

## 2024 Government of Ireland Postgraduate Scholarship Programme Frequently Asked Questions

FAQs will be published every Thursday until 05 October 2023.

New questions will be marked **\*\*New\*\***

Updated questions will be marked **\*\*Updated\*\***

Questions are grouped under the following headings:

1. Eligibility
2. Applying to the programme
3. Conditions of award

### 1. Eligibility

**A potential applicant has earned a 2.2 bachelor's degree from a university in the past; however, they have since been awarded a first-class (1.1) Higher Diploma from an Irish institution. According to Irish NFQ standards, a Higher Diploma and an Honours bachelor's degree are both listed as level 8. As such, is this student eligible thanks to their 1.1 Higher Diploma?**

As per the Call Document, *'All applicants must have a first class or upper second-class honours bachelor's, or the equivalent, degree', and 'Host institutions are expected to be guided by QQI and the NFQ in terms of the recognition and equivalence of a degree.'*

According to Irish NFQ standards, a higher diploma and an honours bachelor's degree are both listed as level 8. As such, the applicant in question is eligible as a result of their first-class higher diploma.

**According to the guide, applications will be deemed ineligible if *"the research project as proposed in the application form has previously been funded either in full, or in part, by the Irish Research Council or any other funding agency"*. A potential applicant is currently receiving external funding for a Research Master's and is looking to transfer it to a PhD and apply for the scholarship to fund the PhD. Can you please confirm if this is permitted, or would they be deemed ineligible due to their Master's being externally funded?**

This clause applies to projects that have already been completed, not ongoing projects. Therefore, it does not apply to any applicants currently registered for a master's or PhD who wish to apply to the programme for funding to complete their degree, or to those who are transferring from a master's to a PhD.

**A potential applicant would like to apply for one year of funding as they are aiming to be transferred from a Master's to the structured PhD register this year. They first registered in September 2020, but due to COVID-19 pandemic they received HEA funding for a 12-month extension. Would they be eligible to apply for one-year funding, even though their first registration took place prior to the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2021?**

The IRC understands that some research degrees have been disrupted as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, applicants who have been granted formal extensions to their degrees due to the pandemic (whereby no additional fees were charged by their host institution) can apply for funding despite having registered for their degree prior to the dates listed in the Call Document.

The potential applicant is therefore eligible to apply for one year of funding provided that fees were not charged during the 12-month extension granted by their host institution. Evidence of the extension granted by their host institution will be required at the award offer stage. Failure to produce such evidence will result in the award offer being withdrawn.

Applicants are asked to clearly outline this information in the free text box corresponding to the degree that was extended in the 'track record' section of the application.

**Is it possible to apply without an English language certificate, for example IELTS, TOEFL, CAE?**

The IRC does not require English Language Certificates. However, you should check what (if any) are the English language requirements determined by the Irish higher education institution in which you will be enrolled for research master's or PhD.

**Is an application for a PhD by Artefact eligible under the terms and conditions of the GOIPG programme?**

**Are Professional Doctorates eligible under the terms and conditions of the GOIPG programme?**

The [National Framework for Doctoral Education](#) commits the key stakeholders in Irish graduate education and research to the highest standards in the provision of doctoral education and research. One of the principles of this framework is that the *successful completion and examination of the research thesis, comprising work of publishable quality, is the basis for the award of the doctoral degree. **The thesis can be presented in a variety of formats.***

Furthermore, according to the [Irish National Framework of qualifications](#) (NFQ), 'Doctoral programmes are between three and four years in duration (...) Varying doctoral programmes now exist, including professional and performance/practice-based doctorates'.

A PhD by Artefact or formats other than a monograph (e.g. publication; creative/performance practice) and Professional Doctorates are therefore eligible, as long as they are supported and

awarded by the host institution, and meet the principles of the framework and the NFAQ definition referenced above

**A potential applicant has applied twice to this scheme. The second time, the application was placed on the reserve list. As this application was deemed worthy of funding, can they apply again this year?**

As per the Call Document, applicants must not have had two previous unsuccessful applications to the relevant programme. If an application was initially on the reserve list and no award was subsequently made, this means that the status of the application was updated to *'unsuccessful'* on the system. If an applicant has had two unsuccessful applications, they are therefore deemed ineligible to apply again.

**\*\*New\*\***

**A potential applicant registered for a Structural Doctoral degree in January 2021 and had 6 months of documented sick leave during this period. Are they eligible to apply for this scheme?**

No, this applicant is not eligible to apply as they were able to conduct part of their degree (2 months) ahead of 01 September 2021. As per the Call Document, applicants with registrations to a Structured Doctoral Degree prior to 01 September 2021 are ineligible.

**\*\*New\*\***

**Is it possible for the Irish Research Council to award funding to a project in the area of fossil fuel research that examines improving fuel injector efficiency in heavy engines/turbines and that could eventually lead to improved environmental sustainability?**

Yes, such an area of research can be funded.

Please note that as per the Call Document, the Irish Research Council is not in a position to award funding for research activity under any of the following prohibited areas:

- human cloning for reproductive purposes;
- genetic modification of human beings that could make such changes heritable (with the exception of research relating to cancer treatment of the gonads, which may be funded); or
- creation of human embryos solely for the purpose of research or for the purpose of stem cell procurement, including by means of somatic cell nuclear transfer.

**\*\*New\*\***

**A PhD student registered for their Structured Doctoral Degree after 2021. Are they eligible to apply for 1 year of funding?**

As per the Call Document, section 7.1.2, applicants with registrations to a Structured Doctoral Degree prior to 01 September 2021 are ineligible. Applicants with registrations between 01 September 2021 and 31 August 2022 are eligible to apply for 1 year of funding. Applicants with

registrations between 01 September 2022 and 31 August 2023 are eligible to apply for a maximum of 2 years of funding. Lastly, applicants with registrations between 01 September 2023 and 31 August 2024 are eligible to apply for a maximum of 3 years of funding.

**\*\*New\*\***

**A PhD student registered for their Structured Doctoral Degree on the 15<sup>th</sup> of January 2019 and, after 17 months of maternity leave and an additional 8 months of HEA COVID extension, they are now in the fourth year of their PhD and their registration is due to finish on the 15<sup>th</sup> of February 2025. Are they eligible to apply?**

No. This applicant is not eligible to apply as they were able to conduct part of their degree (15 months) ahead of 01 September 2021. Additionally, exceptions to the eligibility criteria listed in section 7.1.2 are applied to those who received HEA funding for a 12-month extension. As per the Call Document, applicants with registrations to a Structured Doctoral Degree prior to 01 September 2021 are ineligible.

**\*\*New\*\***

**A PhD student completed year 1 of their PhD programme during 2022-2023. Owing to personal issues, the student has decided to suspend their registration for the AY2023-24 and hopes to resume their studies in September 2024. Is the student eligible to apply? What would be the eligible duration of funding?**

As per the Call Document, for applicants who have already completed part of the postgraduate degree for which they are seeking funding, **the duration of funding to be awarded is dependent on the type of degree being pursued and the date of first registration.**

If the student is pursuing a traditional doctoral degree, a registration prior to 01 September 2022 is ineligible, and a registration between 01 September 2022 and 31 August 2023 is eligible for 1 year of funding.

If the student is pursuing a structured doctoral degree, a registration prior to 01 September 2021 is ineligible, while a registration between 01 September 2021 and 31 August 2022 is eligible for 1 year of funding, and a registration between 01 September 2022 and 31 August 2023 is eligible for 2 years of funding.

Exceptions to the above dates of first registration may only be made for those who have taken an eligible career break from their degree programmes. Eligible career breaks include maternity leave, paternity leave, parental leave, adoptive leave, prolonged sick leave and carer's leave. Provision of documented evidence of an eligible career break will be required.

**2. Applying to the programme**

**Should the applicant be registered in a postgraduate course at an eligible HEI before applying for the scholarship?**

Applicants do not have to be a registered student at an eligible HEI before applying for a Government of Ireland Postgraduate Scholarship award.

**Can a research fellow, employed at the host institution act as the supervisor?**

No, postgraduate students must be primarily supervised by suitably qualified and experienced permanent members of academic staff at the host institution.

**Can applicants use in-text citations or footnotes with a bibliography as part of the application, and are these included in the word count?**

As per the indicative application form, supplementary information such as a bibliography can be uploaded in PDF format. Any information uploaded as part of the PDF will not be included in the word count. Please note that supplementary material should only include essential information required for the interpretation and understanding of the proposed research.

**Is a GANTT chart mandatory?**

GANTT charts are not compulsory, and applicants can submit their application without including one.  
Please note that we recommend applicants to review the “General Application Feedback” document before applying.

**Is there a limit to the number of files that can be uploaded as supplementary material, should they be uploaded as one PDF file and is there a file size limit (in Mb or Gb)?**

The supplementary material should include files such as a GANTT chart to illustrate the project timelines, milestones and deliverables, in PDF format. Supplementary information, e.g. diagrams or a bibliography, should ONLY include essential information required for the interpretation and understanding of the proposed research. Applications will be deemed ineligible and will not be considered for funding if they include additional information about the research proposal or applicant, such as CV. Gender should not be disclosed in any uploaded PDF files, e.g. use initials instead of first names if you have a publication listed in the bibliography.

More than one PDF file can be uploaded, being the total maximum file limit of 2GB.

Please note that, as per Call Document (section 8), an application will be deemed ineligible if it includes additional materials other than those requested and includes materials in a format other than those requested.

**In the *Research Achievements* section, can applicants include publications they have co-authored?**

All publications, single-authored and co-authored should be listed in the *Publications* section only.

**Are applicants prohibited from mentioning ethnicity?**

Applicants are not prohibited from mentioning ethnicity. However, we advise applicants, where possible, to not mention identifying criteria about them (name, gender etc.) as the Irish Research Council seeks to gender-blind the assessment process.

As such, profile information containing the name and gender of applicants is not provided to reviewers during the assessment process.

Supervisors are asked to use terms like “*the applicant*” rather than identifying the applicant in their reference forms. We would ask that applicants also not identify themselves in the application.

### **3. Conditions of award**

**Can students still apply to the call if they hold a SUSI grant?**

As per Terms and Conditions of the award, students can hold SUSI grant or any other awards as long as they do not exceed the amount of annual funding provided by the Irish Research Council in any given year.

**Are professional Doctorates supported by the Government of Ireland Postgraduate Scholarship Scheme?**

As per the Call Document, the Irish Research funds the following under the GOIPG scheme:

**7.1. Government of Ireland Postgraduate Scholarship Programme:**

7.1.1. An applicant who is a new entrant to the postgraduate degree for which they are seeking funding is eligible to apply for funding for the full duration of the degree as outlined below:

Degree type	Duration of funding to be awarded
Research master's degree	1 year
Structured research master's degree	2 years
Traditional doctoral degree	3 years
Structured doctoral degree	4 years

**Must a postgraduate supervisor have a PhD qualification in their own right or does a research track record qualify in lieu?**

A postgraduate supervisor does not need to have a PhD qualification, their research track record is assessed during the evaluation process. As indicated in the call document, the evaluation criteria include the suitability and ability of the supervisor(s) to provide adequate supervision; quality of infrastructure and facilities provided by the host institution; match between the applicant, supervisor(s) and the host institution.

Please note that as per assessors' comments in the General Application Feedback document, inexperienced supervisors/mentors can also mention in their primary supervisor's form, more senior colleagues who may assist them in their supervisory duty.

**Can an applicant apply to the Government of Ireland Postgraduate Scholarship Programme and submit the same project to the Enterprise Partnership Scheme (Postgraduate Scholarship)?**

Yes, an applicant can apply for both the Government of Ireland Postgraduate Scholarship Programme and the Enterprise Partnership Scheme (Postgraduate Scholarship). If successful in both programmes, an applicant can only accept one of the scholarships.

**For the Andrew Grene Postgraduate Scholarship in Conflict Resolution, would DFA accept an application with Ukraine as the focus?**

As per the 2024 Call Document, Andrew Grene Postgraduate Scholarship proposals should focus on at least one of Ireland's key partner countries and/or on specific countries supported by Ireland that are affected by conflict and fragility: Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Uganda, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Cambodia, Colombia, Laos, Myanmar, Palestine, Vietnam; Small Island Developing States.

**If successful, can an applicant register for their degree at both the eligible Irish institution listed in their application and another European institution?**

No. As per the Call document and the Terms and Conditions, all Government of Ireland Postgraduate Scholarship awardees must be registered and obtain their degree through an [eligible Irish Higher Education Institution or Research Performing Organisation](#).

**\*\*New\*\***

**If successful, can the applicant reside in another country that is not the Republic of Ireland for the duration of the award?**

As per the Terms and Conditions of the award, the awardee must maintain a physical presence within their department or school in their host organisation for the duration of the award, reside in the Republic of Ireland and within a reasonable travelling distance of the host organisation.