



## 2016 Research for Policy and Society

### Frequent Asked Questions (FAQs)

Version 6 [25/10/16]

Please note that the deadline for receipt of FAQs is **16:00 (GMT) Friday 21<sup>st</sup> October 2016**. FAQs must be submitted no later than this date.

Similar questions have been grouped below in the following themes:

1. Eligibility
2. Eligible costs
3. Applying to the scheme
4. Research for Policy & Society Strands

### 1. ELIGIBILITY

Am I correct in assuming that it is only the projects on p. 3 of the T&C document that are eligible for funding? For example, I have had discussions with the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform on a research project on public sector leadership – is it possible to submit a project in this area now under the RESEARCH FOR POLICY & SOCIETY AWARDS that is currently open? If not, how do strands/project areas get selected for the scheme as it is something I would like to consider next year should the scheme run again?

I have a research issue relating to a government agency/department that is not listed as one of the participants in the 2016 call. Will other agencies be joining?

The Irish Research Council will only fund projects addressing the one of the topics included in the Terms and Conditions. The Irish Research Council will continue to engage with potential strategic partners for future funding rounds of this funding scheme.

The Terms and conditions document states: 'applicants ....must already hold a contract of sufficient duration to carry out the term of the award' does this apply to fractional part-time as well as full-time appointments?

Yes. Part-time staff may apply to the New Horizons and Research for Policy & Society Calls. In both cases the duration of the staff member's contract must cover the period of the proposed research. All applicants must ensure in advance of application that his/her employment contract allows for a research grant to be held, and in applying for either Call applicants are confirming same. Similarly, the research office in endorsing an application is confirming that should the applicant be successful, the contractual arrangements and/or institutional policy will enable a successful applicant to take up the award. It should be noted that the same eligibility criteria apply to part-time staff regarding personnel costs as full-time staff. In particular, applicants who are part-time should note that project costs cannot be sought to 'top-up' the applicant's existing contract.

Can you clarify if a PhD is a mandatory requirement? Are there circumstances where equivalent experience applies - specifically in the case of a permanent university academic with more than 30 years' experience?

As per the Terms and Conditions the applicant must hold a PhD.

Please clarify how long I must have been in possession of my doctoral degree in order to be eligible to apply? Can a person who obtains his/her PhD between now and closing date apply?



You must have been awarded your doctoral degree no later than 1st November 2014. For this condition, the date of graduation should be taken into account.

I am a full Professor without a PhD, having been conferred with said title on the basis of equivalent-level experience and publications. Am I eligible to apply for the Research FOR Policy and Society scheme?

Applicants without a PhD who hold the title of full Professor are deemed eligible to apply for research for Policy and Society awards. The Professorship will have been awarded no later than 1st November 2014. The date on which the title was awarded/conferred should be included on the online template where date of PhD award is requested.

Does an applicant with an MD meet the requirement for a PhD?

Can an applicant with multiple qualifications such as MB BCh, PG Master's in medical science and FRCPsych, and who holds a contract with a research performing organisation be considered to have met the requirement for a PhD?

For the purposes of this scheme, applicants with the qualifications set out above, but without a PhD are not eligible. In future iterations of this programme, the Council will review the issue of PhD equivalence.

Do I have to submit an Expression of Interest (deadline 4pm, Friday, 30<sup>th</sup> September 2016) in order to apply to the programme?

Yes, failure to submit an Expressions of Interest form by the stated deadline will render your application automatically ineligible. The purpose of the Expressions of Interest form is to assist the Council in sourcing suitable reviewers in a timely manner.

I submitted an expression of interest form by the deadline, can I now submit an additional form for a second, related proposal?

No, it is not possible to submit an additional expression of interest form now, as the deadline has passed.

I was in receipt of New Foundations funding in 2015, does this mean I cannot apply for the Research for Policy and Society grant in 2016?

You can still apply, being in receipt of New Foundations funding does not exclude you from this call.

Are Humanities researchers invited to submit applications under strand 5 "Open Call for research to address national societal challenges"?

Yes, Humanities researchers are welcome to submit applications under this strand.

What details can be changed between submission of an expression of interest and a final application?

The name of the applicant and the subject area cannot be changed between submission of an expression of interest form and the final application. The title of the project can be changed.

## 2. ELIGIBLE COSTS

**\*\*NEW\*\*** Is the provision of monetary incentives when conducting survey based data collection an eligible cost related to a research project?

Monetary incentives can be included as an eligible cost and must be robustly justified. The cost per voucher should not exceed €50.

Can you please advise if costs for outsourcing data collection / conducting survey are deemed eligible? If so, can you please advise where would these costs fit into the budget?



No, the cost of outsourcing data collection/conducting surveys is not eligible. However, applicants may apply for teaching buyout, up to a certain maximum, as well as postdoctoral and research assistance costs.

**\*\*NEW\*\*** On the New Horizons call, strand 6, is proof reading an eligible cost, and if so what category does it fall under?

As per the terms and conditions, all costs sought under an application must be detailed and justified. Applicants must clearly demonstrate that any costs sought are necessary to carry out the proposed research programme and that such facilities are not available to the researcher(s) via any other means. Demonstration of value for money is an important consideration under the evaluation and assessment process. Applicants should ensure that their budget calculations are correct and adhere to the eligible costs set out in the terms and conditions. Depending on what will be proof read, e.g. articles or outputs arising from the research, the applicant could justify including the cost under 'Dissemination'.

Eligible staffing rates – I have to use the IRC staff rates for academic replacements and my institution's researcher salary scale for research assistants and postdoctoral researchers. Is this correct?

Yes. For the 2016 call, there are some changes to the eligible staffing rates:

**For academic replacements (buy-out):** costs may include staff-replacement costs which facilitate participation in the project, but these must be clearly justified. All staff replacements ('buy-out' costs) must be accounted for according to approved Irish Research Council staff rates (see Section C of Terms and Conditions) for academic replacements

**For research assistants and postdoctoral researchers:** HEIs can use their own institutional researcher salary scale for research assistants and postdoctoral researchers. These costs must be clearly justified in the application form. The salary requested must include provisions for PRSI 10.75% & Employer Pension Contribution 20%. As part of the award acceptance process, the research office must confirm that the requested salary is in line with the institutional researcher salary scale and provide documentary evidence

**\*\*NEW\*\*** The question I have is if we recruit a new researcher and take on for 18 months only, that person would not qualify for pension entitlement. You need to have 24 months service to qualify. What then happens to the accrued pension provision that would not be required? Does the researcher reallocate this or return the unspent portion to the IRC? Is there a requirement to factor in an employer pension knowing that upfront the position is for 18 months only?

The applicant should factor in the pension contribution for the postdoctoral fellow and the unspent portion is then returned to the IRC at the end of the project. It is not possible to use this funding for any other purposes.

### 3. APPLYING TO THE SCHEME

Looking at the form and terms and conditions, it looks as though everything is dependent on the PI. Is there scope for a co-investigator or research team approach?

No. As per the Terms and Conditions a sole applicant may apply to this scheme but they may apply for funding for a postdoctoral researcher and/or a research assistant for their project.

Can I invite a colleague to act as an Associate Investigator, and allocate some funds in the budget towards teaching buyout for that colleague?

No, Associate Investigators may not be included in applications.



The terms & conditions document says a sole applicant can only make one application. What about a team of applicants? Is it possible for a person to apply to one strand as a PI and to another as a member of a research team?

As per the Terms and Conditions an applicant can only apply to a single strand within Research for Policy & Society.

I am a pharmacist/medical doctor, can I be considered an AHSS researcher in order to apply under the Teaching and Learning strand?

The list of disciplines are indicative. It is a matter for researchers to evidence their capability to lead as an AHSS researcher, even if the qualification of the intending applicant is science based.

What is the role of the strategic funding partner in framing the topic(s) to be researched?

The SFP provides information on a topic or topics that it would like to see researched. This can be standalone information for the purposes of the Call or, as has happened in the past, the SFP's research strategy (if available) could be used to frame its research needs. Either way, the information is provided by the SFP to the IRC and the information is published by the IRC as part of the Call.

How is/are the strategic funding partner's topic(s) reflected in the Call?

Each SFP's topic(s) will be an identified strand within the Call. Applicants (i.e. researchers) select the strand they wish to submit a research proposal under, corresponding to their area of expertise.

How are proposals selected for funding?

Like all of the IRC's schemes, proposals submitted by researchers are evaluated by a panel of independent international experts on the basis of research excellence. Neither the IRC nor the SFP participates in the assessment or selection process. When the selection process is complete, the IRC will provide details to the SFP of proposals within its strand recommended by the panel, ranked where applicable.

What is the difference between research funded by a strategic funding partner under this Call and contract research?

The RfPS Call is not designed to replace or substitute for contract research. Research funded under RfPS 2016 will take place within an academic environment, will be subject to the Quality Assurance policies and procedures of the host institution, and will have a longer timeframe than typically applies for contract research. The scope for exploration of the subject matter, which will have been defined by the SFP, is broader under RfPS than would typically apply to contract research. Lastly, contract research tends to involve direct steering by the contracting agency of the approach and methodologies in the conduct of the research; this approach will not apply under RfPS.

Are consultants eligible to apply to carry out research under the Call?

Eligibility criteria will be set out in the Call Terms and Conditions. The criteria will include that applicants will be researchers employed by a HEI or other eligible RPO with an employment contract that encompasses the duration of the research proposed in the application. Eligible



researchers will be PhD-holders with a minimum of two years post-PhD research experience. Self-employed researchers or consultants (i.e. not employed by an eligible HEI) will not be eligible to apply under the Call.

How is the progress of funded projects monitored?

The IRC will collect progress reports from funded projects typically every six months. The Council will manage the monitoring and review process of all funded awards and submitted progress reports will, on request, be forwarded to the nominated SFP contact point.

What are the outputs of the funded research?

Funded projects will typically complete with the submission of a research report or working paper(s) to the strategic funding partner. Project leads are also expected to provide a presentation/briefing to the SFP on the research and its findings.

Are reports arising from the research published?

The Irish Research Council anticipates that research outputs from funded projects would be published, in accordance with the Council's Open Access Policy. However, it is recognised that SFPs may need a period of time to consider and absorb the findings and recommendations of any research output, including consideration of further research. It is expected therefore that the parties would discuss the timing of any publications or dissemination activities well in advance.

Are the respective roles and responsibilities of the IRC and the SFP formally agreed?

Yes, through a Memorandum of Understanding to be signed by both parties.

Do I approach the agency relevant to my application directly to propose a project?

No, there is no need to approach any of the agencies/bodies participating in the call during the application phase. The Irish Research Council is managing the application process.