



Irish Research Council Laureate Awards Programme 2018/19

Frequent Asked Questions (FAQs)

Version 1 [22/06/2018]

Please note that the deadline for receipt of FAQs is **16:00 (GMT) Thursday 5th July 2018**. FAQs must be submitted by Research Officers, no later than this date to laureate@research.ie. Queries submitted after this deadline will not be addressed.

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.

All questions are at present grouped under General Queries. The first of this week's new questions is highlighted in red.

1. General Queries

I had my viva in February 2001 and passed the viva at that point. However, for personal reasons, I did not attend the next conferring ceremony. It was not until 2008 that I realised that I had to attend a conferring ceremony or accept the award of the PhD in absentia, so that my PhD was only conferred in 2008.

Would I be eligible to apply for the Advanced Laureate Award? I have been working as a full time academic since 2001.

In such cases, if the applicant can provide a documentary evidence that he passed his viva earlier than the deadline, that will suffice.

- Are retired academics eligible to apply?
- How about Academics due to retire within the period of the award?
- How would the salary/buyout request be affected by the 2 instances above?

The eligibility of a retired academic to apply for the Advanced Laureate Call will depend on the HEI and not the Irish Research Council. As per the terms and conditions (Section 3.1 subsection (iii)) to be eligible the applicant should:

- 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.

Depending on the applicant's contract with the HEI the applicant can either apply for:

(i) **Replacement costs:** to alleviate the Laureate's commitments and facilitate their participation as Principal Investigator up to a maximum of €54,189 (IUA Salary Scale L2.5) (Irish Research Council Advanced Laureate Award 2018/19 Terms and condition Section 3.3.1 subsection i)

(ii) **Employment costs** for a new research contract of employment: Where hosting of the Laureate gives rise to a new research contract of employment, up to 100% of the Laureate's employment costs may be charged to the award for the duration of the award. In this regard, consideration must be given to sector salary norms and the overall budgetary requirements for a feasible research project, including the engagement of other research personnel. If a contribution to the Laureate's employment costs is being requested, the host institution must guarantee to fund the balance of the employment costs for the duration of the award (only applies if the Laureate is requesting less than 100% of their employment costs).

In these cases of a new research contract of employment, to charge 100% of the applicant's employment costs to the Laureate Award, the applicant must devote a minimum of 50% of their WTE to the research project. If their time commitment is less than 50%, the applicant's employment costs must be calculated on a pro rata basis. As per Section 3.1, please note that the minimum time commitment expected of any Laureate remains 25%.

Is an applicant eligible to apply for the Laureate if they have a track record spanning the last 20 years, but they were awarded a Litt.D Higher Doctorate in 2014? Does the IRC consider the Litt.D to be a PhD equivalent, and thus determine that the applicant has only 4 years of research experience post-PhD (making them ineligible)? Or, does the 20-year track record prevail (making them eligible)?

The Council does recognise the Litt.D as a PhD equivalent, but the 20 years track record prevails in terms of making the candidate eligible provided the appropriate section is signed on the Host Institution Letter of Support.

The IRC is a four year project, beginning at the latest 31st May. Doctoral students take four years to complete and usually begin in September. How will that work? Will they not receive a full four years of funding or will it be possible to have a no-cost extension to cover the full duration of the PhD? It is highly unlikely that PIs can find doctoral students in the time between the notification of award and the start date.

To accommodate the Doctoral students, the PI can ask for a No Cost Extensions which will cover any delays with recruitment.



Is it OK to include chapters in edited books among publications rather than just articles and monographs, particularly for those in SSH disciplines?

It is permissible to use chapters in edited books among publications.

What is the PhD cut-off date for a potential applicant who has had three children since January 2004?

As per the terms and conditions of Irish Research Council Advanced Laureate Award, section 3.1 subsection (i):

In order to be eligible to apply for an Advanced Laureate award, applicants must have been awarded his or her first PhD (or equivalent doctoral degree):

- >15 years prior to 1 January 2019 (>17 years prior to 1 January 2019 if holding a medical degree**): Cut-off date: 1 January 2004 (inclusive)

So, in this respect any applicant with more than 15 years of research experience should be eligible for application. The Irish Research Council recommends a strong track record of 10 out of the last 15 years (broken or unbroken). The career breaks due to the birth of a child should be noted in the relevant section of their CV to account for any periods of reduced research activity.

Can a candidate who submitted to the Consolidator Laureate call, bringing their maternity leave into consideration to be eligible for Consolidator, now apply for the Advanced Laureate? The candidate is 15 years post-PhD but their maternity leave deemed them eligible for Consolidator Laureate at the time.

Yes, as per the terms and conditions (Section 3.1) the candidate is eligible to apply.

Are collaborators permitted/encouraged and, if permitted, what is allowed in terms of collaborator finances i.e. can any of the award be used by collaborator(s)?

Collaborators are permitted and encouraged. The Advanced Laureate Awards are single beneficiary for the Principal Investigator (PI), but collaborators can belong to the same Host Institution or other research structures, established in the same or different country, including non-EU third countries. The collaborating partners are not eligible for the Salary replacement costs, but all other eligible costs described in Section 3.3 of the Terms and Conditions of the programme are eligible. Provided the PI fulfils their obligations and time commitment to the project, they may distribute resources to third parties. These expenses should be justified, integral to the success of their proposal and the PI should perform due diligence to ensure best value is obtained.

With regard to letters of support, what if the applicant is a/the Head of Centre/Department/Faculty/School/Institute in which he/she is or will be based?



In instances where the applicant is the appropriate signatory for the letter of support for the research centre in which they will be based, the letter should be signed by the VP of Research.

If proposed projects are inter- or multi-disciplinary (with regard to the indicated Panel Domains, Primary Areas and Disciplines), where should/could this be explicitly stated within the application?

The cross-disciplinary nature of the project should be illustrated in the keywords and free text keywords fields of the application.

Is there any flexibility in the project start date of 31st of May for an Advanced Laureate award? Would it be possible to defer the start date by 3 months to allow for completion of another grant?

The Start date of the awards have been changed from 31st May to 9th September 2019. The new terms and conditions are now available on our [website](#).

According to the Terms and Conditions, *“All Laureates must be based 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”*

Does an applicant have to be based full time i.e. 100% FTE in the proposed Irish HEI?

According to the terms and conditions of the Advanced Laureate Awards Section 3.1 (iii) 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.

This would imply that the HEI should provide the applicant with a suitable contract (either 100% FTE or less) which would enable the applicant to successfully complete the Laureate award. However, the maximum level of replacement costs cannot be sought from the project for applicants who do not have a full-time contract.

“Laureates are expected to spend a minimum of 25% of their time working on the project. In cases where a new research contract of employment arises as a result of obtaining a Laureate Award, and the Laureate wishes to charge their full employment costs to the award, their minimum time commitment to the project must be 50%”



In the event of a new contract of employment arising and an institution charging 100% of the applicant's full employment costs to a budget, does the IRC have any requirements as to what the other 50% of the applicants' time should be spent on in the HEI in question? I am imagining with this question a scenario that the applicant chooses to spend 50% of their time on the project for the full project duration.

The Irish Research Council does not have any special requirements regarding the remainder of the 50% time for the applicant. This is a matter for the institution.

A number of worked examples are provided (example a-c) on pg. 13. In each of the cases the maximum eligible cost for the project is outlined depending on how much time the applicant will spend on the project

Bearing in mind that pg. 12 states '*If a contribution to the Laureate's employment costs is being requested, the host institution must guarantee to fund the balance of the employment costs for the duration of the award*' then can we assume that it is a requirement of the HEI in question to pay the balance of the salary i.e. in example 'a' the HEI would have to pay €10,913 to bring the applicant's salary up to 100% FTE or €109,128?

According to the terms and conditions of the Advanced Laureate awards, in cases where a Laureate award leads to a new contract of employment (Section 3.3.1 (ii)) and the applicant has requested less than 100% of their employment costs from the project, salary contributions can be requested depending on the applicant's time commitment to the project. If their time commitment is less than 50%, the applicant's employment costs must be calculated on a pro rata basis.

In such instances the HEI is expected to fund the balance of the employment costs for the duration of the award. Hence according to the example, the HEI would have to pay €10,913 to bring the applicant's salary up to 100% FTE.

Can an applicant who is currently employed by the HEI but will retire during the award apply for buyout for an initial portion of the award and switch to contribution costs for a new research contract once he/she retires? From the T&C I understand that buyout and salary contributions are mutually exclusive, but a few potential applicants will retire soon, and I am not sure of how else it could work.

The two costs will remain mutually exclusive and cannot be applied for at the same time. However, in instances like this, the Council will permit applicants to switch from buyout to salary contributions as they retire provided the applicant and host institution adhere to the Laureate programme's Terms and Conditions, in particular:

2.2.1. Application to the European Research Council (ERC)

It is a condition of holding an Irish Research Council Advanced Laureate award that a follow-on application is made by the awardee to the ERC for an Advanced Grant. Ideally this will occur prior to the end of the Laureate award, but no later than within one year of the award end-date or next available ERC call deadline where this does not occur within one year of the end of the Laureate award. In fulfilling this condition, awardees are not expected to apply to ERC within the first 24 months of the Laureate award. 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.

2.2.2. Who can apply for an Irish Research Council Laureate Award?

Researchers based in Ireland or anywhere in the world may apply to the Irish Research Council Laureate Awards programme. Awards must be held at an eligible higher-education institution or research performing organisation in Ireland.⁵ *Applications may be made in any of field of research.*

6.3. Responsibilities of the Host Institution (HEIs/RPOs)

Irish Research Council grants are awarded to the host institution on the basis that the host will provide the appropriate conditions²⁴, (including the 'portability' of the grant) for the Laureate to independently manage the research. By agreeing to host the Laureate, the host institution commits to ensuring that s/he is able to:

- Manage the research and the funding for the project including making appropriate resource allocation decisions;
- Have access to the appropriate space and facilities for conducting the research;
- Supervise the work of team members including postgraduate research students;
- Publish independently as a main author and include co-authors who have contributed substantially to the reported work;
- Apply for funding independently.

In addition, the host institution must obtain and comply with all necessary and statutory permissions laid down by local and national authorities in relation to protecting the environment, preventing pollution and ensuring wider societal health and safety protection.

In summary, the applicant must have the support of the host institution throughout the Laureate award and in their submission of an application to the ERC.

Can people close to retirement age apply given the requirement to submit to the ERC by which time they will likely be retired?

People close to retirement age may apply, it will be up to the host institution to indicate their support of the applicant (and by proxy demonstrate their support for the applicant making a submission to the ERC) by signing the relevant Letter of Support. The penalty for Laureate awardees who do not make a submission to the ERC are outlined in Section 2.2.1 and 6.2.

Can I apply to the IRC Laureate Advanced grant call if I hold an SFI Investigator award, or plan an application to the SFI Investigator call later in 2018?

Applicants can apply for or hold an SFI Investigator award provided the projects are distinct and it does not constitute double funding.

In relation to the 2000 character-limit on the expression of interest form, can you please clarify if this limit is inclusive or exclusive of spaces?



As with the Lay summary and Abstract of the indicative application form, the 2000 character-limit on the expression of interest form is inclusive of line breaks and spaces.

The eligibility criteria for the ALA scheme states that an applicant should match one or more of the criteria listed, including '2 major research monograph(s) and any translations thereof'. The expected profile document lists this as: '2 major research monographs, of which at least one is translated into another language.'

If an AHSS applicant has 2 monographs (and several book chapters) but none of these have been translated, are they ineligible to apply?

The translation of a Monograph is a preferred criterion, but not mandatory. The absence of a translated monograph will not make the applicant ineligible to apply.

At what stage will the application portal open for Advanced Laureate Call? If an applicant wishes to apply should their research office get in touch with the laureate team to open the Smart Simple portal for them? Or is it only after the receipt of the Expression of Interest form will the portal be open?

The online submission portal is under construction, we are working with the Smart Simple team to fine tune some details. We hope to get it ready as soon as possible. If an applicant intends to apply they have to submit an Expression of Interest (EoI) form to us via the research office. The online system is not tied to the EoI but to be eligible the applicant must submit the EoI by 4pm 20th June 2018 through their respective research office.

Do an applicant's 10 publications listed in Laureate application need to strictly align to the field of the research proposal outlined?

It is preferable to align the publications with the field of research outlined in their proposal. This will provide evidence to the reviewers that the researcher is capable of completing the research. However, given that we are inviting proposals for blue skies research and discovery which may be tangential to the researcher's field, this may not always be possible. Therefore, the publications do not need to strictly align to the field of research proposed, but applicants should attempt to address this potentially perceived shortcoming in their proposal.

If a Laureate applicant is unable to locate their PhD graduation certificate, can they upload a pdf of their certified PhD transcript instead?

If an applicant is unable to provide a PhD certificate, then a certified PhD transcript will be acceptable as a proof of eligibility.

Footnote 19 on page 23 of the Ts and Cs doc states: '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 a school structure in our university, and the Faculty Heads didn’t feel it was appropriate for them to do this last year.

For the Letter of Support, we will accept the signature of the Head of the Department or Research Institute where the research will be performed.

(ii) Track record....Principal Investigators are expected to demonstrate a record of achievements appropriate to the field by matching one or more of the following:

.. 10 publications as main author (or in those fields where alphabetic order of authorship is the norm, joint author) in major international peer-reviewed, multidisciplinary journals and/or in the leading international peer-reviewed journals and peer reviewed conferences proceedings of their respective field;

Is ‘main author’ referring to the last name on a publication?

The order of the names on a publication varies from discipline to discipline, hence why we say main author.

In the context of your question, we believe you are referring to the naming convention that is prevalent in many fields, where the primary author of the publication is the first name, and the mentor/supervisor takes the last name on the publication. In this case, main author refers to the first name. It is understandable that at an advanced career stage, researchers may produce more publications where they are the last name on the publication. They may also be considered a main author of these publications and therefore it is appropriate to list these in the track record document.

As per the FAQ document (page 3, question 4), it is clear that staff costs for collaborating partners are eligible, with the exception of the PI salary replacement costs. Can you please confirm that it is OK to use the collaborating partner institution’s salary rates for Postdocs/technicians in these cases? For example, if the project involved employing a postdoc/technician at the collaborating institution outside Ireland, we cost it according to the salary rates at that institution and not according to the IUA salary scales which are only applicable in Ireland.

Collaborating partner institution’s may use their respective salary rates for Postdocs/Technicians where the IUA scales do not apply.

In relation to the equipment budget for the laureate call:

- Is there a cap on the equipment budget total?
- Would a particularly high equipment budget affect the competitiveness of the call during the review process? Or is the equipment amount irrelevant so long as the overall budget is under 1 million and the equipment costs are sufficiently justified?

1. There is no cap on equipment in the budget.

2. We will accept the application provided the application is below the overall budget of €1m. Budget’s will be scrutinised by panel members. Due consideration should be given to the Terms and Conditions.



In light of this query, we are revising our Terms and Conditions (Section 3.4) to add clarity.

“Small equipment of a value of less than €1,000 should be included in the materials and consumables section, with the exception of computer equipment.

For equipment costs, provide details and justification for any small items of equipment being sought. The Council will pay particular attention to any equipment sought (e.g. laptops, voice recorders, etc.). Any such requests will require a strong rationale and an account of why such items might not be already available to an applicant or fundable from core budgets.

All Equipment must be acquired, in compliance with all National and EU procurement guidelines, at the most cost-effective price and upon the most competitive terms having regard to the needs of the Laureate Research Programme in relation to economy, time, and quality, and without any conflict of interest.

Details of all requested equipment necessary for the research programme should be itemised and the rationale for why it must be purchased (i.e. access to it is not currently available to the applicant) should be included.

In the event of an equipment item which costs in excess of €50,000, the quote number and cost must be included in the budget justification. Quotations should also be available for services costing in excess of €50,000. Documentation supporting such quotations must be kept in a manner and form that will meet audit requirements and such documentation must be made available to the Council on request.

The financial elements of proposals will be considered as part of the assessment process.”

Is it possible to include letters of support from experts and/or collaborators as part of the Laureate proposal?

No additional documents apart from the ones requested in the Terms and conditions will be admissible as part of the Laureate proposal.

An applicant has funding available from a Centre which they are affiliated to which they would like to use to supplement the budget for their Laureate project. This funding would cover some of the consumables cost associated with the project. Is it permissible to supplement the Laureate budget with another source of funding? Does the additional source of funding need to be confirmed as part of the application?

Applicants are permitted to supplement the budget using external funding sources. The details should be explained in the ‘Resources’ section of the ‘Detailed Research Proposal’. The additional source of funding does not need to be confirmed as part of the application, but applicants should be cognisant that they must confirm all information supplied in the application is true prior to submission.

Does the €54,189 link to the time commitment of the project e.g. if a Laureate awardee is dedicating 30% of their time to the project, are they limited to 30% of the €54,189?



As the Laureate candidate being replaced will be a senior member of staff, is it possible to allow for a larger portion of the budget to be made available due to the fact that they will be replaced by a postdoctoral researcher.

As stated in Section 3.3.1 of the Terms and Conditions, yes, the €54,189 is linked to the time commitment of the applicant to the Laureate Award project. If they are dedicating 30% of their time to the project, they are limited to 30% of the €54,189. The only exception to this is where the applicant is receiving a new research contract of employment as stated in Section 3.3.1. This will be strictly assessed during eligibility checks.

The ERC is not a collaborative grant and if collaborators are included on an ERC project, their role is usually quite focused. One of the FAQs for the Laureate call states that collaboration is encouraged. Does the Laureate differ from the ERC in the way it views collaboration?

The Laureate Awards are similar. While collaboration is encouraged, the award is in the Laureate's name and collaborators should only be included to complete focused bodies of work. The majority of the proposal should be completed by the Principal Investigator and this will be taken into account by the panel at Stage 2 of the evaluation process. To cover the costs of collaboration, the Laureate Awards have been designed to be flexible. To that end, collaborator costs are subject to the same guidelines in Section 3.4 of the Terms & Conditions, except that salary replacement costs are not permitted i.e. they may expense consumable costs, travel costs or hire personnel, but they may not buy out their time.

An applicant is based within one Department but will need to carry out the research under a different Department. As the applicant is constrained by the grant to give 25% of their time (or even possible teaching buy outs), is the applicant required to provide a Letter of Support from the Department in which they would normally be based, or is it sufficient to provide a letter from the other Department which will be providing the research support? Or, in such a case, should the applicant seek two Letters of Support – one from each Department?

Only the Letter of Support from the Department providing the research support is necessary.

If a candidate was to submit an EOI from one institution, then moved, would they be able to submit the full application from their new institution.

The applicant should contact the research office of the new institution and if possible, they should submit an EOI with the new institution's support. If this is not possible, the applicant should first submit an EOI with their current institution. In circumstances where they move institution after the EOI deadline, but before the application submission deadline, the applicant may submit their full application from their new institution. In these cases, the new institution's research office must submit a letter on headed paper (soft-copy acceptable) confirming their support of the applicant to laureate@research.ie prior to the application submission deadline.

Similarly, if they were awarded the laureate in one institution and then moved, I presume the award is portable and they could bring it to their new institution.



The awards are retained by the Laureate and are fully portable if they move institution.

Is it required to include CVs for collaborators as part of the Laureate proposal?

No, the CV of collaborators will not be required as part of the proposal.

There is no space for a project title in the Advanced Laureates Expression of Interest form. Should this be included in the Abstract (and within the 2000 characters), or perhaps you don't need a title?

We don't need a title at the EoI stage. This was omitted intentionally so that applicants are free to come up with a title at a later stage.

Are certified translations required for PhD certificates which are written in Latin (including the PhD award-date)?

As stated in the terms and conditions in Section 4.2.4, supporting documentation submitted in any language other than English must be accompanied by a certified translation in English.

In some cases, here, PIs do not have access to their PhD certificates and will instead be using Section E of the institutional letter of support to meet the eligibility criteria. Do they need to let you know in advance?

Applicants do not need to let us know in advance if they will instead be using Section E of the institutional letter of support. Each case will be reviewed during internal eligibility testing.

The cap on the replacement costs is €54,189. This is for post doc researcher on point 5. Can this be increased in years 2-4 to allow for the future IUA increments published?

Yes, the Council welcomes the inclusion of increments as it is best practice provided it is in line with the Host Institution's policies.

If as part of a Laureate project interviews will be held with a small number of members of a local community group, can an incentive be provided to these people in any form (eg. gift vouchers)? Can their travel expenses be included in the budget?

Reasonable travel and refreshment costs for subjects and volunteers in studies are permitted, but incentives (such as cash or gift vouchers) for participation are not considered eligible costs.

This has now been updated in the Terms and Conditions - Section 3.4 Eligible costs.

Should the CV and Track Record be Arial, black font, at least font size 11, the same as for the Detailed Research Proposal?

Given there may be stylistic differences in how applicants wish to present their CV and Track Record documents, there is no restriction on font, font colour or font size for these documents.

Can a PhD student be costed for 4 years or is this limited to 3?

Yes, a PhD student may be costed for 4 years.



When using the IUA scales do they have to be the current scale (Jan 2018) or can we use the projected scales that the IUA have published to cover up to October 2020?

The Council welcomes the use of the projected scales and the use of increments provided it is in line with the Host Institution's policies.

The Advanced Laureate call is for "frontier basic research". Basic science is variously taken to refer to non-human or pre-clinical or laboratory-based work. (a) How is this defined in relation to disciplines that do not fall within the traditional lab-based science disciplines e.g. social science? (b) Does applied or clinical health research fall within the scope of "basic" research as per the IRC guidelines?

In relation to "frontier basic research" what the Council wishes to imply is any research that pushes the boundaries of our understanding and leads to new knowledge, be it in the field of science (including medicine and engineering), human behaviour (social science, politics, law), history or literature. It can be either interdisciplinary in its approach, where ideas from different fields are brought together to gain new knowledge. Or it can be fundamental in nature which challenges the basic principles and understanding of the field.