



Eligible Research Bodies Policy

As per the Research & Innovation Act 2024 (Section 36), which provides for the establishment and functions of Taighde Éireann | Research Ireland (“Research Ireland”), an organisation is the ‘applicant’ and an individual or individuals can submit an application for funding ‘on behalf’ of the applicant (or applicants) where they are either employed by the applicant or are registered as a student or intend to register as a student of the applicant.

An applicant will be a Research Ireland Eligible Research Body (ERB). You can check to see if your organisation is included on the current list of Research Ireland ERBs¹.

If you are not on the list, you can apply to make your organisation eligible. There are two policies which govern eligibility, both of which are described below. One concerns core eligibility and applies to most Research Ireland funding programme calls. The second concerns strategic eligibility and only applies to certain Research Ireland programme calls, for example, the Industry RD&I Fellowship Programme and the Discover Programme.

Core Eligibility: To be considered an ERB for the purpose of applying to a programme call funded under Research Ireland, an organisation must meet the following criteria:

1. The organisation must be a designated institution of higher education as defined by Section 53 of the Higher Education Authority Act, 2022², *and/or* in receipt of public funding as approved by the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science for the purposes of the Free Fees Initiative³.

OR

The organisation must be a public sector research performing organisation which is sponsored directly by a government department.

2. The organisation must be based in the Republic of Ireland. Organisations in Northern Ireland may only apply if it is expressly called out as being permitted in a Research Ireland funding programme call.
3. The organisation must demonstrate solvency⁴.

¹ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/eligibility-related-information/> or; <https://research.ie/funding/eligible-higher-education-institutions-and-research-performing-organisations/>

² <https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2022/act/31/section/53/enacted/en/html#sec53>

³ <https://hea.ie/funding-governance-performance/funding/student-finance/course-fees/>

⁴ (for example) <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/s/solvency.asp>

4. The organisation must warrant that they are able to comply with Taighde Éireann | Research Ireland's Grant General Terms & Conditions, as specified.
5. The organisation must demonstrate the capacity to process applications and manage grants.
6. Organisations which fall under the definition of Higher Education Institutions must comply with the Athena SWAN accreditation requirements that are current at the time of their application⁵. Organisations that do not hold Athena SWAN accreditation should provide evidence of a Gender Equality Plan⁶.
7. The organisation must have the capacity to support research activities and be able to award post-graduate qualifications or be affiliated with a body which can award such qualifications⁷.
8. The organisation must not be the target of international sanctions⁸.

Strategic Eligibility: Some Research Ireland programmes will be open to a broader range of organisations. This will be clearly indicated in the programme call document when it applies. Such programmes may operate under a State aid exemption, may apply the de minimis regulation and/or may include organisations which are not involved in economic activities (e.g. public sector, engagement with research). To be eligible the following criteria must be met:

1. The organisation must be engaged in research and innovation⁹.
2. The organisation must be based in the Republic of Ireland. Organisations in Northern Ireland may only apply if it is expressly called out as being permitted in a Research Ireland funding programme call.
3. The organisation must demonstrate solvency.
4. The organisation must warrant that they are able to comply with Taighde Éireann | Research Ireland's Grant Terms & Conditions, as specified.
5. The organisation must demonstrate the capacity to process applications and manage grants.
6. The organisation must not be the target of international sanctions.

How to apply: To apply to become an ERB, the organisation must complete the relevant form (as appropriate¹⁰) and send to researchpolicy@researchireland.ie, in advance of submitting an application to a programme call. Please allow plenty of time for your application to be assessed¹¹. An organisation which does not fall under the definitions as outlined in point 1

⁵ <https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/equality-charters/international-charters/athena-swan-ireland>

⁶ Gender Equality Plans must meet the Horizon Europe requirements: https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/strategy/strategy-2020-2024/democracy-and-rights/gender-equality-research-and-innovation_en

⁷ <https://www.qqi.ie/what-we-do/quality-assurance-of-education-and-training>

⁸ <https://www.ireland.ie/en/eu/restrictive-measures-sanctions/>

⁹ The definition of research is broad, and the Research & Innovation Act 2024 gives Research Ireland a mandate to engage in all educational and public engagement activities which increase the store of knowledge.

¹⁰ This may be guided by the relevant Programme Call.

¹¹ This assessment can take up to 3 months.

as per core eligibility and which falls within the definition of an “undertaking” as defined by State aid law¹², may be required to provide additional information.

Following submission of the completed application form, Taighde Éireann | Research Ireland will assess whether the organisation meets the criteria set out in this policy. If an application is successful, the organisation will be added to the list of ERBs for a period aligning with the term of the policy¹³. If the organisation fails to meet the criteria set out in this policy at any time during that period, Taighde Éireann | Research Ireland reserves the right to re-assess the organisation’s eligibility. If the application is unsuccessful, Taighde Éireann | Research Ireland will provide feedback and the organisation will be afforded the opportunity to re-apply at a later date, if desired.

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¹² A private sector body would be considered an “undertaking” for the purposes of compliance with State aid requirements. The concept of an “undertaking” under EU competition rules is an entity that is engaged in an “economic activity” (offering a good or service on a market) regardless of its legal status or the way that it is financed.

¹³ This applies to Core Eligibility only; Strategic Eligibility is managed under the relevant Programme Call.