IRISH RESEARCH COUNCIL
An Chomhairle um Thaighde in Éirinn

IRISH RESEARCH COUNCIL LAUREATE AWARDS PROGRAMME 2021/22

CALL DOCUMENT: GUIDE FOR APPLICANTS

Please Read This Document Carefully Before You Register as an Applicant

Expression of Interest Open	04 June 2021
1st FAQ published	11 June 2021
Expression of Interest Deadline	27 Aug 2021 at 4pm
Call open	01 Sept 2021
FAQ deadline	03 Nov 2021
Deadline for applications	10 Nov 2021 at 4pm
Outcome of Stage 1	Feb 2022
Rebuttal phase	End of Feb 2022 (2 weeks)
Outcome of stage 2 assessment	April 2022
Applicant interviews	April 2022
Outcome of selection process	May 2022
Award commencement date	01 Sept 2022

Due to heavy server traffic on the closing day of the competition, applicants are strongly advised to submit applications well in advance of the deadline.

The Irish Research Council reserves the right to amend these terms and conditions without notice. Where an amendment has been made, the Council will endeavour to communicate this to all relevant parties.

1st Version Published 4.6.2021

2nd Version Published 7.7.2021

3rd Version Published 8.10.2021

4th Version Published 15.10.2021

Updates for Version 2 of the Laureate Awards Call Document

- Section 3.1.1
  - Guidance is updated to indicate that the official date of the PhD [for eligibility purposes] is defined as the date on which the PhD was conferred.

- Section 3.4.2
  - Guidance on contracts is updated.

- Section 3.5.5
  - Guidance on the time obligations of awardees to their Laureate Award is updated.

- Section 4.6
  - Guidance for Research Offices on the gender-blinding of Letters of Endorsement is updated.

- Appendix 2
  - The section describing the eligible costs for Principal Investigators has been significantly amended following engagement with Research Officers.

Updates for Version 3 of the Laureate Awards Call Document

- Appendix 2
  - Guidance on inclusion of pensions costs has changed

Updates for Version 4 of the Laureate Awards Call Document

- Section 5 – please read the updated section, what follows is a summary:
  - The assessment process for the Starting and Consolidator Laureate Awards has been changed. Assessment will now comprise a three-stage process, instead of the formerly described two-stage process. The three stage process has been put in place in response to forecasted demand as evidenced by the Expressions of Interest (EOIs) and to ensure an efficient assessment process. The process will operate as follows:

    Stage 1 now solely constitutes Remote Peer Review by 3 subject-matter experts. Proposals which have an average score below a quality threshold at stage 1 will exit the assessment process. Proposals which exit the process at stage 1 will not be given the option to rebut reviewer comments, but reviewer feedback will be provided.

    In stage 2 applicants are given an opportunity to rebut stage 1 Remote Peer Reviewer comments. After this, all proposals that progressed to stage 2 are reviewed by a sitting panel. The Panel assess the applicant's proposal, the reviews of the remote peer reviewers, and the applicant's rebuttal to inform their decision. Proposals retained progress to stage 3.

    Stage 3 of the assessment comprises interview of applicants. At the end of stage 3 final funding decisions are made by the sitting panel.

CONTENTS

1. THE IRISH RESEARCH COUNCIL

The Council, an associated agency of the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS) under the aegis of the Higher Education Authority, funds research across all disciplines on the basis of excellence. The Council supports the development of excellence in research within the higher education system, facilitating exceptional researchers to independently develop their ideas within their chosen discipline and across disciplines. In recent years, a consensus emerged that Ireland's research and innovation framework contained a significant gap: namely, opportunities for exceptional researchers to conduct frontier basic research across all disciplines beyond postdoctoral level. The introduction of the Irish Research Council Laureate Awards in 2017 sought to bridge this gap and has enabled the Council to deliver further on its remit by enhancing investment in excellent basic research across all career stages.

2. INTRODUCTION TO THE STARTING AND CONSOLIDATOR LAUREATE AWARDS

2.1 Laureate Programme Overview

2.1.1 The health of the Irish research eco-system depends on a balanced set of funding measures which cultivate excellent research and researchers across all career stages, from postgraduate students to senior professors who are at the forefront of their disciplines internationally. A strong bedrock of basic research is essential to the functioning of our eco-system, providing the environment for world-class education, training and development, for new discoveries and the future application of those discoveries for economic or societal impact. The publication of a recent independent review of the Laureate Awards Programme 2017-2019, declared it to be a critical and timely addition to the Irish research landscape. The report also highlighted a wealth of high-quality basic research capacity across all disciplines in Ireland. DFHERIS has provided additional budget to the Laureate Awards Programme from 2021.

2.1.2 Funding will be awarded solely on the basis of excellence, assessed through a rigorous and independent international peer-review process. Funding will enable awardees to enhance their track record and international competitiveness. As well as the benefits for the awardee and their team, it is anticipated that this funding will enhance the potential for subsequent European Research Council (ERC) award success as a further career milestone; indeed, it is a requirement of all awardees that they make a follow-on application to the ERC.

2.1.3 The aims and objectives of the Irish Research Council Laureate Awards Programme are as follows:

a. To enhance frontier basic research in Irish research-performing organisations, across all disciplines.
b. To support exceptional researchers to develop their track record, appropriate to their discipline and career stage.
c. To build the international competitiveness of awardees and Ireland as a whole.
d. To leverage greater success for the Irish research system in ERC awards.
e. To retain excellent researchers in the Irish system and to catalyse opportunities for talented researchers currently working outside Ireland to relocate to Ireland.

2.1.4 The Laureate programme co-exists with and is complementary to a range of funding

instruments within Ireland's research eco-system. It is characterised by a sole focus on research excellence, and support at early-career stage for a) complete research independence and b) the opportunity to build a small research team. The programme is also characterised by broad applicant criteria that recognise that individuals in different disciplines have diverse routes to the point at which they are ready to start or progress an independent research career.

2.2 Description of the Starting and Consolidator Laureate Awards

2.2.1 The 2021 call invites applications for two types of award:

a. Starting Laureate Award

The aim of the Starting Laureate Award is to enable early-career researchers who have already produced excellent supervised work and are ready to work independently. It is aimed at researchers who have been awarded their PhD[1] at least 3 and up to 8 years prior to 10 November 2021. Applicants must have already shown the potential for research independence, maturity in managing an individual research project, mentorship and supervision. Applicants should be able to demonstrate a promising track record from an early stage, appropriate to their research field and career stage.

b. Consolidator Laureate Award

The aim of the Consolidator Laureate Award is to enable excellent mid-career researchers with an established track record to consolidate their own research programme or team. It is aimed at researchers who have been awarded their PhD at least 8 and up to 15 years prior to 10 November 2021. Applicants must be able to demonstrate research independence and evidence of maturity in their supervision of early career researchers. Applicants should also be able to demonstrate a promising track record from an early stage, appropriate to their research field and career phase.

2.2.2 A summary of the awards is outlined below:

Award type	Duration	Value	Award start date	Discipline coverage	Location
Starting Laureate Award	2 to 4 years	€250,000 up to a max. of €400,000 (incl. 25% overhead)	Awards must commence by 1 Sept 2022	All disciplines	Irish HEI/RPO[2]
Consolidator Laureate Award	2 to 4 years	€450,000 up to a max. of €600,000 (incl. 25% overhead)			

[1] Where multiple PhDs are held, eligibility will be determined against the first PhD awarded.

[2] As of 1 Jan 2019, all HEIs/RPOs are required to hold at least a Bronze Award in the Athena Swan Charter Ireland. The list of eligible HEIs/RPOs can be found at the following link https://research.ie/funding/eligible-higher-education-institutions-and-research-performing-organisations

3. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

All applicants to the Irish Research Council Laureate Awards Programme must meet the following eligibility criteria:

3.1 PhD eligibility

3.1.1 In order to be eligible to apply for a Starting Laureate or Consolidator Laureate award, applicants must have been awarded their first PhD (or equivalent doctoral degree)[3].

Award Type	Applicant
Starting Laureate Award	Applicant should have been awarded their first PhD* >3 years and <8 years prior to 10 Nov 2021 Cut-off dates: 10 Nov 2013 to 10 Nov 2018 (inclusive)
Consolidator Laureate Award	Applicant should have been awarded their first PhD* >8 years and < 15 years prior to 10 Nov 2021 Cut-off dates: 10 Nov 2006 to 10 Nov 2013 (inclusive)

* The official date of the PhD is defined as the date on which the PhD was conferred: i.e. the date stated on the official PhD certificate or transcript.

3.1.2 As part of the application process, applicants will be required to upload a verifiable copy of their degree certificate or transcript in order to confirm the date of award of the PhD. In order to substantiate the equivalence of their overall training to a PhD, medical doctors need to provide certificates of both a medical doctor degree and a PhD or proof of an appointment that requires doctoral equivalency, e.g. postdoctoral fellowship, and information on their research experience, including peer-reviewed publications.

3.2 Eligible career breaks

3.2.1 An applicant's period of eligibility may be extended in the following properly documented circumstances, provided the grounds for the extension started before the call deadline. Eligible career breaks include the following:

a. Maternity leave
b. Paternity leave
c. Adoptive leave

[3] See Appendix 1 for more information on PhD and Equivalent Doctoral Degrees for the Laureate Awards Programme.

d. Parental leave[4]
e. Long-term illness leave
f. Carer's leave
g. Military service
h. Clinical qualifications

3.2.2 Only career breaks taken by the applicant as a statutory entitlement will be considered eligible.

3.2.3 No allowance will be made for part-time working (two years of part-time working count as two full-time years).

3.2.4 If an applicant wishes to extend the period of eligibility, they must produce evidence, birth certificate and/or documents from the HR office of their employer at the time of the eligible break(s):

a. For maternity leave, applicants will be granted an 18-month extension for each child born **before or after** the first PhD award, regardless of how long the applicant took for maternity leave. If the applicant can document a longer maternity leave, the eligibility period will be extended by the documented amount of actual leave taken until the call deadline. The same principle also applies for child adoption.
b. For paternity leave, applicants will be granted an extension equal to the documented amount of paternity leave actually taken for each child born **before or after** the first PhD award. The same principle also applies for child adoption.
c. For parental leave/carer's leave, applicants will be granted an extension equal to the documented amount of leave actually taken by the applicant for each incident which occurred **after** the first PhD award.
d. Verification for long-term illness must be provided in the form of a medical certificate. For long-term illness (over ninety days for the principal investigator or a close family member, i.e. child, spouse, parent, sibling), applicants will be granted an extension equal to the documented amount of leave actually taken by the applicant for each incident which occurred **after** the first PhD award.
e. Verification of leave taken for clinical qualifications or military service must be provided in an appropriate form. Applicants will be granted an extension equal to the documented amount of leave actually taken for each incident which occurred **after** the first PhD award.

3.2.5 Career breaks explained by working outside of academia or by being unemployed for a period of time will not be considered as valid reasons to extend the eligibility window. Examples of other ineligible career breaks include taking time off to travel or to complete examinations for the Bar[5].

3.3 Track record

3.3.1 The aim of the Starting Laureate Award is to support early-career researchers who have already produced excellent supervised work and are ready to work independently. The aim of

[4] Parental leave entitles parents to take unpaid leave from work to spend time looking after their children. Individuals can take up to 26 weeks' parental leave for each eligible child before their 12th birthday. https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/employment/employment_rights_and_conditions/leave_and_holidays/parental_leave.html

[5] A **bar examination** is a test intended to determine whether a candidate is qualified to practice law in a given jurisdiction.

the Consolidator Laureate Award is to enable excellent mid-career researchers consolidate their own independent research programme or team. Applicants must demonstrate the ambition, originality and novelty of their research proposal. Applicants should be able to demonstrate a promising track record of early achievements, appropriate to their research field and career stage. Applicants should list (if applicable, and in addition to any other scientific achievements deemed relevant by the applicant in relation to their research field and project):

a. Publications in major international peer-reviewed multi-disciplinary scientific/scholarly journals and/or in leading international peer-reviewed journals, peer-reviewed conference proceedings and/or monographs, edited volumes and chapters in edited books;
    i. Starting Laureate Award applicants should include up to five publications, highlighting at least one as main author or without the presence of their PhD supervisor as co-author.
    ii. Consolidator Laureate Award applicants should include up to ten publications, highlighting several as main author or without the presence of their PhD supervisor as co-author.

3.3.2 Note: With the adoption of the San Francisco Declaration of Research Assessment (DORA) principles, the mention of Journal Impact Factors is no longer accepted and use of H-Index is discouraged among the field relevant bibliometric indicators that may be included as part of the publications track record. Instead, applicants are encouraged to briefly note the significance of the publications they have chosen to include in the track record.

b. Research monograph(s) and any translations thereof;
c. Granted patent(s);
d. Invited presentations to internationally established conferences and/or international advanced schools;
e. Other forms of peer-reviewed recognition of achievement (prizes, awards, academy memberships).
f. Applicants are also invited to use this section to outline their broader contribution to research through teaching, public engagement, academic administration, etc. Applicants may also provide a short narrative description of the scientific/scholarly importance of the research outputs submitted as part of the proposal, and of the role that the Principal Investigator (if applicable) played in their production. This change will also be reflected in future ERC calls in alignment with the San Francisco Declaration of Research Assessment (DORA).

3.4 Employment status and host institution

3.4.1 Applicants must either:

Hold an academic post (permanent, or a contract that covers the duration of the award) in the proposed eligible host institution,

or

Be an individual who, upon receipt of a Laureate Award, will be conferred by the proposed eligible host institution with a contract of employment of sufficient duration to cover the term

of the award. The contract of employment must enable the awardee to independently direct the research project and provide for the necessary accommodation and supporting infrastructure.

3.4.2 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 a contract of employment to cover the duration of the award if their application is successful.

3.4.3 All awardees must be based whole-time 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.

3.4.4 International applicants must satisfy the Ireland's regulations on immigration and employment and must have the support of their proposed host institution with respect to these regulations and requirements, if they are not a national of a member state of the European Union (EU). Arrangements with respect to immigration will be a matter for settlement between the applicant and their proposed host institution and the relevant immigration authorities of the Nation.[6]

3.4.5 The full list of eligible institutions can be found here: https://research.ie/funding/eligible-higher-education-institutions-and-research-performing-organisations/

3.5 Additional awards[7]

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

- Starting Grant
- Consolidator Grant

3.5.2 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

3.5.3 Applicants holding an ERC Starting Grant which finishes within twelve months of the Laureate Awards Programme call deadline (4pm, 10 Nov 2021) may apply for a Consolidator Laureate Award. It is not intended that successful applicants would concurrently hold an ERC Starting Grant and a Consolidator Laureate Award. However, the Council will allow a maximum period of overlap of six months from the start date of the Laureate Award to enable successful applicants to finish their ERC Starting Grant obligations.

3.5.4 Applicants may have pending ERC Starting or Consolidator Grants at the time of application for a Laureate Award. Where an applicant for a Laureate Award secures an ERC award during the application process or in the conditional offer phase, the application/award will be terminated. In these circumstances, applicants are required to inform the Council immediately of the ERC award.

3.5.5 Successful applicants are expected to lead their individual teams and devote a significant

[6] http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/index.cfm/services/index provides information on living and working in Europe.

[7] Applicants will be deemed to hold an award at a particular date if any obligations from any of the parties to the award remain outstanding as at that date.

amount of time to their project. A minimum time commitment of 25% of full-time employment is required across all IRC project awards. This time commitment is not pro-rated in the case of part time employment: for example, an awardee on a 0.5 full time equivalent (FTE) contract must dedicate 50% of their working hours to the Laureate award.

3.6 Resubmissions

3.6.1 The number of applications across all the Council's programmes always outnumber the number of awards that can be made. As such, restrictions will apply as to how many times an applicant can re-submit a proposal for a Laureate Award. Applicants may apply for each of the Laureate Awards a maximum of twice.

3.6.2 Ineligible or withdrawn proposals do not count against any of the above restrictions.

3.6.3 Applicants should carefully and objectively evaluate their track record against the criteria set out above in order to ascertain if they are competitive at the time of application before deciding to apply.

4. APPLICATION SUBMISSION

Applicants who wish to apply for the Laureate awards through an eligible HEI/RPO in Ireland must inform the Research Office (or other appropriate office) of their intent to submit an application to the programme. Canvassing the IRC or by, or on behalf of, applicants will render an application automatically ineligible. Where this occurs, the proposal will not, under any circumstances, be funded. Applications are subject to a mandatory Expression of Interest (EOI) submission (see section 4.4).

4.1 Language requirements

4.1.1 Applications will be accepted in either the Irish or English language only. In order to facilitate evaluation by the international panel members and remote peer reviewers, applications submitted in Irish must be accompanied by a translation of the documents in English.

4.1.2 Copies of official documents, e.g. PhD degree certificate or transcript, can be submitted in any language. Official document(s) in any other language must be accompanied by a certified translation in English.

4.2 Application deadline

4.2.1 The Council strongly encourages the submission of applications well in advance of the closing date for the competition, as on the day that the call closes there will be heavy traffic on the server, which may slow down the submission of applications.

4.2.2 If you need to upload your application on the closing day, it is recommended that you allow at least 6 hours before the deadline to allow the upload to complete.

4.2.3 All applications will be assessed solely on the basis of the material submitted to the Council at

the time of the application.

4.2.4 Please note that the Council will not follow up on any supporting documentation related to the application. It is the sole responsibility of the applicant to upload all supporting documentation prior to submission. If the documentation is not submitted by the stated deadline, the application will be deemed ineligible and will not proceed to the evaluation stage.

4.3 Grant management system

4.3.1 Applications to the Laureate Awards Programme will only be accepted through the online grants management system, which can be accessed through the call page or by following this link: https://irishresearch.smartsimple.ie/s_Login.jsp

4.3.2 A full step-by-step guide to creating a profile and logging into the system is detailed in on the Laureate webpage in the Applicant guide to Smart Simple.

4.4 Expression of Interest (EOI)

4.4.1 EOIs are used by the Council to allow for early and accurate sourcing of international peer reviewers. The submission of an EOI is mandatory; full proposals will only be accepted from applicants who have submitted an EOI before the deadline at 16:00 on the 27 August. This will be strictly enforced.

4.4.2 Calls for expression of interest (EOI) submissions will open from the 4 June 2021 and will remain open until 16:00 on the 27 August 2021. Submissions will be accepted through the Research Offices who will be provided with a template for collecting details on all EOIs.

4.4.3 The template for EOIs will be available on the Laureate webpage and will ask for the applicant's title, name, proposed host institution, intended panel domain, discipline, keywords and a lay abstract for the project.

4.4.4 In the course of recruitment, the lay abstract provided in the EOI may be used to ensure sufficient expertise of the peer reviewer. No personal identifying information will be provided to potential peer reviewers during reviewer recruitment.

4.4.5 As peer review is confidential, reviewers will be required not to share EOI abstracts. This applies both during and after the application review process.

4.4.6 EOIs must be stamped/signed by the Research Office of the proposed host institution before submission. If it is not possible for EOIs to be stamped due to COVID-19 restrictions, an electronic signature from the relevant institution's Research Office will suffice.

4.5 Application documents

4.5.1 A single submission of the full proposal documentation will be followed by a two-stage evaluation process outlined in section 6 below.

4.5.2 A complete proposal will comprise the following documents, to be uploaded via the grant management system as PDFs (Word documents will not be accepted):

a. Detailed Research Proposal – 15 pages max.

The research proposal must provide a detailed description of the scholarly, scientific and/or technical aspects of the proposal, demonstrating the originality and novelty of the research, the proposed research methodology (including key risk and contingency plans) and its potential impact. The proposal must include a detailed budget justification. Explicit and clear justification should be provided for each budget category. References do not count towards the page limit.

The research proposal should include the following:

- *State-of-the-art and objectives*

Specify clearly the objectives of the proposal, in the context of the state-of-the-art in the field. When describing the envisaged research, it should be indicated how and why the proposed work is important for the field, and what impact it will have if successful, such as how it may open up new research horizons or opportunities. Specify any particularly challenging or unconventional aspects of the proposal, including multi- or inter-disciplinary aspects.

- *Methodology*

Describe the proposed methodology in detail, including as appropriate, key intermediate goals. Explain and justify the methodology in relation to the state-of -the-art, including any particularly novel or unconventional aspects addressing 'high-risk/high-gain' balance. Highlight any intermediate stages where results may require adjustments to the project planning.

- *Resources* (including project costs, see Appendix 2)

State the amount of funding considered necessary to fulfil the objectives for the duration of the project. The resources requested should be reasonable and fully justified in the proposal. The requested grant should be appropriate to the actual needs to fulfil the objectives of the project. Describe the size and nature of the team, indicating, where appropriate, the key team members and their roles. Specify any existing resources that will contribute to the project. Describe any other necessary resources, such as infrastructure and equipment. It is advisable to include a short technical description of any equipment requested, a justification of its need, as well as the intensity of its planned use. When estimating the costs for travel, please also consider participation of the awardee and team members in conferences and dissemination events.

b. CV – 2 pages max.

The CV should include the standard academic and research record including current funding awards. Applicants should comment on any actual or apparent overlaps with current funding awards to demonstrate that, if successful, there will be no double funding in respect of the same activities.

a. Track Record – 2 pages max.

Applicants must provide a list of achievements, highlighting their track record. Applicants should refer to the profile for the relevant Laureate Award for the type of achievements expected, as outlined in section 3.3 above.

b. Data Management Plan – 2 pages max.

See section 4.7 below for more information.

c. Statement on ethical issues to be addressed – 2 pages max.

The self-assessment table in the online system must be completed even if there are no issues (simply confirm that none of the ethical issues apply to the proposal). See section 4.6 for further information.

d. One letter of support from the host institution as specified below.

e. PhD certificate or transcript (and supporting documentation if applicable).

4.5.3 In the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, applicants may mention in their track record section, any specific situation caused by the pandemic that had a negative effect on their curriculum vitae or track record.

4.5.4 With due deference and fairness to all applicants, the specified pages limits will be strictly adhered to. The panel members and peer reviewers will be instructed not to read any material provided beyond these limits.

4.6 Gender

4.6.1 A key feature of the Council's Gender Strategy is to provide equal outcomes to both men and women so that Ireland can attract and retain the most talented, creative and innovative researchers, thereby maximising its collective research intelligence.

4.6.2 To ensure a level playing field for applicants the Council seeks to gender-blind the evaluation process. As such, profile information containing the name and gender of applicants is not provided to reviewers during Stage 1 evaluations.

4.6.3 Applications that request eligible career breaks will be assessed internally by the Council. Reviewers will be notified that a confirmed extension has been added to the applicant's eligibility window and notified of the date range covered by the career break, but no further details as to the reason for the extension will be provided.

4.6.4 Applicants are asked, insofar as possible, to use non-gendered pronouns when describing their research and track record and to review their CV and supporting documentation for obvious indicators of gender.

4.6.5 The support letter provided by the HEIs/RPOs should also be gender neutral and refrain from identifying the applicant's gender. Only the applicant's initial(s) and surname should be provided.

4.6.6 The Council has commissioned an independent review of the 2013 Gender Strategy and will use recommendations from the report to shape future calls and a new Gender, Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy.

4.7 Sex-Gender Dimension in Research

4.7.1 A further initiative arising from the Council's Gender Strategy is the requirement for all applicants to demonstrate that they have given full consideration to whether there is a potential sex and/or gender dimension in their proposed research. Applicants should consult Appendix 3 for further information.

4.7.2 Where applicants have indicated that there is no sex/gender dimension to their research, they will be asked to justify this assertion.

4.7.3 The integration of the sex-gender dimension in research is commonly mistaken for the integration of gender balance in research teams. These are two distinct matters, and the gender balance of a team should not be used to answer the sex-gender dimension in research question.

4.8 Open access: data management

4.8.1 In 2016, the European Commission adopted three goals for EU research and innovation policy: open science, open innovation and open to the world[8]. An important aspect of open science is a move towards open access to research results funded with public money. Facilitating access to those results encourages the re-use of research outputs. It is now widely recognised that making research results more accessible to all societal actors contributes to better and more efficient research, and to greater innovation in the public and private sectors.

4.8.2 In 2017, the National Open Research Forum (NORF) was established in Ireland to drive the Irish agenda for open research. As a signatory of NORF, the Irish Research Council aims to achieve an open access environment that supports excellent research.[9]

4.8.3 Applicants are required to address the data management needs of their research project. As part of the application, applicants will furnish an outline data management plan (DMP) appropriate to their project and, if successful, a detailed DMP should be submitted to Council within six months of the award commencement date.

4.8.4 A DMP is a key element of good data management. A DMP describes the data management life cycle for the data to be collected, processed and/or generated by a research project. As part of making research data *findable, accessible, interoperable and re-usable* (FAIR), a DMP should include information on:

a. the handling of research data during and after the end of the project;
b. what data will be collected, processed and/or generated;
c. which methodology and standards will be applied;
d. whether data will be shared/made open access. If data cannot be made available, explain why;
e. how data will be curated and preserved (including after the end of the project).
f. Hoe the data will be stored/managed in compliance with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Health Research Regulations (HRR) if applicable.

4.8.5 Applicants should consult the list of resources in Appendix 4 for further information.

4.9 Ethical approval

4.9.1 The Council is committed to the maintenance of high ethical standards in the research that it funds. The proposed research shall comply with ethical principles and relevant national, EU and international legislation including the *Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union* and the *European Convention on Human Rights and its Supplementary Protocols*. Awardees should adhere to the recognised ethical practices and fundamental ethical principles appropriate to their discipline(s), as well as to ethical standards as documented in the different various national, sectoral, or institutional Codes of Ethics.

4.9.2 The host institution must have in place clear ethical guidelines and assurance procedures designed to manage research under its direction. The host institution and awardee must ensure that the research complies with all national and international regulation requirements

[8] European Commission (2016), *Open Innovation, Open Science, Open to the World: a vision for Europe*, pp.6-7.
[9] See IRC policy on Open Research in the Terms and Conditions for PI-led awards

governing the use of sensitive materials or processes: for example, radioactive isotopes, ionising radiation, laboratory animals or other animals, pathogenic organisms, genetically manipulated organisms, toxic and hazardous substances, and research on human subjects and human embryos. The aforementioned examples do not constitute an exhaustive list.

4.9.3 The Council is unable to award funding for research activity under any of the following prohibited areas:

a. human cloning for reproductive purposes;
b. 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);
c. 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.

4.9.4 The ethics self-assessment table in Appendix 5 serves to identify any ethical aspects of the proposed work and must be completed (via the online system only), even if there are no issues (simply confirm that none of the ethical issues apply to the proposal). Please note that, if you answer YES to any of the questions, you are requested to provide an ethics self-assessment. The aim of the ethics self-assessment is to provide guidance for discussion of ethical issues that may arise in the proposal and to identify how the applicant will deal with the identified issues.

4.9.5 Common ethical issues include:

a. the involvement of children, patients, vulnerable populations
b. the use of human embryonic stem cells;
c. privacy and data protection issues;
d. research on animals and non-human primates.

4.9.6 Ethical concerns also include the avoidance of any breach of research integrity, which means, in particular, avoiding fabrication, falsification, plagiarism or other research misconduct.

4.9.7 Where an awardee's research proposal requires approval by the Host Institution Ethics Committee or equivalent, written evidence of such ethical approval is required by the Council within six months of the commencement date of the award.

4.9.8 Applicants are advised to consult the H2020 guidance document *How to complete your ethics self-assessment,* before completing the ethics self-assessment. See Appendix 5.

4.9.9 If access to archival material in private custodianship or archival material with restricted access is required for the project, written evidence of appropriate permission to consult such material must be furnished to the Council at the award acceptance stage.

4.10 Nominating peer reviewers

4.10.1 Applicants may nominate up to five international academics to be considered for peer review of their proposal. The role of a peer reviewer is to provide an expert academic review of proposals, not personal testimonials. Nominated peer reviewers must NOT:

a. Be a collaborator on the proposed project or have collaborated on a research project, or worked closely, with the applicant in the last five years;
b. Have, or have had in the past, a mentor/mentee relationship with the applicant.
c. Be employed, or was employed within the three previous years, by the proposed host

institution;[10]

d. Be a former PhD supervisor of the applicant;
e. Have close family ties (spouse, domestic or non-domestic partner, child, sibling, parent etc.) or other close personal relationship with the applicant of any proposal they are requested to evaluate.

4.10.2 The Council reserves the right to appoint a peer reviewer to the proposal who is not a nominated peer reviewer of the applicant.

4.11 Request to exclude certain peer reviewers

4.11.1 Applicants may also specify up to three individuals whom they wish to be excluded as an international peer reviewer in the evaluation of their proposal. The persons identified will be excluded from the evaluation of the proposal concerned as long as this does not compromise the Council's ability to have the proposal evaluated in line with the evaluation process as set out.

4.11.2 Applicants are required to provide the name, institution and e-mail address of nominated and the name and institution of excluded peer reviewers via the online system.

4.12 Endorsement from proposed host institution

4.12.1 All applications must be endorsed by the proposed host institution. For this reason a letter of support, signed by the relevant Head of School and the Vice-President/Dean for Research[11] is required.

4.12.2 Applications that are not accompanied by completed and signed letters of endorsement will be deemed ineligible and will not go forward for assessment.

4.12.3 The proposed host institution is required to confirm the following via the letters of institutional support:

a. Based on the information available to it, the eligibility of the applicant;
b. The applicant is, or will be, upon receipt of a Laureate Award, recognised as an employee of the institution for the duration of the award;
c. The applicant, if successful, will be based at the institution for the duration of the award;
d. The requested budget is consistent with institutional policies;
e. The infrastructure required to undertake the research project will be made available to the applicant, if successful;
f. The relevant ethical approval has been, or will be, sought and fully considered within six months of the commencement date of an award;
g. If sought, the transfer of a Laureate Award to another eligible research institution will be allowed – subject to the approval of the Council;

[10] When an expert is working in a different department/laboratory/institute to the one where the work is to be carried out, and where the constituent bodies operate with a high degree of autonomy, the IRC may exceptionally allow the expert to participate in the evaluation, if duly justified by the limited size of the pool of qualified experts.

[11] Where neither of these positions exist in the host institution, the letter of endorsement should be signed by the most senior institutional officer with responsibility for research. The use of authorised signatories or pro-persona signatories will not be accepted.

h. The institution is satisfied as to the applicant's standards of research conduct and integrity based on available information;
i. Where a finding of bullying, harassment (including sexual harassment), and/or sexual violence has been upheld against the applicant and there is a current disciplinary sanction or warning in place, an appropriate risk assessment has been performed (or will be performed, if successful in obtaining a Laureate Award).[12]

4.13 Frequently asked questions

4.13.1 Any queries relating to this Call Document, or the operation of the programme generally, should be submitted to the relevant research office of the HEI/RPO in the first instance. In the interest of transparency and fairness to all applicants, Council staff will not discuss queries from individual applicants over the telephone or by e-mail.

4.13.2 A list of all queries not resolved by the Research Office should then be submitted as a batch to laureate@research.ie by the designated Research Officer. The FAQ page on the Council's website will be updated on a weekly basis.

5. EVALUATION PROCESS

5.1 Eligibility checks

5.1.1 Before applications are forwarded to Stage 1 assessment, the Council will perform eligibility checks, including checks on the following:
a. The application must be submitted by the relevant deadlines;
b. Submission of all required elements of the proposal and completeness of same (i.e. all requested forms, parts or sections of the proposal, and supporting documents must be completed and present);
c. Post-PhD duration, including PhD equivalence;
d. Requests to take account of career break(s);
e. Funding awards (ERC and IRC);
f. Supporting documentation as appropriate.

5.1.2 Any applications that do not meet the eligibility criteria or are incomplete will not go forward for assessment, this will not count towards the number of times they can apply for a Laureate award in the future.

5.1.3 The eligibility checks are completed on the basis of the information provided as part of the application. Where there is a doubt about the eligibility of a proposal, the peer review evaluation may proceed pending a final decision. If it becomes clear before, during or after the peer review process that one or more of the eligibility criteria has not been met (for example, due to misleading or incorrect information), the proposal will be declared ineligible and not considered any further. This will not count towards the number of times they can apply for a Laureate award in the future.

[12] This action is in line with the IRC's forthcoming Policy on Bullying, Harassment (including Sexual Harassment) and Sexual Violence.

5.2 Evaluation of proposals

5.2.1 The Council is committed to rigorous peer review of its funding programmes in line with international best practice. All peer reviewers engaged by the Council are subject to an agreed Code of Conduct.

5.2.2 For the Laureate Awards Programme, the Council is adopting a three-stage evaluation process, to include an interview at Stage 3. Throughout this process, proposals to the Starting and Consolidator Awards are assessed separately, and budget is awarded to proposals in each award separately, based on different scored and/or ranked lists.

5.2.3 In the first stage of the review, all applications to both awards in the programme will be evaluated by subject-matter remote peer reviewer experts, across four panel domains:

- Humanities (H)
- Social Sciences (SS)
- Life Sciences (LS)
- Physical Sciences and Engineering (PE).

5.2.4 A breakdown of the disciplines included in each panel is available on the Laureate webpage.

5.2.5 All proposals that progress to stages 2 and 3 of the evaluation will be evaluated by an international panel, in the selected panel domain. The composition of each panel will broadly reflect the disciplines within the respective domain. The members of each panel will act as 'generalists' and both the Chair of each panel and the constituent members will be appointed by the Council based on their international scientific/scholarly standing.

5.2.6 Any direct or indirect contact about the peer review evaluation of a proposal between an applicant or their host institution and a peer reviewer involved in the assessment process may result in the decision of the Council to exclude the proposal concerned from the evaluation.

5.2.7 It is important to note that comments by individual reviewers may not necessarily be convergent. Differences of opinion about the merits of a proposal are legitimate among evaluators, and it can be potentially beneficial for an applicant to consider differing perspectives on the research proposal.

5.3 Evaluation process

5.3.1 In stage 1 of the evaluation, the proposal will typically be evaluated by a minimum of three international peer reviewers. Each reviewer will be required to review the proposal, assigning scores and commentary. They will also provide a comment, summarizing their review, that will form the basis of the rebuttal phase for applicants who progress to stage 2. The outcome of the stage 1 remote peer reviewer evaluation will be a ranked list, determined by the aggregate of the remote peer reviewer scores. Approximately 80-90 applications per panel – split evenly between applications to the Starting and Consolidator Awards – will progress to stage 2 based on the ranked list. In the event of a tied score, the scoring of the quality of the proposed research will be used as the selection criterion to separate applications. Where there is a significant negative outlier in three remote peer reviewer scores, specifically one which may affect the progression of a proposal, an additional remote peer review may be sought.

5.3.2 In stage 2, reviewer comments for rebuttal will be returned to allow for a rebuttal phase. Applicants will have two weeks from receipt of feedback to respond to the comments and to provide additional supporting evidence, where necessary. The rebuttal document will be size-limited. All peer reviews in addition to the applicant rebuttal will then be reviewed by a sitting panel. Based on the outcome of the panel evaluation, applications will be given a ranking of either 'A' or 'B' (see table below). All applications in receipt of an 'A' ranking will be retained for stage 3 of the evaluation process. Approximately 24 applications will progress to stage 3 per panel, split between applications to the Starting and Consolidator awards.

'A' rating	Application is of such quality as to be recommended to pass to stage 3 of the evaluation process.
'B' rating	Application is not recommended by the panel to pass to stage 3 of the evaluation process.

5.3.3 In stage 3 of the evaluation, applicants must attend an interview to present their project to the panel and answer questions. Interviews will last approximately 30 minutes in total. The applicant should expect questions related to all aspects of the proposal including the budget and questions on how the Laureate award would support future application to ERC funding calls. Panels will consider the results of interviews alongside the peer reviews and rebuttal statements submitted as part of the first and second stages of the evaluation.

5.3.4 It is the intention of the Council to hold interview panels virtually, however Council reserves the right to hold panels in person where necessary, subject to public health advice. Where panels are to be held in person, applicants will be given sufficient notice[13].

5.3.5 In view of the confidentiality of the evaluation process, applicants who participate in a stage 2 interview are required not to share the identity of panel members until their names have been published on the Council's website.

5.3.6 Following the interview, each panel will assign a final score for the applicant and the proposal, based on all evidence gathered through stages 1, 2, and 3. This results in a ranked list, note that Starting and Consolidator awards will be ranked separately. A cut-off score for funding will be determined by the available budget. Proposals deemed to be tied by the panel may be subject to a non-bias randomization to determine the final ranked list, which will be monitored by the process auditor. The use of a randomized method in the case of tied proposals ensures that the final ranking is not influenced by bias of any kind, including unconscious bias.

5.3.7 Applications that fall below the budget cut-off will be placed on a reserve list for 12 months. The reserve list will be activated in order of ranking where budget becomes available e.g. in the case of declined awards, or where awards are terminated in the first year. The Reserve List will be limited in number due to the low probability of award offer declines however all applicants who progress to stage 3 and do not receive funding will be awarded a small collaboration bursary to aid the progression of their research proposal.

5.4 Evaluation criteria

[13] Candidates based outside of Ireland may elect to have the interview with the domain panel conducted via videoconferencing. The IRC will not cover the travel cost of those who travel for the interview, they are also not permitted to re-coup the costs for the award budget in the event their application is successful.

5.4.1 **Excellence** is the sole criterion of evaluation for both the research project and the applicant. Applicants who progress to stage 2 will also be asked to elaborate on how the Laureate Award will assist a future application to ERC.

Criterion	Description
Research project	Ground-breaking nature, ambition and feasibility: • To what extent does the proposed research address important challenges? • To what extent are the objectives ambitious and beyond the state of the art (e.g. novel concepts and approaches or development between or across disciplines)? • To what extent is the proposed research high risk-high gain (i.e. if successful, the payoffs will be very significant, but there is a high risk that the research project does not entirely fulfil its aims)? Scientific/scholarly approach: • To what extent is the outlined scientific/scholarly approach feasible, bearing in mind the extent that the proposed research is high risk/high gain? • To what extent are the proposed research methodology and working arrangements appropriate to achieve the goals of the project? • To what extent does the proposal involve the development of novel methodology? • To what extent are the proposed timescales, resources, budget and applicant time commitment adequate, good value for money, and properly justified?
Applicant	Intellectual capacity and creativity: • To what extent has the applicant demonstrated the ability to conduct ground-breaking research? • To what extent does the applicant provide evidence of creative independent thinking? • To what extent does the applicant have the required scientific/scholarly expertise and capacity to successfully execute the project?

5.5 Feedback

5.5.1 At the end of the first assessment stage, unsuccessful applicants will be provided with a percentile range indicating broadly where their application ranked in relation to others. They will also be provided with a feedback report derived from the commentary of the remote peer

reviewers.

5.5.2 At the end of the second assessment stage, applicants who received a ranking of 'B' (see section 5.3.2) will be provided with a percentile range indicting broadly where their application ranked in relation to others. They will also be provided with a feedback report comprising a panel consensus statement and the commentary from stage 1 remote peer reviewers.

5.5.3 After the third (final) assessment stage, all applicants will be notified as to the outcome of their application. Those who do not receive an offer of funding will be added to a reserve list for funding, though this list will be limited in number due to the low probability of award declines. All applicants who progressed to the third stage will receive an evaluation report comprising a panel consensus statement, a percentile range indicting roughly where their application ranked in relation to others and details of any mechanism used in determining the final rank of the application.

5.5.4 The panel consensus statement is a key element of the information provided to the applicants at the end of the evaluation process. The panel comments reflect the consensus decision taken by the panel as a whole, based on prior assessments from remote peer reviewers, and on a thorough discussion and on the ranking against other proposals during the panel meeting.

5.6 Appeals procedure

The Council has a 'Declined Funding' Appeals Policy. The primary function of the appeals procedure is to ensure that the Council's review process has been fair and reasonable, and that the Council's review procedures were followed. The appeal procedure is not a peer review process itself and will not re-open such a process. Rather, it is designed to examine the possibility of procedural errors that may have occurred during assessment and other aspects of proposal review

6. APPENDIX 1 - POLICY ON PHD AND EQUIVALENT DOCTORAL DEGREES

In order to be eligible to apply to the Laureate Awards Programme, an applicant must have been awarded a PhD or equivalent doctoral degree. For the purposes of this programme, the IRC is adopting the ERC policy on PhD and equivalent doctoral degrees since a condition of the Laureate award is a subsequent application to the ERC; therefore, Laureate award-holders must be able to satisfy the ERC eligibility requirements.

PhD degrees

The research doctorate is one of the highest earned academic degree. It is awarded for independent research at a professional level in either academic disciplines or professional fields. Irrespective of entry point, doctoral candidates have to meet a certain number of criteria in terms of the duration of the degree and the written assignments required, e.g. successful completion and examination of the research thesis comprising work of publishable quality is the basis of the doctoral award and making an original contribution to knowledge in the respective field. For applicants who hold more than one PhD award or equivalent, the date of the earliest award will define the applicant's eligibility for the Irish Research Council Laureate Awards programme.

Degrees equivalent to the PhD

It is recognised that there are some other doctoral titles that enjoy the same status and represent variants of the PhD in certain fields. All of them have similar content requirements. Potential applicants are invited to consult the following for useful references on degrees that will be considered equivalent to the PhD:

EURYDICE: *Examinations, qualifications and titles - Second edition, Volume 1, European glossary on education* (2004).[14] Please note that some titles that belong to the same category as doctoral degrees (ISCED 6) may correspond to the intermediate steps towards the completion of doctoral education and they should not be therefore considered as PhD-equivalent.

U.S. Department of Education provides a full list of research doctorate titles awarded in the United States that enjoy the same status and represent variants of the PhD within certain fields. These doctorate titles are also recognised as PhD-equivalent by the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF).[15]

Medical doctors

A medical doctor (MD) degree will not be accepted by itself as equivalent to a PhD award for the purposes of application to the Laureate Awards. In order to substantiate the equivalence of their overall training to a PhD, medical doctors need to provide certificates of both a medical doctor degree and a PhD or proof of an appointment that requires doctoral equivalency, e.g. post-doctoral fellowship and information on their research experience, including peer-reviewed publications. In these instances, the certified date of the medical doctor degree plus two years is the time reference for

[14] http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/thematic_studies_archives_en.php
[15] http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ous/international/usnei/us/edlite-structure-us.html

calculation of the eligibility time-window (i.e. 5-10 years past the medical doctor degree for Starting Laureates and 10-17 years past the medical doctor degree for Consolidators).

For medical doctors who have been awarded both an MD and a PhD, the date of the earliest degree that makes the applicant eligible takes precedence in the calculation of the eligibility time-window (2-7 years after PhD or 5-10 years past the medical doctor degree for Starters, and 7-12 years after PhD or 10-17 years past the medical doctor degree for Consolidators).

First professional degrees

It is important to recognise that the initial professional degrees in various fields are first degrees, not graduate research degrees. Several degree titles in such fields include the term 'Doctor', but they are neither research doctorates nor equivalent to the PhD.

7. APPENDIX 2 - ELIGIBLE COSTS

All costs sought must be detailed and fully justified. Applicants must clearly demonstrate that the costs sought are necessary to undertake the research project and that such facilities are not available via any other means. Demonstration of value for money is an important consideration under the evaluation process. Applicants need to provide clear and convincing justification of their costings and should think carefully about the time and resources needed to complete the research successfully within the specified period. Overheads can be requested up to a maximum rate of 25% (of direct costs less equipment).

Only eligible costs as set out below will be considered. Applicants should ensure that their budget calculations are correct and seek guidance from their Research Office when preparing their budget to ensure that they are adhering to institutional guidelines and policies.

Staff Costs

The budget for staff costs as proposed in the application must be clearly justified. It will not be sufficient to provide a breakdown of how the costs are calculated; applicants must explain why the costs are sought for the project and how all personnel for which costs are sought will contribute to the project.

Principal investigator costs

There are two types of eligible cost associated with the principal investigator. The two categories are mutually exclusive and can both be claimed throughout the course of an award but never at the same time. These are:

a. **Replacement costs:** These are used to alleviate the awardee's commitments and to facilitate their participation as a principal investigator. Costs may be requested to facilitate the re-allocation of existing commitments of the awardee (e.g. teaching) in order that they can devote appropriate time and effort to successfully completing the award. A value equal to point 1 on the IUA salary scale for postdoctoral researchers (including employer's pension contribution for members of the single pension scheme, see Pensions section on page 24) may be charged to the project to facilitate the awardee's leadership of the project. If the existing academic commitments of the awardee are fully replaced, this money can be charged to the project in order to recruit one whole-time person, e.g. a postdoctoral fellow, to discharge the awardee's commitments. As part of the reporting requirements, the awardee will be required to report on how the replacement costs have been allocated.
b. **Contribution to employment costs:** Up to 50% of the awardee's employment costs can be sought where hosting of the awardee gives rise to a new contract of employment or where an awardee's existing contract covers the duration of the award, and their employment costs are covered by the host institution or other specified means (e.g. other research grants/funds). If a portion of the awardee's salary (50% or more) comes from other research grants/funds for the duration of the award, this must be in line with the individual terms and conditions of the other funding agency.

Employment costs of Laureates who are permanent academic members of staff are not eligible costs under the Laureate Awards Programme. Any budget requests for such costs in the application will not be considered.

A summary of the policy is as follows:

Options	Approved contribution costs
(i) Seek costs to re-allocate existing commitments of awardees	The value equivalent to point 1 on the IUA salary scale for postdoctoral researchers (inclusive of employers PRSI and pension contribution) to re-allocate existing commitments of the awardee.
(ii) Seek contribution to costs for new contract of employment or for an existing contract that covers the duration of the award	Up to 50% of the employment costs (including employer's PRSI) of the awardee can be charged to the award. The budget sought may reflect regular increments as per the IUA salary scale.

Laureate award team members

Staffing category	Approved rates
PhD Students/ research masters students[16]	The rate of postgraduate stipend should be €18,500 per annum with registration fees capped at €5,750 per annum for all students.
Postdoctoral fellows and research assistants	Applicants should use the Irish Universities Association's researcher salary scale for research assistants and postdoctoral fellows. The point on the scale should be determined by qualifications and experience and the rationale for selecting this point should be explained in the budget justification. The requested costs must include provisions for pension and employer's PRSI. These costs can be pro-rated where appropriate. **See section below on the pension costs for IRC funding awards.**
Other	Other personnel costs may be considered e.g. technicians, digital archivists. These costs must be explicitly justified, and institutional salary scales can be used for this category. As part of the award acceptance process, the Research Office must provide documentary evidence of the salary scale used.

Pensions Costs

Government is continuing to examine the provisions of the Single Pension Scheme and the implications for research funders in relation to the provision of pension costs as part of the total employment costs of researchers. In the context of budgeting for 2022 (when the awards under this call will start), and in order to ensure that budgets are complete, applicants are requested to **include** pension costs in the calculation of employment costs for postdoctoral researchers and research assistants. The IRC is keen to ensure long-term certainty for all stakeholders in relation to the pension

[16] Taught masters/diploma/taught doctorate (not including structured PhDs) students cannot be recruited to a Laureate award.

funding of single pension scheme members, and HEIs/RPOs should note that further changes to guidance may occur when a definitive position is issued or confirmed by government. If such definitive guidance confirms that pensions are to be paid centrally the IRC will require any pension costs budgeted in each Laureate proposal to be returned to the IRC. In this scenario no adjustment to overheads will be required.

Recruiting staff

The recruitment of staff and students must be done openly, through public advertisement. Staff and students must be recruited for the specific project and awarded topic only. Recruitment of staff can commence before the start date of the project and costs for recruitment can be charged to the project (outside the official start date) with the prior approval of the Council.

Institutions must continue to adhere to the principles of the Employment Control Framework, including ceilings for core posts as communicated to the institutions by the HEA.

Eligible research expenses

All research expenses must be strongly justified. Should a particular expense be insufficiently justified within a successful application, the Council reserves the right to remove/amend this particular expense item at the award offer stage.

Travel costs	Costs for travel, subsistence and accommodation may be requested. Details on the number of trips, location, purpose and duration of the trips should be provided and the team members involved. Requests for travel and accommodation should be in line with institutional rates and norms for travel and accommodation. Business class travel is not an eligible cost.
Materials & consumables	Where relevant to the viability of the project, the following research costs may be sought but are not limited to: books and journals; animal costs; bench fees; laboratory fees; recruitment fees; survey costs; costs for participants in focus groups; etc. Costs related to data management for the duration of the project can be included in this category. 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.
Publication costs	Publication costs can include the following but are not limited to: copyediting, indexing, copyright, images, proofreading, open access costs etc. Archival and digitization costs may be included in this category. The Council strongly encourages the use of open access publishers. It is the Council's expectation that all publication costs should be incurred during the period of the award rather than being built into a budget as an anticipated expenditure after the award has concluded. If the costs are not incurred during the lifetime of the award, the funds cannot be transferred to any other budget heading and must be returned to the Council.
Dissemination and knowledge exchange costs	Costs associated with the dissemination of the research, seminar/conference attendance (provide details of name and location where possible) and other channels of dissemination and material; e.g. leaflets, reports, websites and other knowledge exchange activities.

Access to research infrastructures and supports	Research infrastructures are facilities, resources and services that are used by research communities to conduct research and foster innovation in their fields. They include: major scientific equipment (or sets of instruments), knowledge-based resources such as collections, archives and scientific data, e-infrastructures such as data and computing systems and communication networks and any other tools that are essential to achieve excellence in research and innovation. They may be 'single-sited', 'virtual' or 'distributed'.[17] Charges for access to facilities and services not directly available to the applicant, such as the costs associated with commissioning specific experiments in research facilities and National Testbeds (e.g. ICHEC, Tyndall, CRANN, etc.) and access to necessary facilities, services, archives which are not available in the host institution, (i.e. consultancy fees, methodological support, bio banking, Clinical Research Facility support, MRI facilities) may be requested. Requests may also be included for accessing international databases and facilities or for the commissioning of experiments in international facilities/research labs where appropriately detailed. Justification should be provided where the required infrastructure is not available in Ireland. Supports can include training for the awardee and team members where it advances the project or the career development of the team members and is not provided by the host institution.
Relocation expenses	Only applies to applicants who are moving to Ireland from another country specifically to take up the award. A maximum of €5,000 can be sought under this heading and can only be sought for the first year of the award.
Overheads	Overheads can be charged at a rate of 25% of direct costs less equipment.
Equipment	For equipment costs, provide details and justification for any small items of equipment being sought. The Council will pay particular attention to any larger equipment requests. 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.

Ineligible Research Expenses

Examples of ineligible costs include:

- Journal subscriptions;
- Fees for speakers (honoraria);
- Legal fees;
- Membership fees;
- Smartphones;
- Subventions to publishers.

[17] European Commission (2016), *European Charter for Access to Research Infrastructures: Principles and Guidelines for Access and Related Services*, p.9.

8. APPENDIX 3 - GUIDANCE ON THE SEX-GENDER DIMENSION IN RESEARCH CONTENT

Excellent research fully considers the potential biological sex and social gender dimensions as key analytical and explanatory variables. If relevant sex-gender issues are missed or poorly addressed, research results will be partial and potentially biased. In worst-case scenarios poor consideration of the sex-gender dimension in research can result in real-world applications based on inaccurate results or conceptions. Full consideration of the sex-gender dimension in research content is a requirement for all Irish Research Council awards and is a requirement of Horizon Europe funding.

The integration of the sex-gender dimension in research is commonly mistaken for the integration of gender balance in research teams. These are two distinct matters, and the gender balance of a team should not be used to answer the sex-gender dimension in research question.

We recommend this short video from the European Commission on the integration of sex/gender dimension in research: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=67sbLrJAflQ.

Definitions

Sex refers to a set of biological attributes in humans and animals. It is primarily associated with physical and physiological features including chromosomes, gene expression, hormone levels and function, and reproductive/sexual anatomy. Sex is usually categorized as female or male.

Gender refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviours, expressions and identities of girls, women, boys, men, and gender diverse people. It influences how people perceive themselves and each other, how they act and interact, and the distribution of power and resources in society. Gender is usually conceptualized as a binary (girl/woman and boy/man) yet there is considerable diversity in how individuals and groups understand, experience, and express it.

Irish charity, BelongTo provides a list of terminology associated with gender: www.belongto.org/parents/lets-talk-terminology/

Resources

The following links provide positive and negative examples that result from the inclusion or exclusion of sex and gender in research respectively. These may be useful for applicants to complete the Sex-Gender dimension statement in the application:

General

- Integrating Gender into Research IGAR
- Stanford University resource concerning the sex-gender aspects of research

The following examples demonstrate these principles in the panel domains relevant to the Laureate programme:

Life Sciences

- Online training for integrating sex and gender in health research
- Article about the dangers of drug testing on all-male animal populations (animal studies, drug design)

- Gender research focus in agricultural technology and botanical science (agriculture, botanical science)

Physical Science and Engineering

- Transport Infrastructure Ireland report on the implications of transport design for women in Ireland (transportation engineering)
- Machine learning reinforcing gender stereotypes (machine learning)
- Oxfam study about the gendered impacts of mining (geoscience)
- https://nvlpubs.nist.gov/nistpubs/SpecialPublications/NIST.SP.1270-draft.pdf (mathematics, statistics, and computing)

Social Science

- Book by Trine Rogg Korsvik & Linda M. Rustad on the gender dimension in research (multiple examples provided in the chapter, Safe Societies)

Humanities

- Article on urban design principles that take into account the needs of women and minority groups (urban design)

Toolkit: Gender in EU-funded research

This toolkit aims to give the research community practical tools to integrate gender aspects into their research, including equal opportunities for women and men and the sex-gender dimension of research, thereby contributing to excellence in research.

- Toolkit Link

Investing in a sex-gender-sensitive approach to the research content makes for higher quality and validity. If research takes into account the differences between men and women in the research population, the results will be more representative. General categories such as 'people', 'patients' or 'users' do not distinguish between men and women.

Research based on such categories may well draw partial conclusions based on partial data. For example, research on a new breast cancer treatment should include male patients, so as to draw a complete picture. Most basic research with animal models focuses on males to the exclusion of females (Zucker et al., 2010; Marts et al., 2004). Research on economic migrants cannot limit itself to male points of view if it wants to understand the whole migrant population.

How to consider the potential gender dimension and implications for your research

1. **Research ideas and hypotheses:** The relevance of sex-gender for and within the subject matter needs to be analysed and an assessment made of the state of knowledge in this respect. The formulation of hypotheses can draw upon previous research and existing literature. Indeed, the body of knowledge on sex-gender issues has been steadily growing over recent decades and can serve as interesting reference material to build new hypotheses for future research.
2. **Project design and research methodology:** While research methodologies may vary, they all strive to represent (aspects of) reality. Whenever this reality concerns humans, any sound methodology should differentiate between the sexes/genders and take into account the

male/female and/or men's and women's situations equally. Groups such as 'citizens', 'patients', 'consumers', 'victims' or 'children' are potentially too general as categories.

3. **Research implementation:** Data collection tools (such as questionnaires and interview checklists) should be gender-sensitive, use gender neutral language, and should make it possible to detect the different realities of men and women. This will help to avoid gender bias. For example, answers to be provided by the 'head of household' are not necessarily valid for all household members.
4. **Data analysis:** In most research concerning human subjects, data are routinely disaggregated by sex, which would logically lead to analyses according to sex. However to date this is still not common practice. Systematically taking sex as a central variable and analysing other variables with respect to it (e.g. sex and age, sex and income, sex and mobility, sex and labour) will provide significant and useful insights. Involving gender-balanced end-user groups in the course of the research is also a good way of guaranteeing the highest impact.
5. **Dissemination phase – reporting of data:** Collecting and analysing sex-gender-specific data is not enough if they are omitted from the published results. Sex-gender should be included in 'mainstream' publications as it is as much part of daily reality as any other variable studied. Specific dissemination actions (publications or events) for sex-gender findings can be considered. Institutions and departments that focus on gender should be included in the target groups for dissemination. Publications should use gender-neutral language.

Checklist for Sex-Gender in Research Content

- **Research ideas phase:** If the research involves humans as research objects, has the relevance of sex-gender to the research topic been analysed?

  If the research does not directly involve humans, are the possibly differentiated relations of men and women to the research subject sufficiently clear?

  Have you reviewed literature and other sources relating to sex-gender differences in the research field?

- **Proposal phase:** Does the methodology ensure that (possible) sex-gender differences will be investigated: that sex-gender differentiated data will be collected and analysed throughout the research cycle and will be part of the final publication?

  Does the proposal explicitly and comprehensively explain how sex-gender issues will be handled (e.g. in a specific work package)?

  Have possibly differentiated outcomes and impacts of the research on women and men been considered?

- **Research phase:** Are questionnaires, surveys, focus groups, etc. designed to unravel potentially relevant sex and/or gender differences in your data?

Are the groups involved in the project (e.g. samples, testing groups) gender-balanced? Is data analysed according to the sex variable? Are other relevant variables analysed with respect to sex?

- **Dissemination phase:** Do analyses present statistics, tables, figures and descriptions that focus on the relevant sex-gender differences that came up in the course of the project?

  Are institutions, departments and journals that focus on gender included among the target groups for dissemination, along with mainstream research magazines?

  Have you considered a specific publication or event on sex-gender-related findings?

9. APPENDIX 4 - RESOURCES ON DATA MANAGEMENT PLANS AND FAIR PRINCIPLES

- ☒ H2020 Programme (2016) Guidelines on FAIR Data Management in Horizon 2020
- ☒ H2020 Programme (2016) Guidelines on Open Access to Scientific Publications and Research Data in Horizon 2020.
- ☒ OpenAire - The OpenAIRE2020 project
- ☒ FAIR data principles FORCE 11
- ☒ ROAR- Registry of Open Access Repositories
- ☒ OpenDoar – Directory of Open Access Repositories
- ☒ Registry of Research Data Repositories
- ☒ NORF – National Open Research Forum

10. APPENDIX 5 - ETHICS SELF-ASSESSMENT TABLE

Applicants are required to consider carefully ethical implications of their proposed research. The ethics self-assessment table below, which is drawn from Horizon2020, should be completed by applicants as they are undertaking the relevant assessment in advance of completing the application form in the online system. Detailed guidance on completing the ethics table below and further information is available on European Commission's website.

Section 1: HUMAN EMBRYOS / FOETUSES					
Does your research involve Human Embryonic Stem Cells (hESCs)?		YES	NO	Information to be provided in two-page document	Documents to be kept on file.[18]
If **YES**:	Will they be directly derived from embryos within this project?			*Research cannot be funded*	*Research cannot be funded*
	Are they previously established cells lines?			Origin and line of cells. Details on licensing and control measures by the competent authorities of the Member States involved.	Copies of relevant Ethics Approval.
Does your research involve the use of human embryos? If YES:				Origin of embryos. Details on recruitment, inclusion and exclusion criteria and informed consent procedures.	Copies of relevant Ethics Approval. Informed Consent Forms. Information Sheets.
Does your research involve the use of human foetal tissues / cells? If YES:				Origin of human foetal tissues / cells. Details on informed consent procedures.	Copies of relevant Ethics Approval. Informed Consent Forms. Information Sheets.
Section 2: HUMANS					

[18] These documents should be kept on file and furnished to the Council if requested.

Does your research involve human participants?		YES	NO	Information to be provided in one of the subcategories below:	
If YES:	Are they volunteers for social or human sciences research?			Details on recruitment, inclusion and exclusion criteria and informed consent procedures.	Copies of relevant Ethics Approval. Informed Consent Forms. Information Sheets.
	Are they persons unable to give informed consent?			Information above plus: details on the procedures to obtain approval from guardian / legal representative. Details on the procedures used to ensure that there is no coercion on participants.	Documents as above.
	Are they vulnerable individuals or groups?			Details on the type of vulnerability. Details on recruitment, inclusion and exclusion criteria and informed consent procedures. This must demonstrate appropriate efforts to ensure fully informed understanding of the implications of participation.	Documents as above.
	Are they children / minors?			Information above plus: details on the age range. Details on children / minors assent procedures and parental consent. This must demonstrate appropriate efforts to ensure fully informed	Documents as above.

				understanding of the implications of participation. Describe the procedures to ensure welfare of the child / minor.	
	Are they patients?			Details on the nature of disease / condition / disability. Details on recruitment, inclusion and exclusion criteria and informed consent procedures. Details on policy for incidental findings.	Documents as above.
	Are they healthy volunteers for medical studies?			Information as above	Copies of relevant Ethical Approvals.
Does your research involve physical interventions on the study participants?		YES	NO		
If **YES**:	Does it involve invasive techniques (e.g. collection of human cells or tissues, surgical or medical interventions, invasive studies on the brain, TMS etc.)?			Risk assessment for each technique and as a whole	Copies of relevant Ethical Approvals.
	Does it involve collection of biological samples?			Details on the type of samples to be collected. Details on procedures for collection of biological samples.	Copies of relevant Ethical Approvals.
If your research involves processing of genetic information, please also complete the section "Protection of Personal Data" i.e. Section 4.					
Section 3: HUMAN CELLS / TISSUES					
Does your research involve human cells or tissues? (Other than from "Human Embryos/Foetuses" i.e. Section 1)		YES	NO	Information to be provided in one of the subcategories below: details of the cells and tissue types involved.	Documents to be provided at award stage

If **YES**	Are they available commercially?			Details on cell types and provider (company or other).	
	Are they obtained within this project?			Details on cell types.	Copies of relevant Ethical Approvals.
	Are they obtained within another project?			Details on cell types. Provider of the cell types. Country in which the material is located.	Authorisation by primary owner of cell/tissues (including references to ethics approval).
	Are they deposited in a biobank?			Details on cell types. Name of the biobank. Country in which the biobank is located	Details on biobank and access to it.
Section 4: PROTECTION OF PERSONAL DATA					
Does your research involve personal data collection and/or processing? *It should be noted that:* *"Personal data" can be defined as identifiers: any information that could, in any way, lead to the specific identification of one unique person, such as name, social security numbers, date of birth, address, mails IPs etc.* *Any data that you are using should be taken into account, regardless of the method by which they are/were collected: for example, through interviews, questionnaires, direct online retrieval etc.* *Processing should be understood to not only include data usage, but also merging, transformation, transfer and,*		YES	NO	Information to be provided	

more generally, as all actions using data for research purposes.					
If **YES:**	Does it involve the collection and/or processing of sensitive personal data (e.g. health, sexual lifestyle, ethnicity, political opinion, religious or philosophical conviction)? *It should be noted that this involvement applies, whatever the research topic or Programme. The above list is only indicative. If the type of data that you will be handling in your research is not included the list, it does not mean you should not take into consideration the subject of data processing.*	YES	NO	Details of the data safety procedures (compliance with privacy by design and protection of privacy/confidentiality). Details of procedures for data collection, storage, protection, retention, transfer if any, destruction or re-use. Explicit confirmation of compliance with national and EU legislation	Copies of relevant Ethical Approvals for the collection of personal data. Information sheets. Informed Consent Forms.
	Does it involve processing of genetic information?	YES	NO	*Information as above*	Copies of relevant Ethical Approvals for the processing of genetic data.
	- Does it involve tracking or observation of participants? *It should be noted that this issue is not limited to surveillance or localization data. It also applies to Wan data such as IP address, MACs, cookies etc.*			*Information above* ***plus:*** Details on methods used for tracking or observing participants.	

Does your research involve further processing of previously collected personal data (secondary use)? If **YES:** *It should be noted that this question is threefold. If you answer YES to any of the 3 questions below, you fall within its scope:* *Are you planning to use pre-existing other data sets or sources and/or does your research involve further processing of previously collected data?* *Does your research involve merging existing data sets?* *Are you planning to share data with non-EU member states?*	YES	NO	Details of the database used or to the source of data. Confirmation of open public access to the data or of authorisation for secondary use. More specifically, detail how this consent was obtained specifically in case of public archives usage (Automatic opt in, etc.). Permissions from the owner/manager of the data sets. A mitigation procedure to avoid private appropriation of the data. A mitigation procedure to avoid the unforeseen disclosure of personal information (i.e.: mosaic effect). Explicit confirmation of compliance with national and EU legislation. Conformity to Safe Harbour, if applicable.	Document confirming open public access to the data (e.g. print screen from Website) or authorisation by primary owner of data. Informed Consent Forms (if applicable)

Section 5: ANIMALS	

Does your research involve animals?		YES	NO	Information to be provided	Documents to be provided at award stage
				Details on implementation of the Three Rs (Replacement, Reduction and Refinement). Justification of animal use and why alternatives cannot be used. Details on species and rationale for their use, numbers of animals to be used, nature of the experiments, procedures and techniques to be used in a chronological order. Details on procedures to ensure animal welfare during their lifetime and during the experiment and how its impact will be minimised. Details on severity assessment and justification.	Copies of all appropriate authorisations for the supply of animals and the project experiments. Copies of training certificates/personal licences of the staff involved in animal experiments.
If **YES**	Are they vertebrates or live cephalopods?			Information as above	Documents as above.
	Are they non-human primates (NHP)?			*Information above* ***plus:*** Confirmation of Compliance with Art. 8, 10, 28, 31,	Documents as above. Personal history file.

				32 (Directive 2010/63/EU). Discussion of specific ethics issues related to their use.	
	Are they genetically modified?[19]			Confirmation of compliance with relevant EU and national legislation and details as for no genetically modified animals above.	Copies of all appropriate authorisations for the supply of animals and the project experiments. Copies of the training certificates/personal licences of the staff involved in animal experiments.
	Are they cloned farm animals?			*Information as above*	Documents as above
	Are they an endangered species?			*Information above* ***plus:*** Discussion of specific ethics issues related to their use.	Documents as above
Please indicate the species involved (Maximum number of characters allowed: 1000)					
Section 6: THIRD COUNTRIES					
Does your research involve third countries? *Countries:* (Maximum number of characters allowed: 1000)		YES	NO	Information to be provided: Details on activities carried out in non-EU countries	Signed declaration to confirm compliance with ethical standards and guidelines of H2020. Copies of relevant Ethics Approvals from EU country host and non-EU country (double ethics review, is possible).

[19] DIRECTIVE 2009/41/EC OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 6 May 2009 on the contained use of genetically modified micro-organisms and REGULATION (EC) No 1946/2003 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 15 July 2003 on transboundary movements of genetically modified organisms – see specifically its articles 4 to 11 and its annexes III to V

Do you plan to use local resources (e.g. animal and/or human tissue samples, genetic material, live animals, human remains, materials of historical value, endangered fauna or flora samples, etc.)? If **YES:**			Details on type of local resources to be used and modalities for their use.	In case of human resources, copies of relevant Ethics Approvals. In case of animals, plants, micro-organisms and associated traditional knowledge, document showing compliance with Convention on Biodiversity (e.g. access permit and benefit sharing agreement).
Do you plan to import any material, including personal data, from non-EU/third countries into the EU? ***If your research involves importing data, please also complete the section "Protection of Personal Data" i.e. Section 4.***			Details on type of materials or data to be imported.	As above (use of local resources) and: Material Transfer Agreement (MTA)
If YES: Specify the materials and countries involved (maximum number of characters allowed: 1000)				
Do you plan to export any material, including personal data, from the EU to third/non-EU countries? ***If your research involves exporting data, please also complete the section "Protection of Personal Data" i.e. Section 4.***			Details on type of materials or data to be imported.	Authorisation for export from EU. Material Transfer Agreement (MTA).
If YES: Specify the materials and countries involved (maximum number of characters allowed: 1000)				

If your research involves low and/or lower-middle income countries, are any benefit-sharing actions planned?			Details on benefit sharing measures. Details on responsiveness to local research needs. Details on procedures to facilitate effective capacity building.	As above (use of local resources) and narrative document describing benefit sharing, responsiveness to local research needs and capacity building.
Could the situation in the country put the individuals taking part in the research at risk?			Details on safety measures that will be implemented, including personnel training	Insurance cover.

Section 7: ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND SAFETY[20]				
Does your research involve the use of elements that may cause harm to the environment, animals or plants? If **YES:**	YES	NO	Information to be provided: Details on safety measures to be implemented.	Documents to be provided at award stage: Safety classification of laboratory.

[20] DIRECTIVE 2000/54/EC OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 18 September 2000 - On the protection of workers from risks related to exposure to biological agents at work – see specifically its Chapter II and article 16; DIRECTIVE 2009/41/EC OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 6 May 2009 on the contained use of genetically modified micro-organisms – see specifically its annex IV; DIRECTIVE 2008/56/EC OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 17 June 2008 establishing a framework for community action in the field of marine environmental policy (Marine Strategy Framework Directive) – specifically its Annex III; COUNCIL DIRECTIVE 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora Council directive 79/409 EEC on the conservation of wild birds and Council Regulation (EC) No 338/97 on the protection of species of wild fauna and flora by regulating trade therein

					GMO authorisation if necessary.
Does your research deal with endangered fauna and/or flora /protected areas?[21] If **YES:**				Confirmation of compliance with international/national/local guidelines/legislation.	Specific approvals, if applicable
Does your research involve the use of elements that may cause harm to humans, including research staff? If **YES:**				Details on health and safety procedures.	University safety procedures. Safety classification of laboratory.
Does your research involve the use of elements that may cause harm to humans, including research staff?				Details on health and safety procedures.	
If **YES**	Does your research involve harmful biological agents?[5]				
	Does your research involve harmful chemical and explosive agents?[6]				
	Does your research involve harmful radioactive agents?[7]				
	Does your research involve other harmful				

[21] See, in particular:
Directive 2008/56/EC; Council Directive 92/43/EEC; Council Directive 79/409/EEC Council Regulation (EC) No 338/97
Council Decision 93/626/EEC

	materials or equipment, e.g. high-powered laser systems?				
Section 8: DUAL USE					
Does your research have the potential for military applications?		YES	NO	Information to be provided	Narrative document describing the potential dual use implications of the research.
If **YES**	Does your research have an exclusive civilian application focus?			Explanations on the exclusive civilian focus of the research	
	Will your research use or produce goods or information that will require export licenses in accordance with legislation on dual use items?			Details on what goods and information used and produced in your research will need export licences	
	Does your research affect current standards in military ethics – e.g., global ban on weapons of mass destruction, issues of proportionality, discrimination of combatants and accountability in drone and autonomous robotics developments, incendiary or laser weapons?			Details on how the research might affect current standards in military ethics.	
Section 9: MISUSE					
Does your research have the potential for malevolent/criminal/terrorist abuse?		YES	NO	Information to be provided	Narrative document describing the potential dual

					use implications of the research
If **YES**	Does your research involve information on/or the use of biological-, chemical-, nuclear/radiological-security sensitive materials and explosives, and means of their delivery?			Details on the legal requirements of the possession of such items and proposed risk mitigation strategies.	
	Does your research involve the development of technologies or the creation of information that could have severe negative impacts on human rights standards (e.g. privacy, stigmatization, discrimination), if misapplied?			Details on measures to prevent malevolent abuse. Details on risk mitigation strategies.	
	Does your research have the potential for terrorist or criminal abuse e.g. infrastructural vulnerability studies, cybersecurity related research?			Details on measures to prevent malevolent abuse. Details on risk mitigation strategies.	
Section 10: OTHER ETHICS ISSUES					
Are there any other ethics issues that should be taken into consideration? Please specify: (Maximum number of characters allowed: 1000)		YES	NO	Information to be provided	Any relevant document.

Resources for completing ethics self-assessment,

☒ How to complete your ethics self-assessment

☒ Horizon 2020 Online Manual – Ethics – documents for Horizon Europe under development at the time of publication

☒ Ethics for researchers

☒ Strategy to minimize ethical misconduct

☒ Textbook on ethics in research

☒ Guidance Note for Researchers and Evaluators of Social Sciences and Humanities Research