

FAQs for Laureate Starting and Consolidator Awards 2021 (Second Round - 18/06/21)

This document includes FAQs from all previous rounds. New queries for the current week are headed in **orange**. Queries from all previous rounds are headed in **purple**.

Questions currently relate to the following headings:

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A. Eligibility for the call

Q: Am I eligible for a Starting Laureate Award if I am already employed in an independent position?

A: Yes, as long as you meet the eligibility criteria for a Starting Laureate Award as detailed in the Call Document ([here](#)), you may apply for a Starting Laureate Award. While the Starting grant aims to enable researchers who are “ready to work independently” (mirroring the ERC, [see here](#)), this also includes eligible persons who are at an early stage of their career (3-8 years post-PhD conferral, see [here](#)) who may have already transitioned to research independence.

Q: Are people not currently resident in Ireland eligible for a Laureate Awards programme grant?

A: Yes, as described in the call document ([here](#)), applicants need to be nominated by an [eligible Irish higher education institution](#), but do not need to be currently resident in Ireland. Successful applicants must ultimately carry out their research in their eligible nominated Irish higher education institution.

Q: Could you kindly confirm that internationally based, non-Irish citizen applicants are eligible to apply for the Consolidator Laureate Program, if applying with the support of an eligible Irish host institution? The language in the FAQ document suggests that location doesn't matter, but I wanted to clarify that foreign citizenship is not a barrier.

A: Internationally based and/or non-Irish citizens are eligible to apply. However, as described in the call document ([here](#)), applicants must be nominated by an [eligible Irish higher education institution](#) where they will carry out their research, if successful.

Q: I was conferred for my PhD on the 25th of November 2018. The eligibility criteria state that eligible candidates for Starting Laureate Awards must have had their PhD conferred before 10th of November 2018, which would make me ineligible. However, in a footnote, the call also states; '*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*'. Does this mean that only the conferral year is considered and not the exact date? Would this therefore make me eligible to apply?

A: Eligibility is calculated in relation to the exact date of conferral. The cut-off dates for eligible candidates are between 10th November 2013 to 10th November 2018 inclusive for Starting Laureate awards, and 10th November 2006 to 10th November 2013 inclusive for Consolidator Laureate awards ([here](#)). A researcher awarded their first PhD on the 25th November 2018 is thus ineligible to apply for a Starting Laureate Award in the 2021 call.

Q: Is the 18 month eligibility extension for maternity leave counted as actual months or as the number of days? i.e. 18 months from the date or 549 days from the date?

A: The 18-month eligibility extension for maternity, paternity and adoptive leave will be calculated in months. Therefore, the applicant can extend the eligibility window to the 10 May 2012 for Starting awards and 10 May 2005 for Consolidator awards. An additional 18 months can be added for each subsequent child born/adopted or 36 months in the case of twins.

Q: Is there any possibility to extend the eligibility window for COVID and how it has impacted the applicant's career.

A: The criteria that may be used to extend an applicant's eligibility window for the purposes of this call are detailed in the call document (available [here](#), under section 3.2). If applicants have personally suffered from a lengthy COVID-19 related illness, or if they have had to care for someone suffering through an extended period of COVID-19 related illness, they may be eligible for an extension if they have taken long-term illness leave or carer's leave.

The career impact of COVID-19 will also be taken into account through a new narrative section in the track record, which will be made available to reviewers.

Q: Is there any leeway for eligibility the cut off dates. We have a potential applicant to the Consolidator Award whose date of PhD was 7 November 2006. Can a concession be made for the sake of 3 days?

A: The eligibility dates are fixed, and exceptions cannot be made; this is to ensure fairness and consistency in the treatment of all applicants.

Q: Can applicants hold an ERC synergy grant and still apply to the Laureates? As you are probably aware the ERC synergy award is an ERC award whereby a group of two to maximum four Principal Investigators (PIs) work together and bring different skills and resources to tackle ambitious research projects. Are synergy grant awardees eligible for this round of the laureate programme? Do Synergy grants also count as 'ERC awards'?

A: Holders of previous ERC Synergy grants may apply for a Laureate Award. The only ERC awards to restrict eligibility are outlined in the call document in section 3.5 and below:

To be eligible to apply for a Starting Laureate Award, applicants cannot have held, or currently hold the following IRC Laureate and/or ERC award:

- Starting Grant

To be eligible to apply for a Consolidator Laureate Award, applicants cannot have held, or currently hold, either of the following IRC Laureate and/or ERC awards:

- Consolidator Grant
- Advanced Grant

B. Eligible costs

Q: In the call document [available [here](#)], under the guidance on ‘Principal Investigator costs’ (p.21) it says, “Employment costs of Laureates who are permanent members of staff are not eligible costs under the Laureate Awards Programme”. It is not clear if this also includes then no possibility of “Replacement costs to alleviate the awardee's commitments and facilitate their participation as a principal investigator” (located at the top end of this section).

A: “*Employment costs of Laureates who are permanent members of staff are not eligible costs*” refers to direct contributions to the principal investigator’s salary. Replacement costs which contribute to the salary of an additional staff member who will cover some of the duties of the PI will be eligible.

Can you confirm in the case of a category 2 or 3 applicant that the school is only responsible to cover 50% of the salary for the duration of the award that is not covered by an existing grant. Or is this the school responsible for 50% for the full duration of the award irrespective of the additional grant that could cover an applicant’s salary.

An applicant has a contract until 2025 and can cover 50% of their salary from another grant. However they are thinking of applying for the 4 years and so will be out of contract for the final year. In this case can they ask the School to contribute 50% salary of 1 final year or do they have to commit to 5% for the full duration of the Laureate?

A: Up to 50% of an awardee’s salary may be paid from a Laureate award. The remaining portion of the awardee’s salary can come from the host institution, from other research grants/funds (so long as this is in line with the individual terms and conditions of the other funding agency), or from a combination of these sources over the lifetime of the Laureate award. The disbursement of these funds is a matter for the awardee and their higher education institution or other funding agency.

Q: Does IRC limit the salary scale point (on the IUA salary scale)?

A: Employment costs of Principal Investigators are described in detail under the heading “Principal Investigator Costs” in Appendix 2 of the call document ([here](#)). Employment costs of other Laureate Team members are described in detail under the heading “Laureate award team members” in Appendix 2 of the call document ([here](#)).

Q: Where applicants are (e.g.) postdocs etc. and the School has to provide 50% funding: Is salary to cover 50% of salary for time spent on the award? Or 50% of salary total? E.g. could someone spend 0.5 full time equivalent on the award funded by IRC, and then 0.5fte on teaching funded by the School? Or would they have to spend 1.0 full time equivalent on the award (or else have 0.5 on the award – 0.25 IRC / 0.25 School, and then 0.5 teaching all School funded)?

A: Up to 50% of the awardee's employment costs may be charged for the duration of the award. By providing a letter of support, the proposed eligible host institution confirms that the applicant is either a member of the academic staff or will be conferred with such status if their application is successful (See section 3.4 of the [call document](#)). A minimum time commitment of 25% is required across all IRC project awards as set out in the [Terms and Conditions for principal investigator led awards](#). Demonstration of value for money is an important consideration under the evaluation process.

C. Peer and Panel review process

Q: Because the identity of an applicant is blinded in the review stage (i.e. during international peer review), to what extent could this affect identities of other people (e.g. collaborators, etc, etc). Identity of collaborators for example, might affect the identity of the applicant? Also, how might this affect the applicant's ability in the application that reviewers would see, to be explicit about their work that is referenced in and that is relevant and/or central to the application?

Q: Are applicants to mask the identity and/or gender of collaborators too? The 'track-record' document could reveal identity of applicant when listing the publications? For instance, a reviewer could look up reference even if the first name of author is not on a reference? Listing references defacto will reveal the identity of the applicant?

A: The purpose of gender-blinding is to conceal the gender of the applicant. For that reason, when referencing collaborators or involvement in a published body of work, the Council requests that the applicant uses gender-neutral pronouns. It is accepted that, in some instances, the gender of the applicant may become apparent to the peer reviewer through reference to publications or in the course of reviewing the applicant track record. However, the effort of gender blinding the application in the first instance can oftentimes reinforce the need for reviewers to be cognisant of their own potential biases.

Q: How much do the IRC want the CV document 'de-identified' beyond just the name of the applicant and pronouns. Are the IRC expecting a CV so without the name of the applicant on the CV?

A: Applicants' CVs should not include the name of the applicant, and they should not refer to themselves using gendered pronouns.

Q: Can applicants mention the second names of collaborators or are names of collaborators not to be mentioned at all (obviously making sure no pronouns indicate gender anyhow even if we are allowed to mention their 2nd names).

A: When referencing collaborators or involvement in a published body of work, the Council requests that the applicant uses gender-neutral pronouns. One way of gender-blinding the identity of collaborators is to only use their first initial and surname.

Q: The reviewers will see the listed publications in the 'track record' and the CV; assuming that the CV will have no name on it but the location of employment and job title would easily give away the identity of the applicant. What the advice on this?

A: The purpose of gender-blinding is to conceal the gender of the applicant. For that reason, when referencing collaborators or involvement in a published body of work, the Council requests that the applicant uses gender-neutral pronouns. It is accepted that, in some instances, the gender of the applicant may become apparent to the peer reviewer through reference to publications or in the course of reviewing the applicant track record. However, the effort of gender blinding the application in the first instance can oftentimes reinforce the need for reviewers to be cognisant of their own potential biases. Peer reviewers and panel members are required to assess on the basis of information provided in the application only.

D. EOI process

Q: Will there be a cap on the number of EOIs institutions can submit for either award?

A: No, host institutions may submit as many EOIs as they are willing to support.

Q: Do you expect the Eois to be submitted by [the Research Offices] in one batch in August or is it possible to do this in smaller batches between now and the deadline?

A: Research Offices have flexibility in how they submit approved candidates' EOIs. Submitting as one batch in August OR smaller batches between now and the deadline is acceptable. When sending in smaller batches, please label the files sequentially so there is no risk of missing any files.

Q: Should we submit FAQs continuously throughout the week or in a batch at the end of the week?

A: FAQs will typically be updated each Friday, so a single batch of questions submitted each Thursday afternoon would be preferable. However, it is acceptable to submit them as they arise or if the query is urgent.

Q: For research offices how does the process of submitting EOI batches work?

A: The process is as follows:

1. Each applicant completes/signs the Word-document EOI template available on the Laureate website and submits it to their relevant Research Office (RO).
2. The RO reviews the EOI Word-document and agrees or declines to support it.
3. The RO copies the details of each approved EOI Word-doc into a single EOI spreadsheet (available on the Laureate webpage).
4. The RO finalises and signs the single EOI spreadsheet.
5. The Research Office submits the signed EOI spreadsheet to laureate@research.ie, along with all approved EOI word-documents. *Note: Research Offices may submit EOIs in batches before 27th August deadline if they so choose.*

Q: Will you be providing a template Letter of Support from the Institution? And if yes can you please provide it sooner (before the deadline for the EOI). This will ensure that the only applicants that have the full support of their School can submit EOIs.

A: A template Letter of Support will be available on the Laureate website. The Council will post this to the website as soon as possible.

Q: When completing the EOI form, is it acceptable to an applicant to add select sub-disciplines from two different Primary Areas? Or, once the applicant has selected their Primary Area, are they restricted to only the sub-disciplines listed under that particular Primary Area?

A: Applicants shall only select Sub-Disciplines that are taxonomically related to the Primary Area they have chosen. In addition, applicants are encouraged to enter free text keywords that they consider to best characterise the scope of their research proposal. The choice of keywords should take into account any multi/inter-disciplinary aspects of the proposal. The chosen keywords will be important to the selection of international peer reviewers, this means that applicants should carefully consider the keywords chosen.

Q: Can the title and abstract used in the EOI be changed in the final submission of the grant application? Or, must the EOI info correspond exactly to the final application info?

A: The title and abstract used in the EOI may be modified in the final submission of the grant application; however, the subject matter of the full application should be substantially the same as the abstract submitted at EOI stage. The purpose of the EOI is to assist with the recruitment of international peer reviewers. Major changes in subject matter will hinder the optimal matching of reviewers to submitted applications by topic or discipline.

E. Other Queries

Q: Will there be an information session/webinar on the call and if yes when will it be held and how to register?

A: Yes, there will be an information session/webinar for this call, during the week of the 28th of June. Full details, including registration, will be provided at a later date, on the Laureate call web page. The session will also be recorded and posted in the Laureate call web page.

Q: What is the total budget of the scheme? What is the budget split between Starter and Consolidator?

A: The total budget of the Starting and Consolidator Laureate Awards scheme 2021/22 provided by the Department of Higher and Further Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS) is €24.7M. The budget is split equally between the Starting and Consolidator grants.