



## Irish Research Council Laureate Awards Programme 2017/18

### Frequent Asked Questions (FAQs)

Version 6 [14/06/17]

Please note that the deadline for FAQs was **16:00 (GMT) Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2017**. Queries submitted after this deadline will not be addressed. This document is the final set of FAQs in advance of the application deadline.

**Please note that we cannot provide any determinations of eligibility in responses to queries – only guidance, based on the terms and conditions. If an applicant submits a proposal and the question of eligibility is not clear cut, an Eligibility Review Committee will be convened to discuss the case and make a determination after the call deadline based on the documentation submitted. In addition, applicants are advised not to submit any documents (birth certificates, supporting documents in relation to career breaks, etc.) to any IRC staff member for verification before the call deadline.**

***\*\*Please note that the Letter of Support template has been amended to include additional reference to the excellence of the applicant and that they have demonstrated potential for future ERC success, in line with the objectives of the Laureate programme. Only the revised Letter of Support will be accepted as part of a Laureate application. \*\****

Similar questions have been grouped below in the following themes:

1. Number of awards
2. Eligibility
3. Eligible Funding
4. Applying to the Scheme
5. General Queries.

## 1. NUMBER OF AWARDS

How many awards will be offered under this first Call of the IRC Laureate programme?

The Council will be making at least 24 awards valued between €400k and €600k in the first Call.

## 2. ELIGIBILITY

Is the Laureate Award programme open to all disciplines?

Yes, applications are invited from ALL disciplines, both STEM and AHSS. Please consult the Laureate Awards Programme list of disciplines [here](#).

I believe that host institutions may only be based in Ireland. Is that correct?

As per the Terms and Conditions (section 2.2.2), awards must be held at an eligible higher-education institution or research performing organisation in Ireland.

An eligible higher education institution in Ireland must be: within the meaning of Section One of the Higher Education Authority Act, 1971; and/or approved for the purposes of the



Free Fees initiative; and/or in receipt of some other form of public funding from the Department of Education and Skills. An eligible research performing organisation (RPO) is one that possesses an existing in-house capacity to carry out research that materially extends and enhances the Irish research base and is in a position to demonstrate an independent capability to undertake and lead research projects/programmes, as approved by the Council. A list of eligible Irish HEIs and RPOs is provided on [www.research.ie](http://www.research.ie). Ireland shall for the purposes of these Terms & Conditions mean the Republic of Ireland.

Application to ERC is a requirement but can applicants apply to any ERC call? Can someone who is currently in the final year of the Consolidator bracket apply to IRC with a view to applying for an ERC Advanced Grant 2 years down the line?

It is a condition of award that Laureates make application for an ERC grant. Laureates can apply for any ERC grant for which they are eligible, appropriate to their career stage.

An applicant received their PhD on 1st July 2008 and had one 6 month period of maternity leave (which according to the T&Cs counts as an 18 month break). Based on this we think they are just about eligible to apply for a Starter Laureate. But we would like to have confirmation before the candidate progresses any further.

On the basis of the information provided, it appears that the candidate meets the eligibility criteria to apply for the Starting Laureate Award. Please note that determination of eligibility can only be made on the basis of the full application.

A potential applicant was awarded her PhD in 2000. She has been on maternity leave three times since then so she should subtract 4.5 years from 2000 to get a cut-off date of 2004 i.e. she is eligible to apply for a Consolidator Laureate Award. Can you confirm?

On the basis of the information provided, it appears that the candidate is eligible to apply for the Consolidator Laureate Award. Please note that determination of eligibility can only be made on the basis of the full application.

It is not clear if a potential applicant is eligible due to the date of her PhD which was awarded in 2000. Since then, she has had two periods of maternity leave. Can you confirm that she may add 18 months for each child?

Yes. As per the terms and conditions (section 3.1 (ii)),  
o For maternity leave, the effective elapsed time since the award of first PhD will be considered reduced by 18 months or if longer by the documented amount of leave taken for each child **after** the first PhD award.

Re. cut-off dates and maternity leave, our understanding is that applicants use a standard 18 months per child even if the leave taken was less than 18 months. Is this correct?

Yes. As per the terms and conditions (section 3.1 (ii)), the effective elapsed time for maternity leave since the award of first PhD will be considered reduced by 18 months or if longer by the documented amount of leave taken for each child **after** the first PhD award.

I have a query regarding extending the eligibility of applicants for the Laureate call. A prospective candidate is outside the window of eligibility but can extend her eligibility due to maternity leave. Since her PhD, she has had three children, 1 single child and a set of twins. The guidelines state that applicants may extend their eligibility by 18 months per child, not by number maternity leaves taken. However they also state that applicants extending their eligibility must provide documentary evidence from the HR Dept of their employer at the time. If this is the case, the applicant will only be able to account for two children, despite the fact she has had three children since her PhD. The ERC allows applicants to simply provide a copy of the birth certs for children as verification, would it suffice that the applicant provides copies of the birth certs for all three children in order to extend her eligibility by the number of children she has and not the number of maternity leaves she has taken? She could also provide documentary evidence from HR of the dates she took maternity leave. Would you mind clarifying the IRC's position on this?



In this instance, where an applicant cannot provide documentary evidence from the relevant HR department in relation to three separate maternity leave periods, they can provide a copy of the birth certificate as verification.

Could you let me know what the policy of the IRC is regarding the age-based (years post-PhD is a chronological measure) pre-allocation of research funding? Especially when no provision has been made for the most experienced and accomplished researchers in Ireland to apply for the new scheme.

As is stated in the Call, one of the key objectives of the programme is to support the development of track record to enable Laureates to be competitive for ERC grants. The criteria for the 2017 Call is therefore closely related to the equivalent Starting/Consolidator grants in ERC. Council recognise however that there is considerable demand for frontier research funding in Ireland due to the dearth of opportunities over recent years, and thus the PhD criteria for the Laureate scheme allow for researchers with a longer post-PhD period to apply than is the case for ERC. The Call also makes provision for career breaks, in line with good practice, which, where eligible, can extend the post-PhD period limit allowed.

Government approved an initial allocation of funding to enable the Laureate programme to get underway, and we anticipate that this will result in at least 24 awards being made across the Starting and Consolidator streams. The Council made a decision to prioritise Starting and Consolidator grants in this first iteration. In the context of further funding being secured from the Department to grow the programme as intended, the Council will be prioritising an Advanced Laureate Award in the next iteration. This will be available to researchers from the mid-career stage onwards.

1. I do not understand the set timeframe for the IRC consolidator laureate award, which is 8-15 years after awarding the PhD (section 3.1.i). In contrast, the timeframe for applying for an ERC consolidator grant is 7-12 years after PhD completion. As applying to the ERC is a MUST for the Laureate, how can that be? Older researchers would be eligible for the IRC but not the ERC.
2. I am eligible to apply for the IRC Laureate Consolidator award but if successful will be ineligible to apply for the ERC Consolidator as I will fall outside of the ERC PhD requirement. Can I still apply for the IRC Laureate Award?
3. Along these lines: section 2.2.1: "In fulfilling this condition, awardees are not expected to apply to ERC within the first 24 months of the Laureate award." Does this mean that I MUST NOT apply within the first 24 months? Or that I should not (but CAN in principle)? In my case, I would need to apply for an ERC consolidator in autumn 2018 because afterwards I will not be eligible anymore, so this would be already in month 5.

1. It is a condition of award that Laureates make follow-on application for an ERC grant for which they are eligible, and appropriate to their career stage
2. Yes. An IRC Laureate ineligible for an ERC Consolidator Grant due to the PhD eligibility criteria for ERC would still be eligible to apply for an ERC Advanced Grant.
3. Laureate award holders are not expected to apply to the ERC within the first 24 months, however they are not prohibited from doing so. If they decide to apply within 24 months of the start of the Laureate award, they should inform the Council of their intention.

I'm a post-doctoral researcher based at the National Cancer Registry of Ireland – I'm currently not a university affiliated researcher but was wondering if the IRC would accept my application (if I apply) if I had the support/agreement of a relevant department at University X to carry out the research there? I have contacts with the relevant department but would like to find out if this information before I approach them.



You should contact a proposed host institution to discuss your proposed application and whether they can host you for the duration of the award.

As per the terms and conditions (section 3.1 (iv)), in order to be eligible to apply to the Laureate Awards programme, applicants must either:

- Hold an academic post (permanent, or a contract that covers the duration of the award) in the proposed host institution, **or**
- Be an individual who, upon receipt of a Laureate award, will be conferred by the proposed host institution with a contract of employment of sufficient duration to cover the term of the award. The contract of employment must enable the Laureate to independently direct the research project and provide for the necessary accommodation and supporting infrastructure.

By providing the letter of support, the proposed host institution confirms that the applicant is either a member of the academic staff or will be conferred with such status as defined above if the application is successful.

All Laureates must be based whole-time within, and employed by, the proposed host institution for the period of the award.

**Can I clarify that you cannot apply unless you have a PHD awarded before Jan 1 2015?**

You cannot apply unless you have a PhD awarded before 1 January 2015. In order to be eligible to apply to the Starting Laureate Award, applicants must have been awarded their first PhD:

>3 years and < 8 years prior to 1 January 2018

Cut-off dates:

1 January 2010 to 1 January 2015 (inclusive).

(Section 3.1 (i) Terms and Conditions).

**Paternal leave was taken within the first 6 months of a child's birth in the first half of 2013 - however this predates the instigation of a formal 'Paternity leave'.**

**Could the birth cert and a letter from the PI at the time confirming that paternal leave was taken ( it cannot be confirmed by HR as Paternity leave was not formalised at the time) be sufficient to allow the paternity leave period to be taken off the required "< 8 years prior to 1 January 2018 "**

The applicant can provide a copy of the birth certificate as verification. Although Paternity Leave may not have been formalised at this time, the applicant should still submit a letter from the institution confirming the amount of time taken as leave and the purpose of the leave.

**If an applicant is currently on a 2 year contract with the Host Institution and they are applying for a 3 year IRC Laureate award, do they need to complete their 2 year contract before moving to a new one, or should it be a new contract from day one of the award?**

This is a matter for the host institution to determine, not the Irish Research Council. For the purposes of the Laureate Awards programme, applicants must either:

- Hold an academic post (permanent, or a contract that covers the duration of the award) in the proposed host institution, **or**
- Be an individual who, upon receipt of a Laureate award, will be conferred by the proposed host institution with a contract of employment of sufficient duration to cover the term of the award. The contract of employment must enable the





Laureate to independently direct the research project and provide for the necessary accommodation and supporting infrastructure.

By providing the letter of support, the proposed host institution confirms that the applicant is either a member of the academic staff or will be conferred with such status as defined above if the application is successful.

"I currently hold an IRC New Horizon Strand One starter award, which will end in October 2017. Although (per Terms and Conditions) holding this award does not make me ineligible to apply, I was wondering if this may interfere with success/eligibility of the Laureate award as one of the stated project aims of my current IRC grants is to serve as seed funding for an ERC starter grant?"

Your New Horizon Strand One starter award will not interfere with the success/eligibility of the Laureate award. Applications will be assessed against the criteria – The Applicant and The Research Project - outlined in section 5.4 of the Terms and Conditions.

A prospective applicant received a PhD degree in May 2009. The applicant was out of academia between then (May 2009) and July 2013 due to that fact that the applicant's spouse is a diplomat and the applicant was on posting with the spouse (Zambia & Finland) between December 2010 and August 2015. Can this be regarded as a form of public service (hence, the applicant has 'unavoidable statutory reasons' as per terms & conditions, p.9) and will this applicant be eligible to apply for a Starting Laureate Award?

For the purposes of this scheme, the career break outlined above does not count as an eligible career. As stated in section 3.1 (ii) Eligible career breaks of the Terms and Conditions, only career breaks taken by the applicant as a statutory entitlement will be considered eligible.

Query regarding employment status of a potential applicant: the T&Cs, point 3.1 (iv), it is stated that applicants must hold either a permanent academic post or a contract that covers the duration of the award - is it correct to identify these applicants as category 1 applicants? If so, the template for the institutional letter of support does not explicitly state that if an applicant has a contract of sufficient duration then he/she falls under category 1 applicant (it only says 'a permanent member of staff in the institution')

This applicant can be marked in Category 2 in the Institutional Letter of Support.

If an applicant is in receipt of an SFI SIRG Award, are they eligible to apply for the IRC Starting Grant?

Yes, an applicant in receipt of an SFI SIRG award is eligible to apply for an IRC Starting Laureate award provided they meet the eligibility criteria outlined in terms and conditions.

For the avoidance of doubt, can you confirm that an applicant who had twins post PhD, but only had one period of maternity leave, can extend the eligibility window by 2 x 18 months

Yes: for each child, a female PI is entitled to 18 month extension. In case of twins, the overall eligibility window would be extended by 36 months.

If a candidate is at the upper end of the scale in terms of eligibility i.e 14.5 years post PhD for the consolidator category. If they were to apply and not be successful-presumably they would not be able to resubmit to this category as they would then be over the <15 year post PhD eligibility criteria?

On the basis of the information provided, an applicant who is 14.5 years post PhD at the time of their first application for the Consolidator Laureate award, would not be eligible to re-submit to the Consolidator category in the event of an unsuccessful application.

One of our researchers can extend her eligibility window for the Starter Laureate Scheme as she has two children. However the paperwork from HR confirming her maternity leave periods are in Russian, while she has translations of her children's birth certificates in English. Can she upload the translated birth certs as evidence to support her eligibility extension claim?



In this instance, where an applicant cannot provide documentary evidence from the relevant HR department in relation to two separate maternity leave periods, they can provide a copy of the birth certificate as verification.

I am seeking clarification to the eligibility criteria. I am a post-doctoral researcher currently but my contract is due to end next year. If the early laureate were to be awarded would it cover my salary as PI and researcher on the project?

For the purposes of the Laureate Awards programme, applicants must either:

- Hold an academic post (permanent, or a contract that covers the duration of the award) in the proposed host institution, **or**
- Be an individual who, upon receipt of a Laureate award, will be conferred by the proposed host institution with a contract of employment of sufficient duration to cover the term of the award.

It appears that you fall into the latter category, up to 50% of your salary from the point at which you awarded a contract as a PI can be charged to the Laureate award.

I have a potential IRC Laureate candidate who received his PhD on August 14th 2009. He wants to inquire if he will be eligible to apply for a Starter Laureate as he took a period of parental leave from September 1st 2015- January 24th 2016. It is my understanding that he is eligible for the starter based on the calculations below, however I was hoping the IRC would be able to confirm. In order to be within the window of eligibility for the Starter, the candidate would need to have accumulated at least 140 days of paternity leave to bring him up to January 1st 2010

(17 days in August 2009, 30, days in September 2009, 31 days in October 2009, 30 days in November 2009, 31 days in December 2009 +1 day January 2010)

$(17+30+31+30+31+1= 140 \text{ days})$

The candidate took 145 days parental leave based on my calculations below

30 days in September 2015, 31 days in October 2015, 30 days in November 2015, 31 days in December 2015 and 23 days in January 2016

$(30+31+30+31+23= 145 \text{ days})$

It therefore seems that the candidate is within the window of eligibility for the starter award by 5 days. Can the IRC confirm based on these dates that the candidate is within the eligibility window?

On the basis of the information provided above, it appears that the applicant meets the criteria to request an extension to the PhD window. Please note that we cannot provide any determinations of eligibility in responses to queries – only guidance, based on the terms and conditions. The determination of eligibility can only be made on the basis of the full application.

*The official date of the PhD is defined as the year in which the PhD was conferred, i.e. the year stated on the official PhD certificate. The number of years refers to calendar years.*

If a potential applicant's PhD was conferred in July 2010, does that mean that 2010 is the first calendar year and 2017 is the eighth i.e. he may apply for the Consolidator Laureate?

On the basis of the information provided, it seems that the applicant cannot apply for the Consolidator Laureate award. The cut-off dates are 1 January 2003 to 1 January 2010 (inclusive).



We are unclear as to how the two available options for meeting the eligibility rules for the Laureate (PI) would apply in the case of an applicant currently employed by the Institute as a postdoctoral researcher and has a contract of indefinite duration and is fully funded on EU research projects.

**Option 1:** the replacement cost model. This would not be applicable in his case as the projects he works on are all based on the actual cost model. That is, whoever becomes his replacement would become the eligible cost on those projects. (a) Is it acceptable that the €46,401 per annum would be a contribution to his salary cost and that the balance could come from his work on other projects? (b) Is it expected that the Laureate dedicates 100% of his time to the Laureate award? (c) Is it acceptable that he would be part-funded from other projects?

**Option 2:** new research contract of employment. (d) Can you clarify does this mean that if the applicant is successful he/she must be awarded a new contract of employment in respect of the award period, in this instance our researcher is on a contract of indefinite duration? (e) Is it expected that the Institute meets 50% of his cost from their own resources or is it acceptable that the PI works on other funded projects to meet the balance of his cost?

On the basis of replacement costs, as only 50% of existing commitments would be allocated to a potential replacement for the applicant, a maximum of 50% of €46,401 could be requested as part of the budget. Alternatively, if a new/revised contract is issued to the applicant that reflects their responsibilities as a Laureate award holder 50% of the employment costs is available to charge to the Laureate award and the institution funds the balance of the employment costs for the duration of the award.

I received a query from a potential Laureate applicant who has been awarded both an MD and a PhD. She received her MD in June 2007 and immediately entered into PhD training in September 2007 and was awarded her PhD in November 2011. Following her PhD she entered in postdoctoral training and has been a full time researcher since her PhD award with multiple publications. Her query is whether or not she should take the date of her MD award or that of her PhD award when calculating her eligibility for a starter laureate. Based on the information in the terms and conditions, it would seem to me that the applicant should use her PhD date as all postdoctoral training she undertook and most of her publications occurred after her PhD award date. The applicant however has requested that I ask the IRC to confirm is this correct? Would you perhaps be able to clarify?

In this instance, the applicant should take the date of award for her PhD when calculating her eligibility for the Starter Laureate.

I was awarded my PhD in July 2008. Since then I took maternity and parental leave as follows:

From December 2008 - Maternity leave in respect of my daughter (seems to count for 18 months)

From 2nd September 2011 - 16 weeks parental leave in respect of my son (born 2005)

From 2nd September 2013 - 18 weeks parental leave in respect of my daughter (born 2008)

Can you confirm that I am eligible to apply for the Starting Laureate Award?

On the basis of the information provided, it appears that the candidate meets the eligibility criteria to apply for the Starting Laureate Award. Please note that determination of eligibility can only be made on the basis of the full application. Please note that we cannot provide any determinations of eligibility in responses to queries – only guidance, based on the terms and conditions.

Are researchers eligible if they are 'funded investigators' on an SFI centre?



Yes, researchers are eligible to apply if they are 'funded investigators' in an SFI centre. Please note that the determination of eligibility can only be made on the basis of the full application.

I have a medical degree (bachelor of medicine not MD) and graduated in 1998. I also have a PhD and graduated in 2006. I have had three children after graduating from my medical degree. Does this mean that I am eligible to apply?

On the basis of the information provided, you do not meet the requirements to extend the period of eligibility as only eligible career breaks undertaken since the award of the first PhD will be considered.

Can an applicant on CID with no institutional base funding apply as a Category 2 applicant? The applicant in question, if successful, would split their time 50/50 between the laureate award and a European Research project that he is part of that would cover the other 50% of his salary costs.

On the basis of replacement costs, as only 50% of existing commitments would be allocated to a potential replacement for the applicant, a maximum of 50% of €46,401 could be requested as part of the budget. Alternatively, if a new/revised contract is issued to the applicant that reflects their responsibilities as a Laureate award holder 50% of the employment costs is available to charge to the Laureate award and the institution funds the balance of the employment costs for the duration of the award.

### 3. ELIGIBLE FUNDING

The IRC salary is the old scale. Will the IRC be aligning these awards with the new IUA salary scales?

The following rates may be used for the Laureate Awards programme:

Seek costs to re-allocate existing commitments of Laureate:

As per section 3.3.1 of the terms and conditions, costs may be requested to facilitate the re-allocation of existing commitments of the Laureate (e.g. teaching) in order that they can devote appropriate time and effort as Principal Investigator to successfully complete the Irish Research Council Laureate award. Up to €46,401 per annum (first point on the current IUA salary scale for postdoctoral fellows) can be charged to the project to facilitate the Laureate's participation.

Postdoctoral researchers/research assistants:

As per section 3.3.2 of the terms and conditions, applicants can use the current IUA researcher salary scale for research assistants and postdoctoral fellows. The point on the scale should be determined by qualifications and experience and the rationale for selecting this point should be explained in the budget justification. The requested salary must include provisions for PRSI (10.75%) and Employer Pension Contribution (20%). These costs can be pro-rated where appropriate.

Other staff:

Other personnel costs may be considered such as technicians, digital archivists. These costs must be explicitly justified and institutional salary scales can be used for this category. As part of the award acceptance process, the research office must provide documentary evidence of the salary scale used.

PhD students/research masters students:





Postgraduate stipend of €16,000. The stipend can be supplemented from other funding sources if required. Tuition fees are capped at the IRC rates of €5,750 for EU and non-EU students.

When requesting the salary of a postdoctoral researcher, can the postdoc be named/known, or is public recruitment a requirement?

Public recruitment is required for any postdoctoral research positions requested as per the terms and conditions (section 3.3.3). Staff must be recruited for the specific project and awarded topic only.

The stipend offered is €16,000 per annum. Can the IRC increase this to the norm of €18,000 per annum?

The Council is currently reviewing the stipend level for Council-funded postgraduate scholars. Until the Council advises otherwise, the stipend level remains at €16,000. However, as per the terms and conditions (section 3.3.2) the stipend can be supplemented from other funding sources if required.

Are overheads included on student fees?

Yes, overheads are included on student fees.

A potential applicant would need to get certain novel devices designed and fabricated. Can these costs be included in the budget, and under which heading?

As part of their application, applicants must clearly demonstrate that the costs sought are necessary to undertake the research project. They need to provide clear and convincing justification of their costings. The applicant must decide which budget heading is most suitable, however, based on the information provided, materials and consumables might be a suitable heading.

Co-funding by the Host Institution requirement: on page 13 in the T & Cs it says that 'where hosting of the Laureate gives rise to a new research contract of employment, **up to 50% of the laureate's employment costs** may be charged to the award...The Host institution must guarantee to fund the balance of the employment costs for the duration of the award'. However, in the template for the institutional letter of support on page 2 (Part C) it says that '... I confirm ...that any resulting new contract of employment awarded to the Laureate by the [Host Institution] will be funded by the institution's own resources at a minimum rate of **50% of total costs** for the duration of the award'.

Is the Host Institution required to co-fund 50% of the total grant amount requested by the applicant (including employment, travel, materials and other costs) or 50% of the employment costs only?

The Host Institution must only guarantee to fund the employment costs for the duration of the Laureate award, not to co-fund 50% of the total grant requested.

Query regarding employment status of a potential applicant: the T&Cs, point 3.1 (iv), it is stated that applicants must hold either a permanent academic post or a contract that covers the duration of the award - is it correct to identify these applicants as category 1 applicants? If so, the template for the institutional letter of support does not explicitly state that if an applicant has a contract of sufficient duration then he/she falls under category 1 applicant (it only says 'a permanent member of staff in the institution')

This applicant can be marked in Category 2 in the Institutional Letter of Support.

Query regarding the employment status of a potential applicant: if an applicant is currently on a fixed term contract till 2019, but it is likely that the current contract will be extended further for the next 5 years after 2019, does this mean that this applicant still falls under the category 2 and hence the Host Institution still needs to co-fund the employment costs of this person? Or is this a category 1 applicant?



The Institutional Letter of Support asks for the status of the applicant **at the time of application**, so accordingly the applicant should be categorised as Category 2.

The institution has committed to funding the employment costs of the applicant until at least 2019 and potentially extending the existing contract for a further five years. In this scenario, the employment costs are already provided for and would not be funded from the Laureate award, if successful. However replacement costs associated with the commitments of the applicant under their current contract can be sought within the Laureate application, up to a maximum of €46,401.

In relation to Teaching Replacement Costs, typically our Institution would appoint an Assistant Lecturer / Lecturer (rather than Postdoctoral Researcher) to facilitate the re-allocation of existing teaching commitments. As such, we would use institutional salary scales, rather than IUA scales. Can you please confirm if this is acceptable under this category, if fully justified and once the maximum of €46,401 is not exceeded? Also, can we use another calculation method (other than pro-rating the €46,401 maximum), should we require replacement costs for just one teaching module?

If an institution wishes to appoint a lecturer rather than a postdoctoral fellow, any difference in salary will have to be supplemented from other sources. The calculation method is a matter for an institution provided it is transparent and the costs are justified.

We note that the Terms and conditions state that applicants can use the IUA researcher salary scale for research assistants and postdoctoral fellows. We have had a query from a PI who is interested in recruiting a senior researcher on the project for a year. The type of expertise the individual would require means that they are more likely to be a senior researcher with more experience than a post doc. As such the applicant wishes to use the IUA's senior research fellow scale (level 4) to cost that person's salary into their budget. I would be grateful if you could advise if this is possible?

Also should this person be costed under the heading 'Research Assistant' or 'Other Staff'?

If an institution wishes to appoint a senior researcher rather than a postdoctoral fellow, any difference in salary will have to be supplemented from other sources. This position should be costed under 'Other Staff'.

Should we not be factoring in the recent pay restoration onto the IUA pay scales? I understand that these are in the process of being updated by the IUA.

The current salary scale will apply until such time as a revised scale is issued by the IUA.

I have a proposal and in the project, samples would be sent to external laboratories (in the EU) for scientific analysis. Will this be counted as an indirect cost? And therefore not be subject to overhead @ 25%. I have reviewed the guide for applicants, however, there is no mention of this kind of instance. Your guidance on this issue would be greatly appreciated.

There is no distinction between direct costs and indirect costs in the Laureate budget. These samples should be included under the 'Materials and Consumables' category in the budget.

Could you please confirm that annual increments to salaries of research assistants and postdoctoral researchers (e.g. increase of one point in the IUA Researcher Salary Scale per year) to be hired as members of research team on a Laureate project are allowed by the IRC?

Yes, applicants can allow for annual salary scale point increases on the Laureate project. As noted in terms and conditions, the point on the scale should be determined by qualifications and experience and the rationale for selecting this point should be explained in the budget justification. The requested salary must include provisions for PRSI (10.75%)



and Employer Pension Contribution (20%). These costs can be pro-rated where appropriate.

Do travel costs for dissemination events go under Travel or Dissemination in the budget table?

Travel costs for dissemination events should be included under the Dissemination category in the budget table.

The standard Institution X Employer Costs are 10.75 PRSI & 8.5% pension & Life contribution i.e. less than the standard 20% in other universities.

The guidelines state as follows;

...'.Applicants can use the IUA researcher salary scale for research assistants and postdoctoral fellows.....The requested salary must include provisions for PRSI (10.75%) and Employer Pension Contribution (20%).....'.

Question:

Should applicants from Institution X apply for an 8.5% contribution rather than the 20% (per the guidelines) to avoid the reimbursement to the IRC of the difference at the end of the project?

Yes, applicants can apply for an 8.5% pension & Life contribution if this is the institutional norm.

Where a contract will cover the IRC Laureate for only a part of the award period, is the potential 50% contribution from IRC for employment costs:

- a) A 50% contribution over the whole of the award period (so if the current contract covered 50%, the IRC may cover the remaining 50%)?
- b) Or a 50% contribution towards the additional contract that would need to be put in place beyond that which already exists (with the college covering the remainder)?

This depends on whether the Laureate award results in a new/revised contract of employment for the awardee. If not, the 50% contribution could be requested for the additional contract to be issued once the existing contract ends and the institution will fund the balance of the employment costs for the same period. However if the Laureate award results in a new or revised contract of employment to reflect the Laureate's new commitments, 50% of the employment costs applicable to this new/revised contract can be charged to the Laureate award over the duration of this contract.

The approved contribution to hiring someone to fill a Laureate's existing commitments is €46,401. This is point 1 of the salary scale. Can this be increased in years 2-4 to allow for the necessary increments?

Yes, applicants can allow for annual salary scale point increases on the Laureate project provided the increments adhere to the IUA researcher salary scale.

What would be the most appropriate budget category for costs relating to Radio Carbon Dating Services?

Based on the information provided, Materials and Consumables would appear to be the most appropriate budget category for this item.

The applicant would like to include costs for a very specific technical training for both the applicant (PI) and a PhD student (one of Laureate award team members). It is our understanding that this is an eligible research expense. Could IRC please clarify which budget category this cost should be listed under?

For the purposes of this programme, training costs can be included under the Materials and Consumables budget category.

Under which budget category should a specialised computer software of a value of more than €1,000 be included? 'Materials and consumables' or 'Equipment'?



This should be included under the Equipment budget category.

With an award where the laureate receives a new research contract for the duration of the laureate award and as such can include only 50% salary costs within the application, is it possible for the laureate to cover the remainder of their salary costs through teaching hours in the department?

Where the award gives rise to a new research contract, the remainder of the employment costs must be borne by the institution. It is at the discretion of the applicant and proposed host institution to determine the proportion of time that will be spent on other activities such as teaching. All Laureates must be based whole-time within, and employed by, the proposed host institution for the period of the award. Applicants need to provide clear and convincing justification of their costings and should think carefully about the time and resources needed to complete the research successfully within the specified period.

Is there any circumstance under which a category 2 applicant could apply for 100% salary costs as part of the award or is this strictly capped at a maximum of 50% (as described in 3.3.1 of the T&Cs)?

No. 3.3.1 applies.

## 4. APPLYING TO THE SCHEME

The terms and conditions state that IRC Laureate awards may be up to 4 years in duration, however a researcher has queried if there is a minimum duration that awards must be?

There is no minimum duration for the awards. As part of the application, applicants must demonstrate that they can successfully complete the research in the time period specified. Given the overall aim of the programme is to support exceptional researchers to develop their track record and to build their international competitiveness, applicants are required to demonstrate how the proposed research is going beyond the state-of-the-art for their field. Peer reviewers will assess to what extent the outlined scientific approach is feasible, having regard to the extent to which the proposed research is high risk/high gain. When preparing their proposal, applicants should consult section 5.4 Evaluation Criteria of the Terms and Conditions.

(1) Is this call going to be annually?

(2) What type of contract can Irish Universities offer to those people who want to apply but they don't have a contract long enough for the duration of the project (4 years)?

(1) It is expected that the Irish Research Laureate Awards programme will run on an annual basis, subject to funding from the Department of Education and Skills, however it is not anticipated that application for all three types of award will be available annually. The Council will be prioritising an Advanced Laureate Award in the next iteration. This will be available to researchers from the mid-career stage onwards.

(2) The Council is not in a position to advice on institutional contracts. You should contact your proposed host institution to discuss your options. As per the terms and conditions (section 3.1 (iv)), applicants must either:

- Hold an academic post (permanent, or a contract that covers the duration of the award) in the proposed host institution, **or**
- Be an individual who, upon receipt of a Laureate award, will be conferred by the proposed host institution with a contract of employment of sufficient duration to cover the term of the award. The contract of employment must enable the Laureate to





independently direct the research project and provide for the necessary accommodation and supporting infrastructure.

By providing the letter of support, the proposed host institution confirms that the applicant is either a member of the academic staff or will be conferred with such status as defined above if the application is successful.

Is there anywhere on the proposal form where applicants can outline their strategy for a future ERC and how they will use this project grant to get there?

Applicants are not specifically required to outline their strategy for a future ERC application. The applicant and the proposal will be assessed against the evaluation criteria outlined in section 5.4 of the Terms and Conditions. Excellence is the sole criterion of evaluation for the Irish Research Council Laureate Awards programme. The criterion will be applied to both the research proposal and the applicant.

"I had my PhD viva in June/2010 which would put me in the starter award category. However, I have been on maternity leave twice since, which I would like to document. As per terms and conditions this is not necessary but I still would like to document my leave as this impacts my achievements. Am I allowed to document this leave in the application?"

Any research career gaps including maternity leave can be included in your CV should be clearly explained so that they can be fairly assessed by the evaluation panels.

Re. employment status for Laureates, can the academic post be a research position e.g. research fellow or senior research fellow?

This is a matter for the applicant and institution to agree upon.

Regarding the Letter of Support from Head of School to be submitted with a Laureate application, the Ts and Cs state: 'Letter from Head of School must be used where this position exists in the institution. Only otherwise should a letter from the Head of Faculty be used.' We don't have 'Schools' as part of our university's structure, but instead Departments, and 3 Faculties. I assume applicants should therefore submit a letter of support from their Head of Faculty rather than from their Head of Department?

Yes, applicants should a letter of support from their Head of Faculty rather than the Head of Department if 'Schools' are not part of the university's structure.

Regarding applicants who fall under the 2nd category of applicant as outlined on page 10 of the T&C's namely

- an individual who, upon receipt of a Laureate award, will be conferred by the proposed host institution with a contract of employment of sufficient duration to cover the term of the award. The contract of employment must enable the Laureate to independently direct the research project and provide for the necessary accommodation and supporting infrastructure.

We understand that the IRC will provide budgetary support for up to half of the salary for these individuals for the duration of the grant provided an undertaking is given by the HEI via the institutional letter of support that the balance of the full time salary will be provided by the HEI in question.

We are wondering does the IRC have any guidance regarding the proportion of time that these type of applicants might be able to spend on teaching and/or other non-research activities (separate to the activities of managing and researching the research project) over the course of their contract of employment for the duration of the grant.

It is our expectation that a Laureate award holder will devote the appropriate time and effort to successfully complete the Laureate project. It is at the discretion of the applicant and



proposed host institution to determine the proportion of time that category 2 applicants might be spend on other activities such as teaching.

Can an applicant who is employed for the duration of the award on another research grant apply as a Category 2 applicant?

No, an applicant who is employed for the duration of the award on another research grant apply cannot be designated as a Category 2 applicant. This category applies where an applicant and the proposed host institution seek contribution to costs for a new research contract of employment awarded to the Laureate award holder.

Regarding resubmissions of unsuccessful applications – can a resubmission be made with the same project again?

Yes, an applicant can re-submit the same project.

Can the grant be used to send a member of the project team to another organisation for a prolonged period for training/research purposes? Is there a limit on the length of such a trip?

All Laureates must be based whole-time within, and employed by, the proposed host institution for the period of the award. Awards will not be made on a joint appointment basis with other institutions. All staff/students appointed to the research team must work exclusively on the research project for the time period for which they are funded.

Yes, the grant can be to send a member of the project team to another organisation for a prolonged period for training/research purposes as long as it meets the above requirements and is justified in the application, including in relation to duration.

How does the IRC define a “main author”? Is this the first author, the last author or can it be both?

The IRC does not define ‘main author’. Applicants are advised to follow the norms for the sequencing of authors in their research field.

If the Institution does not have a Schools structure and the most appropriate individual to endorse the applicant/application is the Head of Department as opposed to the Head of Faculty, is this acceptable? In our institution we have departments –In most cases the head of department is the direct line manager for the applicants so can we submit a letter from HOD and VPR in this instance?

Can a Research Centre sign in place of Head of School? (this may be something the Host Institution needs to decide, but we want to get IRC’s view on it first please)

In both cases, the Letter of Support must be signed by the Dean or Head of Faculty.

Is it ok to upload letters of support from members of my suggested advisory board as part of my supporting documentation?

No, please do not include letters of support as part of your supporting documentation. Supporting documentation is only required if you request to extend the period of PhD eligibility. In this case, supporting documentation refers to documentary evidence from the HR office of your employer at the time of the eligible break(s), or birth certificates, if relevant.

On the Host Institution letter, Part C should only be completed for Category 2 and 3 applicants, so if it’s not applicable can we just deleted that section? Or should we leave that text in?

Yes, you can delete Part C if it is not applicable.

Can PIs from different research centres or institutes collaborate on a joint application?

The scheme is aimed at individual applicants rather than joint proposers. No more than one applicant can be named on an application. However, an applicant may include provision for team membership or collaboration of researchers from other institutions and organisations, including both national and international participation. The added value of any collaboration must be strongly demonstrated. However personnel costs may not be allocated outside the host institution.



Can a senior researcher from a different discipline (from the same or another institution) have an advisory role in a project? How substantive can that input from the second PI be?

Yes, a senior researcher from a different discipline can have an advisory role in a project if it is appropriate to the project. However, this person cannot be a named applicant. It is at the discretion of the applicant to determine the level of input of the senior researcher. However, applicants are reminded that as part of their track record and CV, they must have already shown the potential for research independence and evidence of maturity, therefore the input and role of any senior research must be carefully considered.

Would it be possible for an awardee to hold a Laureate Grant AND another grant (such as an SFI CDA) at the same time?

Yes, an applicant can hold a Laureate Award and another grant, with the exception of an ERC grant, at the same time. As per section 6.11 of the Terms and Conditions, the Laureate Award may be held in conjunction with other externally funded travel bursaries, equipment grants or awards (excluding ERC awards, see 3.1 (v) of the terms and conditions) provided that:

- should the awardee apply for further funding to another source, they will state as part of that application (whether or not they are required to do so) that they hold an Irish Research Council Laureate Award and will notify the Council prior to submitting the application.
- awardees who have other sources of funding (other than through paid employment) such as travel grants etc., must inform the appropriate offices in their Irish HEI/RPO, and the Council about the amount and source of the funding in writing. This information must also be recorded in the required progress reports. This applies to research funding received before or during the life of the award.
- the other funder(s) agree that the Irish Research Council Laureate Award can be held alongside their award. The Council will not involve itself in the decisions of other funding agencies/local authorities in this regard.

Can figures be added within the extended synopsis, and if so do these count towards the maximum page numbers allowed?

Yes, figures (graphs, images, tables) can be added within the extended synopsis, which cannot exceed the permitted five pages maximum. With due deference and fairness to all applicants, the specified pages limits will be strictly adhered to. The independent assessors (panel members and peer reviewers) will be instructed not to read any material provided beyond these limits.

Are footnotes allowed within the extended synopsis, and within the detailed project description?

No, footnotes are not permitted. Applicants can include references, which do not count towards the page limits.

We have an applicant who is working on a 0.6 FTE post. What are their options in terms of budget for buyout / salary? They would like to work on the award full time – is this possible?

If an applicant is working on a 0.6 FTE post (assuming they are on a permanent contract), the requested replacement costs can be pro-rated. The maximum level of replacement costs cannot be sought for applicants who do not a full-time contract. Laureate award holders are expected to devote appropriate time and effort as Principal Investigator to successfully complete the Irish Research Council Laureate award. However, there is no prescribed minimum time commitment and it is at the discretion of the applicant to determine the appropriate time and effort required to successfully complete the project.

Does the IRC has a specific policy regarding the inclusion of preprints as publications in applications for the Laureate programme?

Any pre-prints referenced in an application must have a Digital Object Identifier (DOI).



We noted the answer following answer to the question in the 12.05 FAQ 'Can the grant be used to send a member of the project team to another organisation for a prolonged period for training/research purposes? Is there a limit on the length of such a trip?'

*Yes, the grant can be to send a member of the project team to another organisation for a prolonged period for training research purposes as long as it meets the above requirements and is justified in the application, including in relation to duration.*

Can you clarify if the same answer applies to researchers (recruited as part of the project team) spending a prolonged period of time for research purposes related to the grant in another organisation outside Ireland but within Europe?

Yes, the grant can be used to send any member of the project team to another organisation for a prolonged period for training/research purposes as long as all staff/students appointed to the research team must work exclusively on the research project for the time period for which they are funded. Please note that personnel costs may not be allocated outside the host institution.

According to Guide for Applicants, "Any direct or indirect contact about the peer review evaluation of a call between an applicant or their host institution and a peer reviewer involved in the peer review evaluation may result in the decision of the Council to exclude the proposal concerned from the evaluation."

Does this apply to the five nominated reviewers? An applicant would normally contact referees/reviewers before putting their names forward. Is it acceptable to do this as long as the contact is BEFORE an application is submitted?

Applicants should not contact any of the five nominated international peer reviewers that they may nominate at any point during the application and evaluation process. The international peer reviewers are not acting as referees: they will provide an expert, independent academic review of the proposal, not a personal testimonial. As per the terms and conditions, the Council reserves the right to appoint a peer reviewer to the proposal which is not a nominated peer reviewer of the applicant.

I have a potential Laureate applicant who has taken paternity leave while working at an institution in Germany. The documentation that he has confirming he took paternity leave is in German. He is going to go back to his old institution and ask them to re-issue his letter in English, however he is concerned that he may not have the English version in time. If this happens, would it be sufficient for the applicant to upload the German version with a translation provided by him or one of his German speaking colleagues or would he have to go through the process of having the document officially translated?

No, a translation provided by the applicant or a colleague is not acceptable. As stated in the terms and conditions, supporting documentation submitted in any language other than English must be accompanied by a certified translation in English.

I have some questions for the FAQ in relation to the Data Management Plan.

1. Can applicants use the Horizon2020 template available in DMP Online to create their outline DMP for this application?
2. What types of data should be covered by the DMP for the IRC Laureate awards?

[See p.9 H2020 Programme (2016) Guidelines on Open Access to Scientific Publications and Research Data in Horizon 2020

[https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/grants\\_manual/hi/oa\\_pilot/h2020-hi-oa-pilot-guide\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/grants_manual/hi/oa_pilot/h2020-hi-oa-pilot-guide_en.pdf)

**Types of data covered**





1. **the 'underlying data'** (the data needed to validate the results presented in scientific publications), including the **associated metadata** (i.e. metadata describing the research data deposited), **as soon as possible**  
2. **any other data** (for instance curated data not directly attributable to a publication, or raw data), including the **associated metadata, as specified and within the deadlines laid down in the DMP** – that is, according to the individual judgement by each project/grantee.]

3. Does the IRC require any specific data repositories to be used for data sharing?

1. Yes, applicants can use the Horizon 2020 template to create their outline DMP.
2. The data types to be covered by the DMP is up to the individual judgment of the applicant as it will depend on the nature of the project, e.g. how will the data be created? (interviews, questionnaires, experimental measurements); what data formats will be used (what is accepted as best practice in the applicant's discipline)? Applicants are advised to consult the list of resources provided in Appendix 2 in relation to Data Management Plans.
3. No, the IRC does not require any specific data repositories to be used for data sharing. Applicants should follow the norms of their discipline and their host institution.

Re. extension to the eligibility window, is it necessary to convert 18 months to number of days?

Yes, it is necessary to convert 18 months to number of days as requested in the online application form.

From my reading of the call documents I see this awards somewhat positioned towards researchers who may be outside the country returning, or can this call be positioned for researchers based in Irish academic institutes apply for the Laureate to develop research with impact for the research community nationally and internationally but basing themselves within the same academic institute and in some cases working with international academic partners to develop new knowledge.

Researchers based in Ireland or anywhere in the world may apply to the Irish Research Council Laureate Awards programme. The aims and objectives of the Irish Research Council Laureate Awards programme are as follows:

- To enhance frontier basic research in Irish research-performing organisations, across all disciplines.
- To support exceptional researchers to develop their track record, appropriate to their discipline and career stage.
- To build the international competitiveness of awardees and Ireland as a whole.
- To leverage greater success for the Irish research system in European Research Council awards.
- To retain excellent researchers in the Irish system and to catalyse opportunities for talented researchers currently working outside Ireland, to relocate to Ireland.

1. Is it possible to nominate a peer reviewer who is also named as a potential member of the project's advisory board?

2. Is it permitted to contact a peer reviewer in advance to let them know that they are being nominated?

1. No, a nominated peer reviewer cannot be named as a potential member of the project advisory's board.
2. No, it is not permitted to contact a peer reviewer during the application and evaluation process.

Can a PhD student be hired for the full 4 year duration of the project?



Yes, a PhD student can be hired for the full four years of the project. As part of the application, applicants must build time for the recruitment of PhD students within the timescale of the project, i.e. four years.

Is it possible to use a digital signature for the Head of School letter if the Head of School is not available to sign in person?

Yes, it is possible to use digital/electronic signature for the Head of School letter.

Is it possible for a postdoctoral researcher employed on the Laureate award project to perform both roles - teaching and research - provided that both roles do not exceed 1 FTE? In other words, can a postdoctoral researcher teach a number of modules (to alleviate part of the Laureate's teaching commitments) and participate in research activities of the project (be a member of Laureate award team) at the same time? Both roles will be pro-rated - 40 % of postdoc time devoted to teaching, and the remaining 60% of his/her time to research - but a single contract will be issued to this individual. Will IRC allow such an arrangement?

Yes, the IRC will allow such an arrangement provided both roles do not exceed 1 FTE and adhere to the criteria on funding for postdoctoral researchers as set out in the Terms and Conditions.

If the Laureate successful project has to start by the end of May 2018, it will be very difficult to recruit a PhD student in the summer 2018 and realistically a PhD student will be able to start his/her position only in September 2018 (start of academic year). The 4 years of PhD will extend beyond the end date of the project (end of August 2022). Is there a way to deal with this, e.g. through a 'no cost extension' form?

As part of the application, applicants are advised to build in time for the recruitment of PhD students within the timescale of the project, i.e. four years. However a request, with justification, for a no-cost extension to an award may be submitted in advance to the Council for approval. A no-cost extension can be sought for a period of up to six months.

## 5. GENERAL QUERIES

If the maximum for the Starting award is €400k, is there an (implicit) minimum reward amount? For example, would it reduce the chances of success if the total requested amount was €200k for the Starting award?

No, the chance of success would not be reduced if an applicant requested €200,000 for the Starting Laureate award. As part of the application, applicants need to provide clear and convincing justification of their costings and should think carefully about the time and resources needed to complete the research successfully within the specified period.

Are there any funding details confirmed for the 2018/2019 scheme yet? The starting laureate is funded in this scheme, is there a plan to continue this type of early career award for 2018/2019?

The 2017/2018 scheme considers starting and consolidator laureates. Will the 2018/2019 scheme continue to support these funding routes for early stage researchers?

Details of the 2018/19 programme are not yet available. As noted in the Terms and Conditions, the Council made a decision to prioritise Starting and Consolidator grants in this first iteration. In the context of further funding being secured from the Department to grow the programme as intended, the Council will be prioritising an Advanced Laureate Award in the next iteration. This will be available to researchers from the mid-career stage onwards.



How stringent are the starting dates for successful applicants in 2017/2018 scheme?

For successful applicants, is there a strict requirement to start the laureate award by May 2018? Or is there some flexibility regarding the start date (such as for international applicants who will have to plan for relocation etc.)?

Awards can start on any date between 1<sup>st</sup> April and 31<sup>st</sup> May 2018. No other dates are eligible.

If you make a successful application to the Consolidator award and are between 10-15 years post PhD, are you expected to apply for an Advanced ERC award?

It is a condition of award that Laureates make follow-on application for an ERC grant for which they are eligible, and appropriate to their career stage

Please explicitly define basic/frontier research.

As noted in Innovation 2020 (2015, p.40) frontier/basic research is “*research at and beyond the frontiers of current understanding. It is intrinsically risky, and is characterised by the absence of disciplinary boundaries.*” Frontier research can also be described as research at the forefront of creating new knowledge. It is research that pushes boundaries, moving beyond the frontiers of our current understanding.

As part of their application to the Laureate Awards, applicants must specify clearly the objectives of the proposal, in the context of the state-of-the-art in the field. When describing the envisaged research, applicants should indicate how and why the proposed work is important for the field, and what impact it will have, such as how it may open up new horizons or opportunities for science, technology or scholarship. As part of the evaluation, proposals will be evaluated against criteria to include the following:

- Ambition to make an important contribution to the state-of-the-art and to go beyond the state-of-the-art, e.g. novel concepts and approaches, or developments between or across disciplines;
- The extent to which the proposed research address important challenges (Challenges in this context refers to the potential ground-breaking nature of the research project and the ‘big’ question(s) at the frontiers of the applicant’s discipline that will be addressed).
- The extent to which the proposed research is high risk/high gain?

Excellence is the sole criterion of evaluation for the Irish Research Council Laureate Awards programme. The criterion will be applied to both the research project and the applicant.

“Does it exclude subjects that received IRC New Foundations funding more than two years ago? In particular projects that were designed with the aim of applying for funding such as this Laureate programme?”

No, it does not exclude subjects (or topics) that received IRC New Foundations more than two years ago.

An IRC Laureate awardee should submit an application to the ERC ideally prior to the end of the award but no later than within one year of the end date. However, applying for an IRC Consolidator award requires 8-15 post-PhD years whereas applying for an ERC Consolidator grant currently requires only 7-12 post-PhD years. So, if an IRC Consolidator awardee has more than 12 post-PhD years at the start of the award, is he/she meant to afterwards apply for an ERC Advanced grant? If that is the case, would an application for an IRC Consolidator award from an applicant with more than 12 post-PhD years be evaluated based on the chances of the applicant afterwards succeeding at securing an ERC Advanced grant?

It is a condition of the Laureate award that a follow-on application is made by the Laureate award holder for an ERC grant appropriate to their career trajectory at the time of application. Excellence is the sole criterion of evaluation for the Irish Research Council



Laureate Awards programme and applicants will be evaluated against the criteria (research project and the applicant) outlined in section 5.4 of the Terms and Conditions.

If an applicant has an application currently pending with another funding agency, can they submit the same application to the IRC Laureate Scheme?

Yes. In the online application form, applicants are required to indicate whether they have submitted the proposal or a very similar one been submitted in the past two years in response to a call for proposals under the ERC, Horizon 2020, Irish Research Council or other programmes. A 'similar' proposal is one that differs from the current proposal in minor ways.

In which category do you define Architecture or Design?

Applicants are advised to consult the list of disciplines - [AHSS](#) and [STEM](#) when determining the primary area and panel domain for their proposal. These are based on the ERC categories/sub-categories. For the purposes of this programme, the primary area – Products and Process Engineering; Discipline: Construction Methods; Keywords: Civil engineering, architecture, etc. might be suitable for your proposal. Please note this is only advice and you should carefully consult the list of disciplines to determine the most suitable categorisation for your proposal.

It is a condition of holding a Laureate award that a follow-on application is made to the ERC. Does the ERC proposal need to be linked to research carried out during the Laureate project?

It is not requirement that a potential ERC proposal should be linked to research carried out during the Laureate project. The overall aim of the Laureate Awards programme is to support exceptional researchers to develop their track record, appropriate to their discipline and career stage, and to build the international competitiveness of awardees and Ireland as a whole.

It is a condition of holding a Laureate award that a follow-on application is made to the ERC. Does an application to the Synergy or Advanced call fulfil this condition if the awardee meets the eligibility criteria?

Yes, an application to the ERC Synergy or Advanced Grant programme can fulfil the condition of Laureate award holders making an application to the ERC.

If a similar proposal has been submitted to another call previously and the outcome is pending, will this affect the competitiveness of the IRC Laureate proposal?

If a similar proposal has been submitted to another call previously and the outcome is pending, this will not affect the eligibility of the IRC Laureate proposal.

The terms and conditions state that applicants are not expected to apply to ERC within the first two years. Are they prohibited from doing so?

No. Laureate award holders are not expected to apply to the ERC within the first 24 months, however they are not prohibited from doing so. If they decide to apply within 24 months of the start of the Laureate award, they should inform the Council of their intention.

What is the penalty of not making a follow-on application to the ERC?

As per section 2.2.1 of the terms and conditions, should a Laureate awardee not submit an application to the ERC within the expected timeframe, the awardee will not be eligible to apply for further Council PI-led programmes.





Section 6.11 of the terms state “should the awardee apply for further funding to another source, they will state as part of that application that they hold an IRC Laureate award and will notify the Council prior to submitting an application”. Presumably this only applies to applications made during the lifetime of an IRC Laureate award?

Yes, this only applies to applications made during the lifetime of an IRC Laureate award.

Regarding ethics approval point in the online system, we cannot guarantee ethics approval at the time of the application. We will ensure that applicants apply for ethics approval, where required, and that approval is in place at the time of the award.

Ethical approval is not required at the time of application. As stated in section 4.2.3 where a Laureate’s research proposal requires approval by the Host Institution Ethics Committee or equivalent committee, written evidence of such ethical approval is required by the Council within six months of the commencement date of the award. At the application stage, applicants are required to complete an ethics self-assessment table. The self-assessment table in the online system must be completed even if there are no issues (simply confirm that none of the ethical issues apply to the proposal). Please note that, in case an applicant answer YES to any of the questions, they are requested to provide a statement (not ethical approval) on ethical issues to be addressed.

What happens when a PI goes on Mat Leave, is the period of leave extended at the end, or how does that work?

As with the Council’s other PI-led programmes, if the Principal Investigator goes on maternity leave during the project, the PI can request a no-cost extension to extend the project.

We note the requirement for applicants to send their PhD cert along with their application, and that if it is in a foreign language it needs to be translated. Are there any requirements for this translation? i.e does it need to be a certified translation? Also if the cert is in Latin, does it need to be translated?

Copies of official documents, e.g. PhD degree certificate, can be submitted in any of the EU languages. Supporting documentation submitted in any language other than English must be accompanied by a certified translation in English. (Section 4.2.4 Terms and Conditions). If the certificate is in Latin, there is no requirement to translate it.

Will Starters and Consolidators be able to apply to the next round of the call or will it be limited to Advanced applicants?

It is intended that the next iteration of the call will be limited to Advanced applicants. In the context of further funding being secured from the Department to grow the programme as intended, the Council will be prioritising an Advanced Laureate Award in the next round of call. This will be available to researchers from the mid-career stage onwards.

My query is regarding portability of the award: does this imply that the applicant may move institution on award to carry out the research OR that a successful applicant may move between institutions over the course of the research?

It can mean either – an applicant may move institutions in order to carry out the award or during the course of the award, a Laureate award holder may move institutions. Awards are held by individual researchers and will be portable within the Republic of Ireland, subject to conditions and approval of the Irish Research Council.

Is there a minimum time commitment the PI must commit to the Laureate project?



Laureate award holders are expected to devote appropriate time and effort as Principal Investigator to successfully complete the Irish Research Council Laureate award. However, there is no prescribed minimum time commitment and it is at the discretion of the applicant to determine the appropriate time and effort required to successfully complete the project. As part of the application process, applicants have to outline their current research and funding commitments and the applicant must have the capacity to carry out the project as proposed.

If a PI goes on maternity leave, how is it expected that the project is to be managed, especially the management and direction of the PhD/Postdoctoral team?

If the Principal Investigator goes on maternity leave during the project, the PI can request a no-cost extension to extend the project. It is the responsibility of the PI and the Host Institution to make the necessary arrangements in relation to the management of the project.

In terms of evaluation of the scientific approach as per page 28 of the guidance document is there only one element of scientific approach evaluated in phase 1 i.e 'To what extent is the scientific approach as outlined feasible having regard to the extent to which the proposed research is high risk/high gain (based on the Extended synopsis)?

Yes, only one element of the scientific approach will be evaluated in step 1 of the evaluation process.

Is there a weighting between the three sections in the 'Detailed Project Description'? How much is each section - 'State of the art and objectives', 'Methodology' and 'Resources' - worth in terms of the marks/percentages? Will evaluators be scoring each section separately and if so, how these scores will be allocated?

No, there is no weighting between the three sections in the 'Detailed Project Description'. Excellence is the sole criterion of evaluation for the Irish Research Council Laureate Awards programme. The criterion will be applied to both the research project and the applicant. Please see section 5.4 of the Terms and Conditions for more information about the evaluation criteria.

Data Management – does this mainly refer to the open repository?

No, data management does not mainly refer to the open repository. For the purposes of the Laureate Awards programme, applicants are required to address the data management needs of their research project. A Data Management Plan is a **key element** of good data management. Applicants are advised to consult the list of resources provided in Appendix 2 of the terms and conditions for more information about Data Management Plans.

I am wondering if it is possible to use this grant to pilot a study in Ireland and also in some other EU countries (for example validating a tool in Ireland but also in other EU countries that have worked with me on an EU bid)? If not, could I run a pilot study with expertise coming in from colleagues elsewhere (and pay for their travel/ time etc.?)

I am keen to use funding to work on preparatory work for a larger EU grant (such as ERC Synergies).

This is not the purpose of the Laureate Awards Programme, i.e. to use this grant to pilot a study in Ireland. As is stated in the Call, one of the key objectives of the programme is to enhance frontier basic research in Irish research-performing organisations, across all disciplines. The scheme is aimed at individual applicants rather than joint proposers. No more than one applicant can be named on an application. However, an applicant may include provision for team membership or collaboration of researchers from other institutions and organisations, including both national and international participation. The



added value of any collaboration must be strongly demonstrated. However personnel costs may not be allocated outside the host institution.

ENDS

Irish Research Council

14 June 2017