



## RESEARCHER OF THE YEAR AWARDS 2020 – GUIDELINES

### ABOUT

The Irish Research Council<sup>1</sup> (the Council) has opened its call for nominations for the 2020 Researcher of the Year awards. Now in their fourth year, these awards will commend the very best of our awardees and alumni who have made, or are making, highly significant and valuable contributions to knowledge, society or innovation. The nominations will be judged by an expert independent panel, whose decision will be final.

### AWARD CATEGORIES

Nominations are invited under three categories<sup>2</sup>:

- **Category one — Researcher of the Year**

One award will be made to a well-established and highly accomplished researcher currently working in an academic institution, who is, or has previously been, a named awardee of the Council<sup>1</sup>, and who has made an exceptional contribution to research in their field.

This category will be evaluated on the basis of substantiated examples of:

- > excellence in research — on the basis of research outputs, including published work; national and international acknowledgements; research awards secured;
- > demonstration of leadership in their field;
- > communication of their research; and
- > impact of their research on knowledge, society or innovation.

- **Category two — Early-Career Researcher of the Year**

One award will be made to an early-career researcher currently working in research in an academic institution, who is, or previously has been, a named awardee of the Council<sup>1</sup>, and who has demonstrated an exceptional level of achievement in their field at this stage in their career.

This category will be evaluated on the basis of substantiated examples of:

- > excellence in research — on the basis of track record appropriate to their career stage;
- > demonstration of potential to become a leader in their field;
- > communication of their research; and
- > potential to evolve into an inspiring role model for new researchers.

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<sup>1</sup> This includes the Council's predecessors, namely the Irish Research Council for Humanities and Social Sciences (IRCHSS) and the Irish Research Council for Science, Engineering and Technology (IRCSET).

<sup>2</sup> The Council reserves the right to make additional awards outside the three categories described in this document.

- **Category three — Impact Award**

One award will be made to an alumnus (former awardee) of the Council<sup>1</sup> who is making a highly significant impact outside of academia. Eligible alumni need not specifically be working in a research-driven role.

This category will be evaluated on the basis of substantiated examples of:

- > the impact of their work, nationally and/or internationally;
- > demonstration of leadership and a proven ability to make a difference; and
- > contribution of their work to knowledge, society or innovation.

The Campus Engage report, [Engaged Research: Society & Higher Education Addressing Grand Societal Challenges Together](#), illustrates the wide range of potential types of impact that may be considered here.<sup>3</sup>

## ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- Nominees under all three categories must be persons who, in their own name, applied for and received funding from the Council<sup>1</sup> under one or more of the following categories:
  - Postgraduate scholarship schemes
  - Postdoctoral fellowship schemes
  - Research project awards including all principal investigator-led awards, e.g. Laureate Awards, COALESCE, Research for Policy and Society, New Horizons.A past awardee of a Lindau Nobel Laureate Meeting Award, Creative Connections Award, New Foundations Award, Ulysses Award or similar travel award is eligible to apply **only** if they have also held one or more of the Council's research awards in their own name.
- Nominees from all disciplinary areas are encouraged.
- Nominees can be based anywhere in the world.
- Category 1 and 2 nominees must currently be based within academia.
- A completed PhD is not a requirement for Category 2 but is required of Category 1.
- Category 1 nominees must have successfully completed their PhD at least 8 years prior to 1 January 2021.
- Category 2 nominees must have successfully completed their highest postgraduate qualification no more than eight years prior to 1 January 2021<sup>4</sup>. This period of eligibility can be extended on the grounds of eligible career breaks<sup>5</sup>.
- Applicants to Category 2 at postdoctoral level or above must have an employment contract with the nominating institution (or another research performing institution abroad) at the time of application. Applicants to Category 2 at postgraduate level need to be hosted by the nominating institution (or another research performing institution abroad) at the time of application.
- Canvassing the Council or the adjudication panel is not permitted and will result in automatic disqualification.
- Current Council Board members may not be nominated.

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<sup>3</sup> Potential categories include economic, environmental, health and wellbeing, policy and/or product development, professional and public services, social and cultural, internationalisation, and capacity building impacts.

<sup>4</sup> For the purposes of this award, the date of conferring will be taken as the PhD or the highest postgraduate qualification completion date.

<sup>5</sup> Eligible career breaks include maternity leave, paternity leave, adoptive leave, prolonged sick leave and carer's leave (as set out in Appendix 1). Provision of documented evidence of an eligible career break will be required if an exception is to be requested.

## NOMINATION PROCESS

### Categories one and two

- Step one — Nominees
  - > Nominees must complete the relevant forms, available [here](#).
  - > The completed form should be sent to the designated Research Officer within their academic institution.
  - > Nominees not currently based in an Irish academic institution should forward their forms to the designated Research Officer at the academic institution where they held their Council<sup>1</sup> award.
- Step two — Academic institutions
  - > Academic institutions may submit nominations (one male and one female) under one or both categories. Academic institutions are required (where possible<sup>6</sup>) to maintain gender balance within *any* Category for which they wish to submit an application. Therefore, an academic institution may decide to enter a total of either 2 applicants (1 male and 1 female within the same Category) or 4 applicants (1 male and 1 female in each Category).
  - > The list of academic institutions eligible for funding from the Irish Research Council can be found [on our website](#).
  - > Research Officers should forward the nominee forms, together with the academic institution overview form (available [here](#)), to [rotya@research.ie](mailto:rotya@research.ie) no later than 4pm (Irish time) on 25 September 2020.

### Category three

- This Category is open for nominations by the organisation in which the individual currently works or by staff at the individual's current or former academic institution (e.g. academic supervisor or mentor, research office, alumni and career development office).
- Staff at academic institutions are encouraged to contact Council alumni to make them aware of this Category.
- Individuals may check the Council's Awardee database [here](#) to ensure the nominee is an alumnus of the Council.
- The nominator must complete the relevant form available [here](#).
- Gender balance is not a requirement of submissions made under Category 3.
- There is no limit to the number of nominations can be submitted under Category 3 by an academic institution; as stated above, nominations can also be made by the organisation in which the individual currently works.
- Applications should be emailed to [rotya@research.ie](mailto:rotya@research.ie) no later than 4pm (Irish time) on 25 September 2020.

## AWARD PRESENTATION

The awardees will be presented with a commemorative plaque in late 2020. Due to social distancing measures related to COVID-19, the exact format of the awards ceremony will not be confirmed until Autumn 2020. The winners will also be profiled through an extensive media and online communications campaign.

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<sup>6</sup> "Where possible" relates only to institutions that do not have eligible male *and* female candidates from whom to select their nominees. In such cases, the Council will exceptionally consider waiving the rule whereby 1 male *and* 1 female nomination must be made. These circumstances will be subject to verification by the IRC.

## IMPORTANT DATES

Call open	17 June 2020
FAQ deadline	18 September 2020
Nomination deadline	4pm (Irish time) 25 September 2020

If you do not find the answer to your query in the call documentation, you should contact the Research Office in your academic institution who will provide additional information. Research Officers can send any queries they are unable to clarify to [rotya@research.ie](mailto:rotya@research.ie).

## APPENDIX 1

The Council's allowance periods for eligible career breaks are:

- For **maternity leave**, the effective elapsed time since the award of first PhD (or the highest postgraduate qualification achieved) 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, or the highest postgraduate qualification achieved<sup>7</sup>.
- The effective elapsed time since the award of the first PhD (or the highest postgraduate qualification achieved) will be considered reduced by the documented amount of **paternity leave** actually taken for each child born after the first PhD award, or the highest postgraduate qualification achieved.
- For **adoptive leave**, the effective elapsed time since the award of first PhD (or the highest postgraduate qualification achieved) 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, or the highest postgraduate qualification achieved.
- For **parental leave/carer's leave**, the effective elapsed time since the award of the first PhD (or the highest postgraduate qualification achieved) will be considered reduced by the total documented time of leave actually taken by the applicant after the first PhD award, or the highest postgraduate qualification achieved.
- Verification for **long-term illness** must be provided in the form of a medical certificate. For long-term illness (over ninety days for the applicant or a close family member, i.e. child, spouse, parent, sibling), the effective elapsed time since the award of the PhD degree (or the highest postgraduate qualification achieved) will be considered reduced by the total documented amount of leave actually taken by the applicant after the first PhD award, or the highest postgraduate qualification achieved.
- Verification for **leave taken for clinical qualifications, military service or for other unavoidable statutory reasons** must be provided in an appropriate form. The effective elapsed time since the award of the PhD degree (or the highest postgraduate qualification achieved) will be considered reduced by the documented amount of leave actually taken by the applicant for each instance which occurred after the first PhD award, or the highest postgraduate qualification achieved.

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<sup>7</sup> A document confirming the maternity leave period from the relevant HR department(s) or a birth certificate is sufficient documentation.