A: A qualifying award should be competitively awarded, internationally peer reviewed and as set out in the call document, provide support for at least one full time equivalent staff member (aside from the grant holder – for this reason personal fellowships are not considered qualifying awards). Internally awarded grants, travel awards, bursaries etc. are also not considered to be qualifying awards.

**Q: If I understand correctly, the academic members who do not have a prior project or history of winning projects cannot participate in this call as either main or Co-Applicant?**

A: Lead Applicants and Co-Applicants must meet the eligibility requirements as set out in the call document. The nature of this programme necessitates having applicants with prior experience of delivering complex projects/programmes, managing awards and supervising students.

**Q: Does the qualifying independent research grant for applicants/Co-Applicants have to have been awarded by SFI or IRC?**

A: No, awards issued by other agencies can also be qualifying awards, if they meet the criteria set out above.

**Q: Lead applicants/Co-Applicants must be a member of academic staff, but do they need to be permanent, have a contract of sufficient duration to cover an award, etc.?**

A: If not already a permanent member of staff or not having a contract that would extend beyond the duration of an Innovate for Ireland award, a commitment should be made in the Host Institution Letter of Support that a contract of sufficient duration will be put in place, if the application is successful.

**Q: We are developing an interdisciplinary proposal, covering both finance and business aspects and technological developments. The proposal will only include one Higher Education Institute (HEI), and we want to include a Lead Applicant and a Co-Applicant to reflect the interdisciplinary nature of the proposal. Can we name a Lead Applicant and a Co-Applicant that are based in the same institution?**

A: Yes, the Lead Applicant and Co-Applicant can be based in the same institution.

**Q: Are Co-Applicants required for all submissions, or can the Lead Applicant apply alone? Is there any limit on the number of Co-Applicants?**

A: 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. Otherwise, it is up to the Lead Applicant and applicant team to determine the team composition that best supports their application and whether inclusion of one or more Co-Applicants would strengthen their application. There is no limit on the number of Co-Applicants allowed.

**Q: Is it possible for postdoctoral researchers to apply as Lead Applicants or Co-Applicants?**

A: Lead Applicants must be academic members of staff at the Research Body, recognised as independent researchers with their own independent office and research space and must have held a PhD for a minimum of five years (i.e. the PhD must have been conferred in or before 2020). Additionally, Lead Applicants need to 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).

**Q: Regarding the requirement for Lead or Co-Applicants to 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). Would non-competitive industry funding cover this requirement, given that the programme is very much focused on industry-academia collaboration and given that funding from industry may not be competitively obtained by it requires skills beyond typically required for grants obtained from state funding bodies (such as negotiating with industry partners, building a business case for the research project that would fit the company's needs, etc).**

A: A qualifying award would be expected to be internationally and independently peer reviewed and competitively awarded - so unfortunately a non-competitive funding award would not meet the requirements in terms of being a qualifying award.

**Q: Can Lead Applicants and Co-Applicants be based at multiple HEIs?**

A: If the question relates to the Lead Applicant or any Co-Applicants having dual/joint appointments at more than one HEI, then the applicant(s) must contact [i4i@researchireland.ie](mailto:i4i@researchireland.ie) in advance of submitting their application with details of their appointments. If the question is asking if Lead Applicants and Co-Applicants can be based at different institutions from each other - yes, applications involving more than one HEI are permitted.

**Q: If a staff doesn't meet the eligible criteria, can he/she be a research collaborator instead of being Lead Applicant or Co-Applicant?**

A: Those who do not meet the eligible criteria for either Lead Applicant or Co-Applicant may act as Named Supervisors on the award if they meet the requirements for that role. This is the only formal collaborative role for Innovate for Ireland awards.

**Q: Under eligibility for Lead/Co-Applicants does grants supporting one full-time staff member include PhD students or does it have to be post-docs, etc.?**

A: It is inclusive of any 'staff' hired on the grant – so PhD students, Research Assistants etc. would also be considered as staff for qualifying purposes.

**Q: Can we invite an international university as a collaborator in the consortium? Also, who can be the main applicant— a postdoc or a lecturer or PhD applicant?**

A: Lead Applicants, Co-Applicants and Named Supervisors must be based in a Research Ireland Eligible Research Body (see the Research Ireland website for details). Lead Applicants must be academic members of staff at the Research Body, recognised as independent researchers with their own independent office and research space and must have held a PhD for a minimum of 5 years (i.e. the PhD must have been conferred in or before 2020). Additionally, Lead Applicants need to 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).

**Q: Are there any limits on submitting more than one application as a Lead Applicant or Co-Applicant?**

A: Applicants may apply as a Lead Applicant or Co-Applicant on one application only under this call. They may be included as Named Supervisors on other applications.

**Q: In terms of eligibility to apply, what does a senior author order mean, first or last authors or both?**

A: Senior Authorship is assessed according to field-specific practices and norms, so applicants should abide by these.

## **Supervisors**

**Q: What is the difference between Lead applicants, Co-Applicants and Named Supervisors? If an academic member has 3 years post PhD experience, they are ineligible to be Lead/Co-Applicant but can be named supervisor. Will the Lead/Co-Applicant have supervision role as well? If yes, what's the need for named supervisors?**

A: 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. For applications that involve more than one HEI (which is allowed and encouraged for applications to the Thematic Cohort stream), a Co-Applicant from each must be included. 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 research project. Lead Applicants and Co-Applicants may be named supervisors. As set out in the call document, supervisors are expected to be added to Thematic Cohort applications to ensure there is a breadth of supervisory capacity to support the iScholars. Co-supervisors only need to be added to Industry Partnership applications where needed to add supervisory capacity beyond that which can be provided by the Lead/Co-Applicant.

**Q: Are Named Supervisors and Co-supervisors the same role (both terms are used in the call document)?**

A: Yes, these are the same role. For both streams named/co-supervisors may be added as collaborators – a CV and Letter of Support should be uploaded for any that are added. Note that for the Thematic Cohort stream, it is expected that a number of Named/Co-supervisors would be indicated at the application stage. For the Industry Partnership stream, named/co-supervisors may be added to an application as required, if merited to cover supervisory requirements beyond that provided by the Lead Applicant and any Co-Applicant(s).

**Q: Can the Lead Applicant be a Named Supervisor also?**

A: Yes, we would assume the Lead Applicant may also have a supervisory role. It's not necessary to duplicate their details on Sesame, but it can be noted in the application/list of supervisors that they have this role too.

**Q: Could you clarify inclusion of Named/Co-Supervisors from other Universities or abroad. What about the Co-Applicant(s)?**

A: The Lead Applicant and Co-Applicants (where applicable) must be based in one of the HEIs involved in the application, which must be an eligible Research Ireland research body. Similarly, the formal supervisors involved must be based at one of the HEIs involved in the application.

**Q: Can we have Co-Supervisors from NI and GB named in the application (with a main ROI supervisor)?**

A: named/Co-Supervisors must be a member of academic staff or contract researcher at an eligible Research Ireland research body.

**Q: Can additional allowance be provided for eligible contract durations of Named Supervisors where they are e.g. Research Ireland Pathway grant holders?**

A: All Named Supervisors must have a contract that will cover the period of supervision at the awarding stage to ensure continuity of supervision for students.

**Q: Could you clarify the specific requirements for a supervisor in the Thematic Cohort stream? Is there a minimum number of supervisors required, and do they need to submit a CV and a letter of support?**

A: There is no minimum number of supervisors required. Per the call document - for the thematic cohort, 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 award additional Named Supervisors may be added to the Innovate for Ireland cohort. Supervisors are required to provide a CV and letter of support to the Lead Applicant to enclose with the application, as detailed in the call document.

**Q: Who must be my supervisor? Could my recent PI be a supervisor?**

A: Named Supervisors may be anyone who meets the criteria for this role as stated in the call document.

**Thematic areas**

**Q: Is there any additional information available on what types or projects are considered to be within remit of the programme, or what disciplines are supported?**

A: Innovate for Ireland supports research within the broad overall themes shown in the figure within the call document and on the programme webpage. Applicants and students can be working in any discipline, provided it is addressing the theme of the research. As part of the application process, applicants will be required to describe how the research aligns with the programme – this will be appraised as part of the review process.

**Q: Under the Climate Change Mitigation theme, can a submission focused on one subtheme or is it expected to cover all three of the subthemes?**

A: Applications need to address at least one of the subthemes under the Climate Change Mitigation thematic area. However, given the scale of the cohort award that will be made for this overall thematic area, applicants are in turn encouraged to consider the scope of the research programme that they plan to deliver, to ensure that it can achieve broad impact against the overall thematic area.

**Q: When justifying the relevance of the proposal to the Innovate for Ireland programme and the alignment with the thematic area what gets priority, the Primary thematic area, the sub-thematic areas, or the programme thematic alignment (main themes)?**

A: There is no specific priority, for the main thematic areas, these are just examples and other themes may apply, so do not need to be addressed if not relevant.

**Q: Is the Sustainable Aviation & Energy Transition theme only focused on the Aviation Industry, or can proposals focus on energy transition in other industries?**

A: The focus of this theme is the setting of the aviation industry.

**Q: In respect of thematic cohort stream (Sustainable Aviation & Energy Transition): How detailed should be the PhD topics be? Should there be five distinct topics or should there be a selection or variety in the area (potentially in excess of five) What if those topics change later? If I have a line-up of candidates can / should that be provided?**

A: For thematic cohort stream, we are looking for an overarching vision and research programme. Exemplar projects may be provided but there will be flexibility for the award holders to adapt the programme as it runs. A line up of candidates are not required for thematic cohort.

**Q: Under the thematic cohort stream, specifically the climate theme, do applications have to outline a research programme for 10 PhDs or 30 PhDs - I realise the guidance says overarching description, but potential applicants feel the number of PhDs does affect the depth of the research programme that can be explored.**

A: Please describe a research programme and vision that would support 30 students in total.

**Q: Under the thematic climate mitigation stream, can you confirm how many proposals will be funded, is it just one?**

A: It is intended that one proposal will be funded under each of the two primary thematic areas (Climate Change Mitigation, Sustainable Aviation & Energy Transition).

**Q: Is there an ideal or maximum number of HEIs that could be involved in supervision under a thematic cohort stream?**

A: There is no ideal or maximum number of HEIs that can be involved - the applicant team should determine the appropriate number of partner institutions to deliver the scope of the research programme they will be proposing.

## **Number of students/intakes**

**Q: Can I make an application to support a small number of students under the Thematic Cohort stream? What is the minimum number of students and projects that must be supported?**

A: The Thematic Cohort stream intends to achieve critical mass through a cohort-based model. Depending on the theme and number of intakes, the applicants must make an application to support the total number of students that would be recruited during the lifetime of the award.

**Q: The document states that the intake is set at ten PhD students. Could you clarify whether this is a fixed number, a maximum, or a requirement for each proposal? Additionally, since the second and third rounds of PhD intakes are not yet guaranteed, should we focus solely on planning for the first intake in our proposal, or should we also consider subsequent rounds?**

A: Under the thematic cohort stream, the cohort size is fixed at ten students for the Climate Change mitigation theme per intake over three intakes. 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. Under the Sustainable Aviation & Energy Transition theme, the intake is fixed at five PhD students in a single intake.

**Q: For the Climate Change Mitigation Stream do partners need to take on 30 PhD students in total. For example, can a partner apply for funding for three or four PhD Students only?**

A: Under the Thematic Cohort stream, the cohort size is fixed at ten students for the Climate Change mitigation theme per intake, with three intakes altogether (so 30 students in total). The partners (or applicant team) must make one application for this number of students. The cohort should be spread across the applicant team (and HEIs, if more than one is involved in the application). Please note that for the Climate Change Mitigation theme, support for the second and third intake of students on an award may be dependent on continued funding being confirmed from the philanthropic partner.

**Q: For Climate Change Mitigation, what does three intakes of ten students mean? Does it mean a total of ten PhD students over 72 months?**

A: Under the Climate Change Mitigation stream, the cohort size is fixed at ten students per intake over three intakes. I.e. each year, for three years, ten students will be recruited. Please note that for the support for the second and third intake of students on an award will be dependent on continued funding being confirmed from the philanthropic partner.

## **Industry Partnership stream**

**Q: Can only Irish partner companies participate, or can foreign companies also participate?**

A: Industry partners must be a private for-profit company located in Ireland. This includes international or multinational companies provided they have an operational base/subsidiary active in Ireland.

**Q: For the Industry Partnership stream, can any eligible industry partner be involved?**

A: Yes, any eligible industry partner can be involved in an application, however to take part in the Innovate for Ireland Programme, the industry partner must meet certain obligations to the overall Programme, as set out in section 2.3.4 of the call document (*'Obligations to the overall Innovate for Ireland Programme'*). Potential industry partners who are not already participating in Innovate for Ireland are advised to contact Global Innovators Ireland via [info@globalinnovatorsireland.com](mailto:info@globalinnovatorsireland.com) for more information on how to join the Innovate for Ireland initiative.

**Q: Can I identify and work with an industry partner on my own to support my application?**

A: Applicants are permitted to recruit their own industry partners, but they must advise them to contact GII (at [info@globalinnovatorsireland.com](mailto:info@globalinnovatorsireland.com)) as soon as possible, if they have not already done so.

**Q: How do we know what industry partners are currently engaged/engaging with GII. Is there a list available. Some contacts in companies may not know if their company is already engaged given scale/size of operations.**

A: Please contact [info@globalinnovatorsireland.com](mailto:info@globalinnovatorsireland.com) with respect to this query.

**Q: How many scholars are to be funded if going through the industry partner option?**

A: Each application must make a request for at least one iScholar, but can accommodate multiple students, provided at least 50% of costs are provided by the industry partners.

**Q: Is there a limit to the number of PhDs that can be recruited in the Industry Partnership stream?**

A: No, there is not a limit, but for each student that will be recruited, at least 50% of costs (depending on state aid requirements) must be met by the Industry Partner.

**Q: Is there a limit on the number applications submitted, under industry stream, with one industry partner? In other words, can more than one application be submitted with one industry partner?**

A: Lead applicants and Co-Applicants may be included as only one application under this call. They may be included as Named Supervisors on more than one application. Applications under the Industry Partnership stream may have more than one PhD student recruited through that application.

**Q: If an industry partner is part of another Research Ireland-funded call are they eligible to apply to Innovate for Ireland?**

A: Yes, there is no prohibition on industry partners participating in this call, alongside other Research Ireland Calls.

**Q: For the industry partnership, can there be one than more industry partner for multiple PhDs?**

A: It would be acceptable for two or more industry partners to join together to support one application, but in such cases, we would expect there to be one 'lead' industry partner for the purposes of the application process (and for providing a lead industry partner letter of support on behalf of the multiple partners). The industry partners would need to satisfy themselves on the arrangements they would have in place and would also need to contact GII to confirm that these arrangements also align with the requirements to provide support to the other elements of the Innovate for Ireland programme.

**Budget**

**Q: Will the programme support registration fees and specifically, non-EU PhD fees (and are non-EU students allowed to be recruited)? If not, there is a risk that the cohort of researchers hired will not be international. How will the fee gap expected to be bridged?**

A: The awards will make a contribution of up to €5500 towards PhD registration fees in line with standard Research Ireland policy. The programme allows the recruitment of non-EU students. Applicants are encouraged to speak to their HEI about any mechanisms by which tuition fee gaps could be managed.

**Q: Does Innovate for Ireland provide for any overheads to cover the HEIs costs?**

A: Overheads will be applied in line with current Research Ireland policy and will be set at 30% of the award amount, excluding equipment costs.

**Q: What is the expected size of the project proposal (in terms of budget and number of students that would be hired)?**

A: The budget allowance, categories and requirements for number of students to be recruited is set out in the call document.

**Q: Is a co-supervisor/collaborator eligible to get funding?**

A: Per the call document, Named/Co-supervisors will have budgetary responsibility for the research expenses for that postgraduate student's research project. Budgetary responsibility for the training expenses will remain with the Lead Applicant/Co-Applicant(s).

**Q: Where in the budget are recruitment costs intended to be included for the thematic cohorts?**

A: These are not included in the call budget, but Research Ireland makes a contribution to costs such as recruitment through the payment of overheads.

**Q: Will taxes be charged on a PhD stipend?**

A: Typically, scholarship stipends paid by Research Ireland for full time students are not subject to taxation, however for a more definitive answer questions on stipends and taxation should be directed to the Revenue Commissioners or your local HEI Finance/HR office.



**Q: Does the budget allow for a Project manager to be funded? Is budget allowable to recompense evaluators?**

A: For this call, the awards will not include funding for a programme manager or to recompense evaluators, but will include a contribution to overheads, which are expected to be used for the payment of exceptional costs in the provision of services, training and support associated with the Innovate for Ireland awards.

**Q: For the climate change mitigation theme, can a manager be recruited to manage the project since there are 30 PhD students, such a big number of researchers working in the project?**

A: For this call, the awards will not include funding for a programme manager, but will include a contribution to overheads, which are expected to be used for the payment of exceptional costs in the provision of services, training and support associated with the Innovate for Ireland awards.

### **PhD Students**

**Q: Does this call support existing PhD students on already funded research projects (as a top up or supplement)?**

A: This is a recruitment-based call – it only supports the recruitment of new PhD students to new projects.

**Q: I'm an undergraduate student interested in undertaking a PhD and participating in the programme. Do I need to meet any specific requirements in terms of academic qualifications?**

A: Student recruitment and registration will be managed by the host HEI(s) for the Innovate for Ireland awards, so the requirements to register for a PhD will vary depending on local policies. Aside from academic excellence, students recruited to the programme will have to demonstrate entrepreneurial, leadership and innovation potential and be passionate about sustainability.

**Q: Does the call support PhDs for a shorter duration than four years, Masters students, or other team members (e.g. postdoctoral research assistants)?**

A: The call only supports iScholars to undertake a four-year PhD.

**Q: I am an undergraduate who is from another country, am I eligible to be a PhD student through the Innovate for Ireland programme?**

A: The objective of Innovate for Ireland is to attract and retain talent in Ireland, so at the programme level there are no restrictions in terms of nationality, current country of residence, etc. However, you will need to follow the appropriate student immigration process to comply with Irish immigration legislation and policy guidelines. Please consult with the international students office at your planned host HEI and also refer to the Irish government Department of Justice section on [Coming to study in Ireland](#). Research Ireland does not play a role in this process.

## **Other questions**

**Q: Is the applicant team supposed to prepare a proposal for all three pillars and set these up?**

A: No, the applicants only need to apply for and directly set up the first pillar - the PhD research training programme. The other two pillars will be set up and led by Research Ireland and GII.

**Q: Who will deliver the Entrepreneurship, Leadership and Innovation programme? How will this relate to existing structured training being delivered by the HEIs and will there be any credits? Is there any anticipated time commitment and are you engaged with the HEIs about developing and implementing the programme?**

A: Because the ELI programme has not yet been designed, we are not able to give precise details on the structure, or an indicative time commitment, however it can be expected that there will be some additional commitment required beyond that already associated with institution-based training and development. We will be working with stakeholders in the HEIs on the design of the ELI programme to understand existing training and development requirements (and how the Innovate for Ireland ELI programme may relate to and sit with these). The programme will be centrally delivered to all iScholars.

**Q: In the final formal application stage, can the Co-Applicant and host institute information on the EOI form be changed?**

A: Aside from the Lead Applicant information (and their associated HEI), all other responses on the EOI can be updated at the full application stage (Co-Applicants, abstract, alignment, etc.)

**Q: Is it required for the defined research programmes/projects to be multidisciplinary in nature?**

A: Multidisciplinary is not absolutely required, but noting the objectives of the programme and the wider remit of Research Ireland, we'd encourage applicants to consider opportunities to carry out multidisciplinary research, to achieve the broadest possible impact.

**Q: Letters of support for named and co supervisor is to be provided by who? Could you provide more information?**

A: Specific details for the letter of Support are provided in the call document in Section 3.5.12, 'Letters of Support'.

**Q: How is IP handled? As in who will IP belong to?**

A: Under the thematic cohort stream, there will be no preferential access to IP for the philanthropic partners, so IP should be managed based on institutional policies and norms. For the industry partnership stream, it is expected the applicants and industry partner will set out a collaborative research agreement (CRA) before the award begins. 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.

**Q: When will the application form be available? Will it be available through SESAME?**

A: Full applications will be submitted via [SESAME](#) and the application form will be available shortly following the close of the Expression of Interest stage.

**Q: If I understand correctly the EOI is one page only, no additional documents required by the 19<sup>th</sup> of February? How will the EOI be shortlisted to move onto the next stage? When will applicants know?**

A: EOIs are not being used for shortlisting but rather to gauge interest and to facilitate planning for the full application stage of the call. EOI receipt will be acknowledged by Research Ireland.

**Q: Is this the model of PhD research funding from Research Ireland that we can expect for the future, with a requirement for least 50% funding from industry for all projects? It seems like a major departure from the past practice of IRC and SFI.**

A: Innovate for Ireland is a unique and standalone initiative - it should not be assumed to be the operational basis for how Research Ireland will structure PhD funding opportunities in the future.

**Q: Are the proposals expected to be consortium type proposals including multiple HEIs in Ireland or are single institution proposals also welcome?**

A: Specifically for the thematic cohort stream, single institution proposals are permitted but we encourage applicants to consider the potential that could be delivered by involving multiple institutions, given the aims and scopes of the programme.

**Q: Would you expect the Pillar 1 to include internships/lab secondments/industry stints (and what about placement costs)? Is that under Pillar 1 or for the other Pillars?**

A: Placements and placement associated costs may be included within Thematic Cohort and Industry Partnership streams, but please carefully review the call document details about the different scope of placements that may be arranged under the respective streams.

**Q: Will the webinar recording be shared after today?**

A: A recording of the webinar will be shared online via the Research Ireland [programme webpage for Innovate for Ireland](#).