

2016 Employment Based Programme Scholarship Scheme: Frequent Asked Questions (FAQs)

Version 4: 12th February 2016

The deadline for receipt of FAQs is **16.00 (Ireland Time), 10th February 2016**. FAQs must be submitted no later than this date.

New questions are marked *****New***!**

Similar questions have been grouped below in the following themes:

1. Eligibility
2. Applying to the Scheme
3. Application Forms
4. Conditions of Award

1. ELIGIBILITY

How do I find out if I'm eligible to apply for this Scheme?

Please see the Terms and Conditions document and Eligibility Flowchart in the Guide to Applicants to ascertain eligibility:

http://www.research.ie/sites/default/files/flowchart_employment_based_programme_2016.pdf.

Under the new Terms and Conditions, are schools and hospitals eligible employment partners?

The Terms and Conditions state that an Employment Partner is 'a business, a company, a registered charity, a social, cultural or not-for-profit organization, or a semi-state commercial organization with a physical operational base located in Ireland that will employ the Scholar for the duration of the award'. If the Employment Partner satisfies the above definition, it is eligible.

Effective from the 2016 Call, government departments and statutory agencies will no longer be eligible Employment Partners. However, such entities can partner with the Irish Research Council as Strategic Funding Partners.

As a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee, without share capital, does Pobal qualify as an Employment Partner under this scheme (i.e. is it considered to be a: business, a company, a registered charity, a social, cultural or not-for-profit organization, or a commercial semi-state organization with a physical operational base located in Ireland).

Pobal is a state agency and not eligible to be a partner under the scheme.

I am applying for an EBPPG scholarship. My Enterprise Partner's primary office is in the city of Derry/Londonderry, Northern Ireland. I am wondering if the language in Sec. 1.4 of the Terms and Conditions document ("...a physical operational base in Ireland...") includes Northern Ireland. We do have a physical, operational base in the Republic of Ireland but it is not our primary office location and I am wondering which location to use.

Please see Section 1.4 of the Terms and Conditions – the employment partner is with reference to the Republic of Ireland. The scholar must be a full-time employee and based in the Republic of Ireland.

For the IRC Employment Based Scheme, I was working with the company that led to the development of the proposal for the PhD as it raised interesting questions. The issue is that I am a director of the company that wants to serve the Employment partner. Another director would serve as the employment mentor and I would become an employee. Is this ok?

The other question is the money paid to me by the company would that be tax free like the stipend from scheme?

The Terms and Conditions supply details relating to the Employment Partner and its financial contribution. The Employment Partner must employ the Scholar (either temporarily or permanently) for the duration of the award as a full-time employee on the normal terms and conditions for salaried employees (clause 6.8). A formal employment contract must be drawn up between Employment Partner and Scholar and agreed for the entire period of the award, and the employment contract must comply with all Irish employment laws and regulations. Provided that the applicant and Employment Partner meet these and all other eligibility criteria as outlined in the Terms and Conditions, s/he is eligible to apply. Please note that the Employment Mentor must be capable of mentoring the Scholar with regard to the Employment Partner's related aspects of the Research Project and contribute to the Scholar's professional development in the employment environment. Regular contact should be maintained between the Employment Mentor, the Scholar, and the Academic Supervisor throughout the duration of the Scholarship (clause 11.6.3).

As stated in the Terms and Conditions, compliance with Irish laws and regulations on taxation will be a matter for resolution between the Scholar, the Employment Partner and the Irish Revenue Commissioners (clause 6.13). This may vary

according to the individuals' circumstances and the level of contribution made by the Employment Partner. The Employment Partner is required to contribute a minimum of €8,000 per annum, which may be used to cover employment/salary costs, including Employer's PRSI, and as a contribution to cover the cost of expenses (e.g. travel and accommodation costs) incurred by the Scholar as a result of travelling back and forth between the Employment Partner and the HEI. Please note that, under the EBP, awardees are employees of the Employment Partner; this is not a student-based stipend.

*****New***** I am a student who has done 1 year MSc and wants to transfer to PhD. Is it possible to apply for the EBP to support my PhD and if successful transfer Msc work to EB PhD?

The student wishing to apply for funding registered as a research masters student in September 2015, having achieved a 2.2 in their undergraduate degree. The supervisor believes the student is capable for a PhD and they plan to submit a transfer form in April/May, where this first year of the research masters would be considered the first year of a structured PhD. Is this student eligible to apply for PhD funding for the remaining 3 years?

The candidate in question is eligible to apply for three years of funding as long as, at the time of application to the scheme, the institution has formally deemed the candidate as having completed the equivalent of the first year of a structured PhD (and has accredited the candidate accordingly) and the candidate meets one of the categories as outlined in Clause 4.4 of the Terms and Conditions of the scheme. The Irish Research Council has no role whatsoever in the determination of the candidate's suitability for transfer to a PhD programme.

*****New***** Where candidates have a first degree and over ten years of professional experience in the relevant field, will the IRC accept them to this programme (given that our PhD includes a year of Research training which is MA equivalent anyway)?

Please see the Terms and Conditions document and Eligibility Flowchart in the Guide to Applicants to ascertain eligibility:
http://www.research.ie/sites/default/files/flowchart_employment_based_programme_2016.pdf.

My company currently has a researcher under the EBP. We are interested in taking on another student on the same scheme to start next Oct and wondered if there were any rules that prevented us having two employees on the scheme at the same time?

If a company has the capacity to support more than one researcher, they are welcome to apply for additional research employees under the open call. There are no specific rules preventing a company having more than one researcher on the Employment Based Programme.

What the minimum score achieved by successful applicants in 2015?

70.3% was the minimum score in 2015.

I assume that Employees of HEI are not eligible to apply for funding under the PG Employment based scheme?

Employees of HEIs are eligible to apply for the scheme, provided that they meet all eligibility criteria as outlined in the Terms and Conditions. However, please note that a HEI cannot act as the applicant's Employment Partner.

The Employment Partner must employ the Scholar (either temporarily or permanently) for the duration of the award as a full-time employee on the normal terms and conditions for salaried employees (clause 6.10). As stated in the Terms and Conditions, a formal employment contract must be drawn up between the Employment Partner and the Scholar and agreed for the entire period of the award. Such an employment contract must comply with all Irish employment laws and regulations; ensure that the Scholar's work tasks and time at the Employment Partner must be devoted exclusively to work associated with the Scholarship only and thus be part of the Scholar's education; and not contain any restraint of trade or non-compete clauses limiting the possibility of employment elsewhere.

I work within an Irish University (non-academic Division). Is it possible to receive funding through this scheme if I am both a staff member of the University and would like to carry out my PhD study in the Institution where I work?

If not, would I be eligible for the Employment Based Postgraduate Programme if I registered for a PhD with another institution such as NUIG or UCD and continued to work in my current institution?

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and eligible Research Performing Organisations (RPOs) may not act as an Employment or Enterprise Partner in Council schemes.

In relation to the employment based PG scholarship, I was wondering if this is an option for Non-EU applicants? [...]

Non-EU students can apply for the scheme. While a majority of Scholarships awarded by the Council will be offered to those who are citizens of the European Union (EU) and whose legal and permanent residence is within a member state of the EU, a proportion of awards may also be offered to exceptional applicants who do not fulfil these requirements. As stated in the Terms and Conditions (clause 5.4.2), Scholars must satisfy the State's regulations on immigration and have the support of their HEI and Employment Partner with respect to these regulations and requirements if not a national of a member state of the European Union (EU). For all Scholarships, arrangements with respect to immigration will be a matter for settlement between the Scholar, his/her HEI, the Employment Partner, and the relevant immigration authorities of the State (clause 5.5).

In the Terms and Conditions of the Employment Based Scholarship, reference is made to the minimum contribution of the employer being €8,000, can that be more and if so, to what maximum?

As per clause 6.12 in the Terms and Conditions, the Employment Partner is required to contribute a minimum of €8,000 per annum, which may be used to cover employment/salary costs, including Employer's PRSI, and as a contribution to cover the cost of expenses (e.g. travel and accommodation costs) incurred by the Scholar as a result of travelling back and forth between the Employment Partner and the HEI.

Should the employer wish to contribute an amount greater than €8,000, this is at their discretion. As per clause 6.10, a formal employment contract must be drawn up between the Employment Partner and the Scholar and agreed for the entire period of the award. Such an employment contract must comply with all Irish employment laws and regulations (clause 6.10.1).

I'm a former UCD student and I have twice applied for the IRC government of Ireland postgraduate scholarship scheme, but have been unsuccessful both times. I was just wondering if I'd still be eligible to apply for the IRC employment-based programme.

Clause 5.3.1 of the Terms and Conditions states that an applicant 'must not have applied more than once to the Scheme and at the time of application'. This refers to the Employment Based Postgraduate Programme only.

Does the IRC need to confirm the eligibility of every potential industry partner in relation to the EBP scheme this year?

Any proposed new industry partner must register with the Irish Research Council at the following link. Existing Employment Partners do not need to re-register.

<https://irishresearch.smartsimple.ie/files/318532/f91747/CompanySignUpPage4.htm>

As stated in the Terms and Conditions (clause 11.1), the understanding of the Council in processing an application under the scheme is that the HEI is satisfied that the chosen Employment Partner is appropriate to and suitable for the proposed research project.

*****New*** I am currently completing an MSc funded by a not for profit. I work 2 days research on the research and then spend 3 days doing clinical work. Would I be eligible under the employment based postgrad scheme?**

Please see the Terms and Conditions document and Eligibility Flowchart in the Guide to Applicants to ascertain eligibility. Under Clause 5.2, Scholars must be full-time postgraduate students affiliated with an eligible HEI in Ireland and during the funding term must exclusively spend all of his/her working time on the research project and associated training and career development activities.

2. APPLYING TO THE SCHEME

I wish to apply for this scheme. Please find resume attached with this email.

Applications to the Employment Based Postgraduate Programme must be made through the online application system ONLY. An application will be deemed ineligible and will not be considered for funding if it has not been submitted via the online application system. No hardcopies or emailed forms will be accepted.

*****New*** Is it possible to apply for both the Government of Ireland Postgraduate and the Employment Based Programme in the same year?**

The Government of Ireland Postgraduate Scholarship (GOIPG) Scheme and the Employment Based Postgraduate Programme (EBP) generally follow similar application and selection timelines. The Council has a policy of not allowing dual application to schemes that run in parallel or have overlapping process timelines. Therefore, applicants to the Government of Ireland Scholarship Scheme may not also apply to the Employment Based Postgraduate Programme.

The Enterprise Partnership Scheme (EPS) will open in Q1 2016. Applicants to the GOIPG or the EBP may apply to the EPS once the latter scheme is open. However,

if they are subsequently successful under the GOIPG or EBP schemes and accept same, they will be required to withdraw their application to the EPS.

An applicant may be in a position to apply to the Enterprise Partnership Scheme in March. If he applies to the current Employment Based Postgraduate Programme, will he be allowed to the Enterprise Partnership Scheme when it opens in March?

The Enterprise Partnership Scheme will open in late Q1 2016. Applicants to the Employment Based Postgraduate Programme may apply to the Enterprise Partnership Scheme (EPS), once open. If they are subsequently successful under the EBP scheme, they can either take up the EBP offer and withdraw from the EPS, or decline the EBP award and await the outcome of EPS.

We are in discussions with a company who would like to see a number of scholars apply for research projects which would all tie in with a specific research agenda that the company wishes to progress. In practice this could result in, say, 4 proposals being submitted, all related to the research agenda in question. We appreciate that EBP is competitive and that only some or indeed none of the proposals might be successful, but have two main questions:

- **Is there any facility whereby proposals can be grouped or, at least, whereby their linked nature can be flagged?**
- **Is there a precedent for one company being involved in multiple successful proposals under the same call? Is it technically possible? Is it highly unlikely?**

All applications must be distinct and must not include elements which are duplicated or significantly overlapping (clause 7.5). Each application is assessed independently according to the evaluation criteria outlined in our Guide for Applicants: http://www.research.ie/sites/default/files/irc_ebp_2016_guide_for_applicants_0.pdf

There are no restrictions on the number of applications in which an Academic Supervisor or Employment Mentor/Employment Partner can participate.

We have a graduate on an 'IRC Employment Based Scholarship'. He applied and was successful to get a masters by research. He is interested in continuing his study to PhD but from my reading of the T&Cs he would not be eligible to transfer from the masters scholarship to a PhD? Could he apply for a PhD Scholarship though he has had a masters scholarship?

If an applicant currently holds or has previously held an Irish Research Council Employment Based Postgraduate (Masters) Scholarship, he/she may apply to the

Council for a Scholarship to undertake a Doctoral Degree. The applicant must have finished their Research Masters degree prior to the start date of the Doctoral Degree.

I am interested in being an academic supervisor for the above programme, and am currently in communication with a number of potential employers in the NGO sector.

My question is this: who makes the final selection of the student? Does the employer/HEI have the opportunity to select from amongst the suitable student applying to the IRC (i.e. from a short-list), or do we have to accept which ever student is selected by the IRC?

The Council offers opportunities for suitably qualified individuals to pursue a postgraduate degree in any discipline, at an eligible HEI within Ireland, while employed by an Employment Partner. As stated in the Terms and Conditions, 'Awards under the Irish Research Council Employment Based Postgraduate Scholarship are made to the individual Scholar' (clause 3.6). Section 5 of the Terms and Conditions sets out the eligibility criteria for scholars. The Irish Research Council does not pre-select scholars or maintain a shortlist of potential scholars for this scheme.

3. APPLICATION FORMS

The Financial Justification section on the form refers to research costs for my degree. Should I enter the funding I need for each year of my degree or should I enter the amount needed for the entire degree?

Applicants should indicate the total amount of direct research costs required for the full duration of the degree, up to a maximum of €2,250 per year. All costs should be fully justified as essential to the research proposed.

My word count is saying it is exceeded limits but I know I am within the limit.

Any bullet points pasted from Microsoft Word into the application will count as one word each. For example, a 300-word paragraph that has five bullet points in it will result in 305 words when pasted into the online system.

4. CONDITIONS OF AWARD

One of our potential applicants would like know if it's possible, should their application be successful, to have a part-time job to supplement their income, alongside their scholarship? If it's possible, what will be the restrictions, in terms of workload and salary they can earn from that part-time job?



Awardees must not assume any other duties that would adversely affect their ability to engage in the EBP Scholarship on a full-time basis. This includes undertaking additional remunerative activities (with the exception of that pertaining to teaching-related duties as per clause 7.11) during the funding term.