

FAQs for Laureate Starting and Consolidator Awards 2021/22 (Seventeenth/Final round - FAQs now closed – 05/11/21)

This document includes FAQs from all previous rounds. The final queries are headed in **orange**. Queries from all previous rounds are headed in **purple**.

Where several questions may be answered by a single response, the questions are presented together, and a single response is provided underneath these.

Throughout this document, 'HEI/RPO' = Higher Education Institution/Research Performing Organisation.

Note that the call document was most recently updated on 15/10/21. Where appropriate, FAQs relating to changed sections have been flagged. Updated answers are preceded by two '**' and the date of the update.

Questions currently relate to the following headings:

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A. Eligibility for the call

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

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

Q: Is it correct that, if I submit an application, the university has to guarantee that I will be hired in case of success?

A: No, you must seek the approval of your proposed hosting HEI/RPO and School (or equivalent) to host you for the duration of the Laureate Award. This approval is sought at full proposal stage.

**[30/07/21] This response has been updated.

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

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

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

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

**[09.07.21] *Additionally, please note that section 3.4.4 of the Call Document provides further information that may of relevance to international applicants.*

Q: I was conferred for my PhD on the 25th of November 2018. The eligibility criteria state that eligible candidates for Starting Laureate Awards must have had their PhD conferred before 10th of November 2018, which would make me ineligible. However, in a footnote, the call also states; 'The official date of the PhD is defined as the year in which the PhD was conferred, i.e. the year stated on the official PhD certificate'. Does this mean that only the

conferral year is considered and not the exact date? Would this therefore make me eligible to apply?

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

**** [09.07.21] Note that, for greater clarity, the text in this section (3.1.1) of the Call Document has been updated (07.07.21) to:**

“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.”

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

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

Q: If a career break has been taken for periods of maternity leave in another country (and another institution), what documentation is required? Would children’s birth certs be sufficient? Thank you.

A: As stated in the Call Document ([here](#)), if an applicant wishes to extend the period of eligibility, they must provide documentation as evidence. This might include a birth certificate and documents from the HR Office of their employer at the time of the eligible break(s). Only career breaks taken by the applicant as a statutory entitlement will be considered eligible.

Q: I would need to supply a document stating my parental leave. Would it be acceptable to submit a letter from the institution where I worked stating the specific dates I was on paternity and parental leave?

A: Yes, this will suffice.

Q: I was unemployed for a period of several months after my son was born (finished of contract and waited to start the next one). Is this considered a career break?

A: Section 3.2 of the Call Document ([here](#)) states that only career breaks taken by the applicant as a statutory entitlement will be considered eligible. If the applicant claimed state maternity benefit, then documents confirming this can be used to claim the 18-month career break. Eligible 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.

Q: If an applicant was conferred in November 2013, but their PhD parchment states July 2013 (to match the date they did their viva), which date would the IRC accept as valid for the Laureate call?

A: We will use the date on the official PhD transcript, as described in the Call Document (available [here](#), 3.1.1-3.1.2), “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. The information provided by applicants must be verifiable: it will not be acceptable for the applicant to claim a different date to that which is listed on the parchment or other official documentation”.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- Starting Grant

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

- Consolidator Grant
- Advanced Grant.

Q: Is it possible to hold a Laureate Award side-by-side with another research grant of similar size, that is, for a related but nevertheless independent research project? (The other funding would not be IRC or ERC.)

A: Applicants are eligible to apply for Starting or Consolidator Laureate Awards unless they have previously held, or currently hold, one of the specifically named disqualifying awards in section 3.5 of the Call Document ([here](#)). As outlined in the Council's [Terms and Conditions for principal investigator led awards](#), "Where the awardee is in receipt of additional funding from another source, the Irish Research Council reserves the right to request a time management plan". A minimum time commitment of 25% is required for Laureate Awards.

Q: An interested staff member holds a 0.5FTE lecturer post. The call states a whole-time employee so that funds are not shared with another institution. However, as this staff member's other employment is for clinical work as a GP, there wouldn't be another institution involved. Would this person be eligible on this basis?

Q: Eligibility query from Applicant: We have a query in from a potential applicant on their eligibility to apply for the IRC Laureate Awards. The applicant is in the category "will be conferred by the proposed eligible host institution with a contract of employment of sufficient duration to cover the term of the award" and is planning on holding a **joint appointment** (50% academic, 50% clinical). Would this individual be eligible to apply?

A: No, as stated in part 3.4.3 of the Call Document ([here](#)) "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".

Q: Can a researcher make an application where they are employed half-time (50% FTE – working only part time). If successful would the applicant have to be employed on a full-time basis by TCD for the duration of the award (considering that a minimum of 25% of time is required to be given to the Laureate Award) or could they continue with a part time contract issued by the HEI?

Q: Can researchers employed on a part time contract apply to the scheme (will a full-time contract have to be provided by the School)?

A: If successful, the awardee may remain on a 0.5 FTE contract (assuming they are on a permanent contract or a contract that covers the duration of the award). However, any requested replacement costs will be pro-rated. The minimum time commitment for Laureate is 25%, based on full-time employment. This would remain the same for part-time contracts. In the case of 0.5 FTE, the awardee would be expected to dedicate 50% of their part-time working hours to the award.

**** [09.07.21] Note that, for greater clarity, text has been added to the relevant section (3.5.5) of the Call Document (07.07.21):**

"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."

Q: Would Tenure Track contracts be treated as permanent?

A: Applicants should discuss specific contract details with their proposed eligible HEI/RPO.

Q: My contract of IRC postdoctoral fellowship is up to Dec. 31, 2022. Am I eligible for application (starting Laureate Award)?

A: The question does not provide sufficient information to confirm eligibility. It is recommended that the applicant contacts the Research Office and/or Head of School at the intended host institution for clarification.

Q: If you have applied for an ERC but have not gotten the results can you still apply for the IRC?

A: As stated in section 3.5.4 of the Call Document ([here](#)), 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.

Q: How does the process work if you are applying from the UK and plan to undertake the work in an Irish institution? Is the application theoretically from the Irish institution or a combined application with a UK HEI? Thanks

Q: Can you clarify whether external applicants are allowed (i.e. not currently on staff of an HEI) and if so the level of contribution required from the host institution to the salary costs?

A: Applicants must engage with an eligible HEI/RPO to ensure that, if their application is successful, a contract of employment that covers the duration of the award will be supplied. In addition, all awardees must be based whole-time within, and employed by, the proposed eligible Irish HEI/RPO for the period of the award. Awards will not be made on a joint appointment basis with other institutions.

Q: So just to clarify – the Athena swan award is mandatory – what if your institute does not have this?

A: Eligible host institutions are those listed on the IRC website ([here](#)). As stated there, exceptions to the Athena Swan accreditation are made in recognition of the contribution of non-HEI publicly funded research performers to Ireland's research base. Thus, other Research Performing Organisations (RPOs) may also be eligible, subject to a qualification process, to apply to the Council's postdoctoral and project schemes. Currently, these organisations are:

- Economic & Social Research Institute
- Teagasc
- The Discovery Programme
- The Marine Institute

Q: What are acceptable forms of evidence of supporting documents for extending eligibility?

A: Eligible career breaks are fully explained in section 3.2 of the Call Document ([here](#)).

Q: Can you provide more details on Eligibility for Consolidator while holding an IRC Laureate Starter please

A: Current holders of a Starting Laureate Award can apply for a Consolidator Laureate Award if they meet the eligibility criteria. As with the ERC Starting Grant, applicants holding an IRC Laureate Award that finishes within twelve months of the Laureate Awards Programme call deadline (4pm, 10 Nov 2021) may apply for a Consolidator Laureate Award. See section 3.5.3 of the Call Document ([here](#)).

Q: The call document states that applicants cannot apply twice to this call. If an applicant has applied once for starter award once does this imply s/he can apply only one more time for the entire call or would they be eligible to apply for the Starter award once more and the Consolidator award twice?

A: As described in section 3.6.1. of the call document, “applicants may apply for **each** of the Laureate Awards a maximum of twice.”

Q: ‘I was wondering if you could confirm regarding eligibility for the IRC laureate grant, please. I have my PhD cert award on 10 February 2010. so I get 36 months added to my years which brings my eligibility forward to 10 February 2013. I suppose I am not eligible for the grant as the cut off is 10 November?’

A: It is not stated in the question to which of the two grants, Starting or Consolidator, that this query is referring. The Starting and Consolidator Laureate Awards are two separate Awards which are being run at the same time.

- Applicants for Starting Laureate Awards must have been awarded their first PhD between **10 Nov 2013 to 10 Nov 2018 (inclusive)**.
- Applicants for Consolidator Laureate Awards must have been awarded their first PhD between **10 Nov 2006 to 10 Nov 2013 (inclusive)**.

For both awards, an applicant’s period of eligibility may be extended by the inclusion of properly documented eligible career breaks, as described in section 3.2.1 of the Call Document.

If the information provided is both complete and correct, the person described in this query **is eligible for a Consolidator Laureate Award**, as they fall within the eligibility window for that award. This person **is ineligible for a Starting Laureate Award**, as they fall outside the eligibility window for that award.

Q: An applicant; not on a permanent academic contract but who is funded 100% from a grant in their own name wishes to apply for a Starting Grant. However their existing grant afforded them to start their own (small) lab and provide supervision. So they are working independently. Would this perceived early stage ‘independence’ preclude them from making an application to the StG?

A: No, any person who passes the eligibility criteria for the call is eligible to apply. Applicants to Starting Laureate Awards should be able to demonstrate a promising career record. As

stated in the Laureate Awards Call Document (section 3.5.5) all awardees must commit a minimum of 25% of their time (full-time equivalent) to their award.

Q: If an applicant requests 50% salary from the Laureate award do they have to commit 50% of their time? Is it possible to claim 50% of salary but commit only 25% of their time (the minimum allowed) to the grant?

A: As stated in the Laureate Awards Call Document (section 3.5.5) all awardees must commit a minimum of 25% of their time (full-time equivalent) to their award. All costs should be fully justified. It is important to note that value for money is part of the assessment criteria for proposals.

Q: I graduated in **November** XXXX from X University, and I have an official letter from my University to state this. My PhD certification, however, has the date of submission of corrections following my viva voce recorded on it (**July** XXXX). Can I confirm that my graduation date (**November** XXXX) will be used when calculating my eligibility for the Laureate scheme?

A: Unfortunately, this is not the case. The call document is quite clear that it is the *date stated on the official PhD certificate or transcript* (i.e. **July** XXXX) that must be taken as the conferral date. It is from this date that eligibility must be measured. The purpose of this requirement is to ensure a level playing field and fairness in the eligibility criteria for the Laureate calls.

Please note that applicants who have submitted an EOI are free to change their proposal from a Starting to a Consolidator, or vice versa, before the call deadline – as long as they fulfil the eligibility criteria for the other call. Indeed, partly for this reason, the EOI did not require applicants to specify to which of the awards they wished to submit.

Q: On page 4 of the application form template after you check yes, you request an extension, it asks you to list "number of months and reason: which would just be 18 months for maternity leave. But there follows a box below that for career break with "from" and "to". Does that need to be filled out as well for those who are indicating extensions for maternity leave? If so, do they fill it out for 18 months which is the automatic extension period applied to for maternity leave or do they insert the specific amount/dates that were taken (approx 6 months).

A: The reason the career break section is laid out as it is on the online application is to allow the IRC to only share part of the information with peer and panel reviewers.

The first box, number of months and reason, is for internal use only, we need this information to verify the supporting documentation supplied and to verify the eligibility extension. This is not shared with reviewers.

The second box, career break with "from" and "to", is shared with the reviewer, we ask applicants to provide the exact dates so reviewers can cross reference these periods with possible gaps in the CV/track record.

Information pertaining to career breaks is limited to the reviewers to maintain the gender blinding and to ensure an unbiased process.

B part i. Eligible costs

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

A: "*Employment costs of Laureates who are permanent academic members of staff are not eligible costs*" refers to direct contributions to the principal investigator's (PI's) salary. Replacement costs, which contribute to the salary of an additional staff member who will cover some of the duties of the PI, are eligible.

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

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

Q: Question about Eligibility and job status: how about academics in short-term contracts? Let's you are in 3- year lecturer contract but you apply for 4 years of funding?

Q: Are tenure-track assistant professors eligible to apply if their current contract ends in 2024, but there is an expectation of passing the tenure review in 2023, resulting in a permanent contract?

Q: Could you please elaborate on the need for researchers to be guaranteed 4 years of full-time employment in order to be eligible?

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

**** [09.07.21] Note that in the updated Call Document (07.07.21) the relevant section has been updated to state the following:**

"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."

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

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

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

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

**** [09.07.21] Applicants should note that employment costs of Laureates who are permanent academic members of staff are not eligible costs under the Laureate Awards Programme.**

Q: In relation to research staff costs (e.g., research assistant, post doc), will IRC allow applicants to factor in a yearly increment, for each year of the research staff member’s employment contract?

A: Yes, increments in pay can be accounted for in the yearly breakdown of the budget for personnel.

**** [09.07.21] Note that wording relating to increments for research staff is now included in the updated Call Document (07.07.21) in Appendix 2:**

“The budget sought may reflect regular increments as per the IUA salary scale”.

Q: If my application gets funded (starting Laureate Award), will the fund be fully allocated to me or there will be any other shareholder?”

A: Laureate Awards are individual awards granted to the awardee. The awardee is responsible for the direction and management of the research project from a financial, legal, and ethical perspective. The host institution must ensure that all funds claimed and paid under the award are allowable, necessary, and reasonable for the conduct of the research project. Please see the IRC’s General Terms and Conditions for Principal Investigator-led Awards for further information ([here](#)).

Funding, apart from that allocated for equipment, is subject to 25% overhead at the host HEI/RPO. It is recommended that you seek approval for your proposed budget from the proposed hosting HEI/RPO.

Q: Does the budget allow purchasing small equipment needed for experimental works (e.g., €20K)? Is there any maximum budget allowed for equipment?

A: As described in appendix 2 of the Call Document ([here](#)), “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.” In addition, value for money is an important consideration under the review process.

Q: Is it possible to hold both the IRC starter Laureate Award and the new SFI/IRC pathway project grant simultaneously?

Q: If we have another SFI-IRC proposal under review. Can we still apply for IRC Laureate Award?

Q: Can an applicant hold a Royal Society – SFI University Research Fellowship and an IRC Laureate award at the same time?

Q: Is someone currently holding an IRC COALESCE award eligible to apply?

Q: Can holders of SFI-IRC Pathway award apply for IRC Laureate Awards?

A: As described in section 3.5.5 of the Call Document ([here](#)), successful applicants are expected to lead their individual teams and to devote a significant amount of time to their project. A minimum time commitment of 25% is required across all IRC project awards, as set out in the Laureate Call Document.

This does not exclude the possibility of an awardee holding other grants simultaneously, apart from those specifically named in the eligibility criteria.

Applicants should check the terms and conditions of the other award to ensure that it is permissible to hold both awards at the same time, if successful in both instances. For example, the Pathway programme does not permit awardees to apply for funding during the first year of their Pathway award.

Q: Research Programme Officer in my institution informed that, if the Laureate Award leads to a new contract, IRC will only contribute up to 50%. If this is correct, where do you envisage the remainder would come from? This would appear to restrict the award to the current permanent staff, as opposed to postdocs.

A: Please see Appendix 2 of the Call Document ([here](#)), ‘Principal Investigator costs’, particularly the second bullet point.

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.

Q: Is teaching buy out a legitimate cost in the budget?

A: Yes, teaching buyout is discussed in Appendix 2 of the Call Document ([here](#)). However, teaching buyout may not be sought simultaneously with contribution to the applicant’s salary during the course of the award.

*** [09.07.21 Note that, for greater clarity, the text in this section (Appendix 2) of the Call Document has been updated (07.07.21) to:*

“The two categories [i.e. teaching buyout and contribution to the applicant’s salary] are mutually exclusive and can both be claimed throughout the course of an award but never at the same time.”

Q: Do project collaborators get access to budget and if so what types of costs are allowed?

Q: Could you say more about eligible collaboration costs? The Call Documentation and FAQs don’t seem to include much detail on this

Q: Q: Should we include collaborators (industry/other academics) in the application? Is it encouraged?

Q: In terms of collaboration, can an applicant apply for collaboration Costs? What types of costs would be eligible? Can an applicant budget for a staff in the collaborator’s University either within or outside of Ireland?

A: The scheme is aimed at individual applicants rather than joint proposers. No more than one applicant can be named on an application. However, an applicant may include provision for team membership or collaboration of researchers from other institutions and organisations, including both national and international participation. The added value of any collaboration must be strongly demonstrated. However, personnel costs may not be allocated outside the host institution.

** [13/08/21] Collaborators may only be referred to by an initialised first name and their second name(s). E.g. Pauline Flynn becomes P. Flynn etc. In addition, it is the applicant’s responsibility to seek the consent of collaborators to be included on a proposal submitted to the Laureate Awards.

Q: Can costs be claimed for PPI (Public and patient involvement)? Not necessarily collaborators but stakeholders who contribute and give up time?

A: See the following text in the table of Eligible Research Expenses in Appendix 2 of the Call Document, under Materials and 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.** [...]”

Note, however, that 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.

Q: If an applicant applies for an award of a duration shorter than 4 years, is the amount they can apply for reduced pro rata?

A: As shown in the table in section 2.2 of the Call Document, applicants to the Starting and Consolidator Laureate Awards may apply for a grant of a minimum of 2 years in length or of up to a maximum of 4 years. Budgets requested for awards may also vary between €250,000 – €400,000 for Starting Laureate Awards, and €450,000 – €600,000 for Consolidator Laureate Awards.

For awards of shorter duration than 4 years, the amount which can be applied for is not reduced pro rata. However, applicants should note that 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.

Q: Just a clarification on eligibility – can a Postdoc employed on another’s PI’s grant (so not funded in their own name) apply?

A: The question does not provide sufficient information to confirm eligibility.

However, as described in section 3.4 of the Call Document, applicants must either hold an academic post or, upon receipt of a Laureate Award, **be conferred a contract of employment of sufficient duration to cover the term of the award** by the proposed eligible host institution. The contract of employment must enable the awardee **to independently direct the research project** and provide for the necessary accommodation and supporting infrastructure.

In addition, as described in Appendix 2 of the Call Document, 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. The disbursement of these funds is a matter for the awardee and their higher education institution or other funding agency.

Lastly, applicants to Laureate Starting Awards should be mindful that these are grants for researchers who are ready to work independently, and that applicants must have already shown the potential for research independence, maturity in managing an individual research project, mentorship, and supervision. Demonstration of these capacities is an important consideration under the review process.

Q: Just a clarification on pensions – are pension contribution costs covered by the Laureate Award?

A: As noted in Appendix 2, 'Pension Costs':

**** [05/11/21]**

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 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.

Q: Can applicants whose full salary is funded under another PI’s grant make an application – assuming they can commit to 25% of their time to the Laureate award if successful?

A: As stated in section 3.4.1 of the call document:

“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.”

A person in the position described is thus eligible to apply.

However, fundamentally, the description of the Laureate Starting award states that “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.” A person who is employed under another PI’s grant may not satisfy this fundamental criterion.

Q: If an applicant is not a permanent academic member of staff and their full salary is covered by another grant for the duration of the Laureate award, can they use the full award for team members, travel, equipment etc.? The applicant would not take any salary for themselves from the award.

A: Description of eligible costs for awardees are clearly described in Appendix 2 of the Laureate Awards Call Document. Under section b (contribution to principal investigator 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.” This contribution may therefore be 0% or, indeed, any percentage between 0% and 50%. However, please note that a minimum time commitment of 25% of full-time employment is required.

Applicants should be mindful that part of the evaluation criteria (described in section 5.4 of the Call Document) will ask reviewers to assess to what extent the proposed timescales, resources, budget, and applicant time commitment are adequate, good value for money, and properly justified.

Q: It is possible that some staff may ask for teaching replacement in each year of the budget and, in reality, the same person might be hired to ensure continuity. Can you confirm if, like members of the research team, these individuals would also be eligible for an annual increment i.e. moving beyond point 1 of the post doc scale?

A: The conditions of employment offered by the host institution should be confirmed at the institutional level. Replacement costs and the number of teaching hours that can be reallocated will vary according to individual HEI/RPO policies.

As stated in the Laureate Awards Call Document, replacement costs equivalent to point 1 on the IUA salary scale can be sought from the Laureate budget. This provision limits the amount of funds that can be sought, but it does not restrict the salary that can ultimately be paid to staff members where alternate funds are available.

Q: Is it the IRC's expectation that, if a post doc was hired on a full time basis over the 4 years [to cover an awardee's teaching responsibilities – see Appendix 2], they would be responsible for discharging all the applicant's academic responsibilities including those relating to administration or is their role only to discharge academic responsibilities relating to the teaching of students (i.e. taking on the full teaching responsibilities for the applicant)?

A: The specific arrangements for replacement costs, including the precise duties of the person hired to cover those costs, are the responsibility of the awardee and their host HEI/RPO to determine. As part of the reporting requirements, the awardee will be required to report on how the replacement costs have been allocated (Call Document: Appendix 2).

Q: Are subcontracting costs eligible?

A: As described in Appendix 2 of the Call Document, the recruitment of staff **must** be done openly, through public advertisement. Staff and students must be recruited for the specific project and topic **only**. Sub-contracting of core parts of the project is not an eligible cost.

In the same appendix, eligible research expenses are described. Under the heading *Access to research infrastructures and supports* it is stated that:

“... Requests may 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...”

Thus, where a specific instance of work cannot be undertaken within the awardee's HEI, the services of outside facilities may be commissioned. Strong justification must be provided for this work. Inability to carry out core parts of the project within the host HEI may indicate a poorly planned project.

B part ii. Eligible costs - recent questions

Q: Can the teaching replacement for the PI be done pro rata?

A: Yes

Q: Will the teaching replacement pay be incremental according to the IUA scale each year?

A: Yes, salary for teaching replacement pay can follow an incremental scale and is a matter for each institution to set, however the amount that can be claimed to cover replacement costs from the Laureate budget is limited to the equivalent value of point 1 of the IUA Salary Scale for postdoctoral Researchers (PD1).

Q: I am applying for the Starting Laureate for this year and just had a quick query about the budget. Namely: how to calculate the costs of teaching buy-out. The call document specified that teaching buy-out was to be determined by Point 1 on the post-doctoral research scale (which I am enclosing here). Can I confirm that a year of full teaching buy out is, according to this scale, €45,942.

And can I also confirm that if I want to support a postdoctoral fellow for a year, the PDI Point 1 is appropriate: € 38,632.

A: No, teaching buyout may be sought to a maximum value equivalent to point 1 on the PD1 IUA salary scale, which is €38,632 as of 08/09/21.

The IUA role and remuneration appropriate to support a postdoctoral fellow is defined by the IUA ([detailed here](#)), and varies depending upon that person's level of experience and expected responsibilities. Value for money is an important consideration under the evaluation criteria.

**** [24/09/21]** Note that the IUA pay scales are due to increase in October 2022. As awards will begin in September of 2022, the appropriate pay and employment costs for postdocs and technical staff employed by Laureate awardees will be defined by the revised amounts which will apply from October 2022. Teaching buyout may be sought to a maximum value equivalent to point 1 on the PD1 IUA salary scale (non-inclusive of employment costs), which will be **€40,023** in October 2022.

Q: IUA payscales - what about factoring in salary contingencies for post October 2022 in relation to expected rise in salaries in line with the new pay agreement for State employees. The HRB for example ask for a salary contingency to be built in.

Q: Re the new IUA scale – I have been advising people to use the Oct 22 tab on the scale, as projects won't start until 2022. This is correct?

A: Awards will begin in September of 2022, and IUA salaries are increasing in October of 2022, applicants should calculate salaries and employment costs of employees or postdocs to be contracted **using the scales that will apply from October 2022**. These scales are available on the [IUA website](#).

If teaching buyout is sought, this can be equal to the revised IUA PD1 (point 1) salary that will apply from October 2022, non-inclusive of employment costs.

The awardees **own** salary is a matter for the awardee and their host institution.

Q: Could you clarify the pension position. Our understanding is that funders were to wait until a final decision was reached with HEA, DFHERIS and DPER before they excluded pensions. I note that SFI has reinstated pension costs until a decision is made.

Q: can you confirm that pension contribution should be included at 20%. At a recent IUA meeting SFI indicated that it is in negotiation with in DPER about this issue and for the foreseeable future applications to SFI schemes were to include 20% pension contribution. Is this the case with the IRC Laureate call?

A: The IRC is continuing to work with government to progress the matter of the funding approach of researchers falling within the single pension scheme. The IRC has requested a

meeting of the funder, the relevant Departments and HEA as soon as possible. A number of Laureate applicants, following consultation internally within their institutions, have asked for confirmation that they should include researcher pension costs in the proposal budget. Having considered the matter in the context of when the expenditure will fall (2022 onwards), **the IRC wishes to confirm that the pension provision should now be included within the proposed budget to ensure that overall provision is made for the duration of the grant.**

Q: What salary scale should the applicant use; IUA salary scale or Host institution salary scale? Within the IUA salary scale, which salary point should the applicant consider for the total employment cost?

A: The specific salary pay-point or scale that a Laureate Award holder will have as part of their contract of employment with their hosting HEI or RPO is a matter for the award holder and their HEI/RPO. For budgeting for a Laureate award, the IRC requires applicants to include both the **salary and employment costs** when calculating their own pay.

Please consult other FAQs and the Call Document for information on the pay and employment costs of postdocs and technical staff contracted by the Laureate awardee.

Q: I wish to recruit an artist to my IRC project through the artist in residence unit at my institution. They have confirmed that I can pay this artist a stipend of €10,000 for their research through the university payroll. Is this an eligible cost?

Secondly, can I commission artwork from the artist if they invoice me/ the project - is this an eligible cost?

A: As detailed in the Call Document: 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. The process for recruitment of persons for which 'other personnel costs' are sought must be in line with institutional guidelines and be an open and transparent process.

Services procured as part of the project proposal must be in accordance with guidelines on public procurement and must be **fully justified** in the project budget.

Q: I wish to include conference costs in my project. Conference attendance is included as a type of "Knowledge and Dissemination Cost" in the call document. What conference costs should be included under this heading? For example, do travel, subsistence and accommodation costs for the conference come under "Travel Costs" or should they be included in total as a conference attendance expense under "Knowledge and Dissemination Cost"?

A: Conference or academic-workshop fees should be included under "knowledge and Dissemination Costs". Travel and accommodation costs associated with conference attendance by the awardee or team members should come under "Travel Costs". Many conferences now either operate a blended model, or are wholly conducted online, no Travel Costs should be budgeted if the awardee does not intend to attend a conference in-person.

Q: I wish to include transcription costs in my project – is this an eligible cost?

A: In principle, transcription costs are an eligible cost, under the category Access to research infrastructures and supports. The IRC discourages the use of third-party transcription services for recordings of human participants. Personal Data arising from recordings are required to comply with GDPR, with additional requirements for "special categories" of Personal Data (e.g. political opinion, health data, data pertaining to vulnerable participants, etc. - see article 9.1 of GDPR). Where transcription costs are requested, the applicant must detail a clear policy for the collection, processing, storage, and deletion of such data in their data management plan and ethical statement (as appropriate). Some transcription services may not be sufficiently compliant under EU law. Applicants must also adhere to the ethical requirements for the handling of data in their own host institution.

Q: With regard to Cat 2 & Cat 3 applicants - please would you clarify if the 50% salary cost-share is/can be cumulative across the programme or is it per year?

A: No more than 50% of an applicants' salary can be claimed from the Laureate Award in any budget year.

C. Peer and Panel review process

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

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

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

** [13/08/21] Collaborators may only be referred to by an initialised first name and their second name(s). E.g. Pauline Flynn becomes P. Flynn etc. In addition, it is the applicant's responsibility to seek the consent of collaborators to be included on a proposal submitted to the Laureate Awards.

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

Q: Can you fully confirm that the CV document should definitely not have the name of the applicant in any format including even if the name of the applicant on the CV had the first name of the applicant initialised. This would also be the case too for the email of an applicant which might also be on a CV?

A: Applicant CVs should not include the name of the applicant, and they should not refer to themselves using gendered pronouns. When referencing published works or achievements, please provide the applicant's initial(s) of the forename and full surname only.

** [16.07.21] Applicants should **not** provide an email address on their CV. There is no reason to provide contact information on the CV, as the applicant profile in the online *SmartSimple* system will contain all necessary details. Applicant email addresses inputted to the online system are not revealed to reviewers or to panel members.

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

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

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

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

*** [09.07.21] Please note that, in section 4.6.5 of the updated Call Document (07.07.21), instructions are provided to Research Offices on how to gender-blind Letters of Endorsement.*

Q: Will reviewers be excluded because they have previously discussed aspects of the project with the applicant?

A: The criteria for the nomination of international peer reviewers by applicants are outlined in section 4.10.1 of the Call Document ([here](#)) and are designed to exclude reviewers who may have a conflict of interest with the applicant. Nominated peer reviewers will also separately confirm that they have no conflicts of interest with the applicant. In the context of the specific question asked, a reviewer who previously discussed aspects of an applicant's project with the applicant will be ineligible to review the proposal under the criteria in section 4.10.1, subpoint (a). Any breach of the integrity of the review process is a very serious matter.

Q: Do you know roughly when the rebuttal window will be? And when interviews are likely to take place?

Q: When will the online proposal be available on the online application system?

Q: Is the deadline of 4pm 27 August the same for EOI and full proposal, or is there a different deadline for the full proposal?

A: See the call timetable on the call website. The deadline for Expressions of Interest is 4pm 27 August 2021. Other dates later in the programme schedule may be subject to minor change. Please check the webpage frequently for updates.

Q: What guidance is given to reviewers and panels as what constitutes "basic frontier research"? Are you giving a definition?

A: As noted in Innovation 2020 (2015, p.40) frontier/basic research is "research at and beyond the frontiers of current understanding. It is intrinsically risky and is characterised by the

absence of disciplinary boundaries.” Frontier research can also be described as research at the forefront of creating new knowledge. It is research that pushes boundaries, moving beyond the frontiers of our current understanding.

Excellence is the sole criterion of evaluation for the Irish Research Council Laureate Awards programme. The criterion will be applied to both the research project and the applicant.

Q: What percentage of the evaluation is given to the DMP?

A: The Data Management Plan (DMP) is not scored, but it is evaluated by the international peer reviewers and discussed by the panel of assessors.

Q: I’m wondering about the rebuttal stage. Is the expectation that everyone will submit a rebuttal to comments (as long as they sense from the comments that they are in the running)?

A: The rebuttal phase is optional. Applicants do not have to submit a response unless they wish to do so.

Q: Does the Starting Laureate support applicants branching into new research areas? (i.e. in terms of track record, would it come against an applicant if they haven’t focussed on the same area throughout their CV).

A: The applicant will be evaluated on their previous work and should be able to demonstrate a promising track record from an early stage, appropriate to their research field and career stage.

Q: Who comprises the sitting panel? Is the Sitting panel the same as the domain panel?

A: Yes, the sitting panel is the domain panel made up of generalist reviewers specific to the four panel domains: Physical Sciences and Engineering; Life Sciences; Humanities; and Social Sciences. The same panel will evaluate applications at both stage 1 and stage 2.

D. EOI process

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

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

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

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

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

A: The process is as follows:

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

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

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

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

Q: Are changes allowable from the one-page EOI to the full proposal?

Q: Does it matter if the project evolves a bit between the EOI in August and the final application in November? How closely would we be held to the abstract submitted in August?

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

Q: For the EOI form, under applicant, does the box 'Title' refer to the applicant's job title or the proposed title of the research?

A: The title of the applicant.

Q: For the pre-submission with deadline August 27, do we need to submit only the abstract? What else?

A: Please see the template provided on the call website ([here](#)). Expressions of Interest **must** be submitted through the Research Office at your nominated HEI/RPO.

Q: Will the applications be selected based on expression of interest, or any application that has been submitted to expression of interest can proceed to the full application?

A: The purpose and use of the Expression of Interest is outlined in section 4.4 of the Call Document ([here](#)).

Q: I would like to ask: can the applications be discarded at the EOI stage, or are all applications that have submitted the EOI eligible to submit the full proposal?

A: All candidates whose Expressions of Interest **are endorsed by an eligible HEI/RPO by the stipulated deadline** will be eligible to submit a full proposal from the 1 September 2021, provided that they meet all other eligibility criteria.

Q: Can you please clarify for the EOI if the applicants should state the Primary Area for their chosen panel under the Project Details section?

A: No, this is not advised. We only require the discipline and sub-discipline(s). The purpose of this information is to aid reviewer recruitment before the full proposals have been submitted; the 'primary areas' are very broad and thus do not aid this process.

Q: For the EOI, currently, discipline and sub-discipline are required. Should applicants select 1 specific discipline from the list of prescribed disciplines per Primary area or can a combination of disciplines from that list be selected?

A: A single discipline is requested. Multiple sub-disciplines may be chosen. The 'keywords' box may be used to elucidate any inter/multi/trans-disciplinary aspects of the proposal.

Q: Where should applicants insert their Project Title and Acronym on the EOI template? Are they included in the 300 word Abstract limit?

A: Title and acronyms should be included in the abstract box. They do not contribute to the abstract word limit.

Q: I am writing to find out the best way to handle an applicant that submitted an EOI via HEI-X, but is in the process of moving to a new post at HEI-Y. They are likely to still be at HEI-X for the submission deadline 10th November, but will have moved to HEI-Y by the time the awards are announced.

A: Applications should be submitted through the institution in which the research is proposed to take place from the 1 Sept 2022. In the case above, this person should, therefore, arrange to transfer their EOI to HEI-Y, and submit using HEI-Y as the nominated HEI on their proposal.

The research office in HEI-Y should directly email Laureate (laureate@research.ie) accepting responsibility for the EOI, to allow for internal eligibility checks after the application deadline.

When the full proposal is submitted on or before the 10 Nov 2021, the applicant should include the Letter of Support from HEI-Y, as HEI-Y will have to guarantee various aspects of that person's application.

E. Call Process

Q: Will you please provide an example of a gender blind CV so that we can refer to it.

Q: Can you please provide an example of some gender blind track records for our information?

A: Gender blinding the CV and track record does not require the applicant to hide their identity, just their gender. An effective example of this is the use of the applicant's initials and surname: e.g. Jane Doe would become J. Doe. In many cases research publications use this naming convention so there is no need to take any additional action when listing research outputs. We also encourage the use of gender-neutral pronouns such as I, they, their, them.

Q: Will it be possible for the interview to be conducted remotely via online methods if required (due to caring duties etc)?

A: Yes, it is anticipated that interviews will occur online. It is the intention of the Council to hold interview panels virtually; however, the Council reserves the right to hold panels in person where necessary, subject to public health advice. See section 5.3.4 of the Call Document for further information.

Q: Can you mention citations of journals (if not IF or H-index) as part of impact/significance in track record?

A: 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 (and similar metrics) 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.

Q: How will the Covid impact section be assessed? Will this be related to gender as it is known that females have been more adversely affected (more childcare duties etc.)

A: Reviewers will be asked to take into account the impact statement provided by the applicant when evaluating the track record and CV. Please note that applications must be gender blinded.

Q: How many proposals can be submitted per person?

A: An applicant may only submit one proposal. If an applicant is found to have submitted multiple proposals, then all applications will be rendered ineligible.

Q: Should reference be made to future ERC funding applications in the written application itself?

A: Applicants are welcome to include reference to future ERC funding applications in the submitted proposal. Applicants who progress to stage 2 of the application process should expect questions from the interview panel on this subject.

Q: Regarding multidisciplinary proposals, are submissions to two panels allowed?

Q: Are interdisciplinary projects encouraged (e.g. Social Science + STEM)?

A: The most relevant panel must be selected. In-depth international peer review will be carried out by subject experts; in this respect, every effort will be made to accommodate interdisciplinary research proposals. Applicants may also suggest suitable international peer reviewers whom they consider will understand the interdisciplinary aspects of their proposal.

Q: Do we need to have preliminary analysis conducted for the project proposal?

A: It is up to the applicant's own judgement as to what information is required, or appropriate, to include in the project proposal. It is recommended that applicants consult with their Research Office for advice.

Q: Just to clarify - there is no extended synopsis of the full research proposal that is required for the IRC Laureate Award (like in the ERC application)?

A: This is correct. No extended synopsis is required. The list of documents required is provided in section 4.5 the Call Document ([here](#)).

Q: The eligibility criteria of this call (Starter Laureate) have significant overlap with the SFI/IRC Pathways call that was just completed. Is it acceptable to submit a proposal that has significant similarities to the application submitted to SFI/IRC Pathways?

A: Yes, the same proposed body of research can be used as part of the submission to the Laureate Award; however, both awards may not be held at the same time. In the event that the applicant is successful in both awards using the same proposal, only one may be accepted.

Q: Will a template be provided by the IRC to complete the Detailed Proposal for upload to the online system as a pdf?

Q: Could you please provide a rough guideline for the structure of the "Detailed Research Proposal"? An indication that it is absolutely free in style and/or some reference to the standards for ERC proposals would already greatly help.

A: Yes, the application template will be available from 1 September 2021, when the call opens.

Q: My question is regarding how the proposal should be viewed. Is it seen as a forerunner proposal to an ERC application with for example proto typing specifically built in which can then be used to improve a future ERC application? Or instead should this proposal be self-contained? If it's the former would the inclusion of future research directions (that could be tackled through an ERC funded proposal) be seen as advantageous?

A: The aims and objectives of the Irish Research Council Laureate Awards Programme are stated in section 2.2 of the Call Document ([here](#)). The inclusion of future research direction could be seen as advantageous for applicants considering the requirement for awardees to submit an application for an ERC Starting, Consolidator, or Advanced award subsequent to their Laureate Award. At the second stage of the evaluation process (interview by the sitting panel), the applicant should expect questions related to all aspects of the proposal, including on how the Laureate Award would support future application to ERC funding calls. It is recommended that applicants familiarise themselves with ERC grants criteria when considering their Laureate research proposal.

Q: It would be really helpful to applicants if an application template could be provided prior to 1st September. Can this be provided so that applicants can commence work on their proposals with a little more certainty that the structure is correct? For example, in the Resources section, will a budget table be required in the 15 pages pdf for upload or will this be part of the online section of the application system. Similarly, will the justification be included in the 15 pages or should the justification be added to the online sections of the application system?

A: The template for Laureate Applications is under development, incorporating improvements recommended from the previous Starting and Consolidator Laureate calls, alongside online-system testing. We will endeavour to provide a full draft template ahead of the call opening. However, applicants should be mindful that this will be a draft edition and, consequently, it may be subject to minor changes in the final published version.

The budget table is inputted as a separate tab in the online application through *SmartSimple*; it is not included in the 15-page limit.

** [06/08/21] These templates have been uploaded to the Laureate call website

Q: Is there a limit to the number of collaborators that can be identified in applications?

A: The scheme is aimed at individual applicants rather than joint proposers. No more than one applicant can be named on an application. However, an applicant may include provision for team membership or collaboration of researchers from other institutions and organisations, including both national and international participation. The added value of any collaboration must be strongly demonstrated. However, personnel costs may not be allocated outside the host institution.

Q: Can PhD certificates be submitted in any language? Is it only documents other than PhD certificates that need a translation?

A: As described in section 4.1.2 of the Call Document:

“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.”

PhD certificates are official documents and must, therefore, be accompanied by a certified translation in English.

Q: A potential applicant to the Laureate is currently based in [HEI X], and will remain so until after the call closes. However, they will then be moving to [HEI Y] in July 2022. Can you please advise if their EOI should be submitted by [HEI X] or by [HEI Y]?

Note that the above question has been anonymised

A: As HEI endorsement requires the host HEI to guarantee the applicant's contract for the duration of the project, the applicant should apply through 'HEI Y'.

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

A: A template Letter of Support is available on the Laureate website.

Q: We note that the template for Laureate Applications is currently under development. An applicant has queried whether there will be a budget template provided?

A: Yes, a budget template will be provided.

Q: Applicant Query: Will the IRC support uploads in *LaTeX* or provide a template in *LaTeX* for mathematical formulae?

A: No, uploads in *LaTeX* will not be supported. Uploaded documents must be in .pdf format. However, if applicants wish to upload files exported from *LaTeX* in .pdf format they are free to do so. This requirement applies to any documents prepared in any other word processor or document preparation software.

Q: The call guidance requires that the Detailed research proposal be Arial, black font, minimum size 11 and with 2 cm margins on the sides with margins of 1.5 on the top and bottom. Can you confirm that all uploaded documents are to follow these requirements.

A: The requirements for uploaded documents are detailed on the proposal form itself, on the online application system, and are also described on the indicative application form template, available on the Laureate Call Webpage. The templates for these documents are all available on the Laureate Call Webpage, we strongly encourage applicants to use them.

Q: I just wanted to double check something with you regarding the CV document: am I correct thinking that the career breaks (maternity leave specifically) should not be included in the CV?

A: The online application asks for details relating to career break(s), time requested, reason for career break and date of said break. The specific reasons for career breaks need not therefore be included in the CV. The date(s) for the career break will be shared with reviewers to allow them to accurately assess the applicants track record, however the reason for the break will not be shared as this could reveal the gender or other information about the applicant. Eligible career breaks (section 3.2 of the Call Document) must be evidenced in a supplementary document (described as "other supporting documentation" in the 'upload' section of the online proposal submission). These documents are also not supplied to reviewers, but are used for internal verification.

Q: The outcomes of stage 1 assessment is April 2022. Applicant interviews are also April 2022. This doesn't really leave anytime for interview prep

A: It is anticipated that all applicants will have at least 2 weeks notice before interviews.

Q: The call document (page 8) asks for a statement of ethical issues to be addressed and the sex/gender dimension (max. 2 pages). This suggests that the sex/gender dimension should be included here. However, in the online form there is a box with 300 word limit for sex/gender dimension. So, should we include the sex/gender dimension in both places or just the online form?

A: The ethical statement is 2 pages long. The sex-/gender statement is to be filled in the appropriate box on the online system. The wording in the online application is updated to make this distinction clear [15.10.2021].

Q: A number of candidates have contacted us about having to have their PhD certs translated into English and the personal cost involved. A lot of these candidates have submitted their PhD to the ERC without translation and are now querying this with us. Can you clarify that all languages need to be translated? Further, some with PhDs from Irish institutions which are in Latin are questioning whether they need to have these translated as well. It would be great to get confirmation of this.

A: Transcripts or PhD certs must be provided in either of the two official languages of Ireland, the Irish or English languages, or in Latin – which is customarily used in some Irish institutions for PhD documentation. Documents in all other languages must be accompanied with a certified English or Irish language translation. For example, this may be a translation provided by the conferring body.

Q: In regard to Part B of the Letter of Support, should applicants with a contract of indefinite duration (CID) select Category 1 or Category 2?

A: As CIDs are a form of permanent contract, 'Category 1' is the correct category for these persons.

Q: One of our researchers does not currently have access to their PhD parchment as it is in a different country. They can get a certified translation of a 'copy' of their original document. Would this be acceptable to the IRC?

A: A scan or pdf copy of the original document accompanied with a certified translation would be an acceptable form of documentation in this case.

Q: For names as Gaeilge, gender can be determined from the surname. How should applicants address this? E.g. Bréige Ní Bréagach -> B.Ní.B. ?

A: The purpose of gender-blinding is to conceal the gender of the applicant. However, throughout these FAQs we have stated that it is accepted that, in some instances, the gender of the applicant may become apparent to the peer reviewer. However, the effort of gender blinding the application in the first instance can oftentimes reinforce the need for reviewers to

be cognisant of their own potential biases. Peer reviewers and panel members are required to assess on the basis of information provided in the application only. Considering this answer, the format given in the question (“B.Ní.B”) is acceptable.

Q: Can you please confirm what size font is permissible for footnotes?

A: The size of footnotes must be 2 font sizes less than the font size of the main text. The minimum size of the text is font size 11, therefore the minimum size of footnotes is font size 9.

Q: for the IRC Laureate Award application are extra uploads allowed i.e. figures or other supporting documentation related to the research project? I can only find reference to the upload of materials relating to career breaks and degree transcripts.

Is the “other supporting documentation” section limited in what can be uploaded?

A: Information uploaded to “other supporting documentation” is never shared with reviewers (it is for internal purposes only – i.e. for information pertaining to eligibility: uploads of official PhD certificate translations; perhaps information on career breaks etc), so applicants’ should not upload proposal information in that place.

Q: This question about education details on the smartsimple form keeps popping up - there doesn't seem to be any fields on the smartsimple form for education. Can they include education details in the CV?

A: Education may be detailed in the CV.

Q: "Call Document Para 5.2.6 prohibits any direct or indirect contact about peer review evaluation. Would this prevent PI contacting potential peer reviewers in advance of nomination to confirm their availability and willingness to act, and absence of conflicts of interests?"

A: Any contact, direct or indirect, between applicants and nominated peer reviewers during the assessment process, is prohibited, as stated in section 5.2.6 of the call document. Any contact from prospective applicants with potential peer reviewers, for the purposes of nominating the latter as peer reviewers as part of the application, must cease once the application is submitted.

Q: "FAQ p.19 indicates that anyone with whom PI has discussed the project would be ineligible, on the basis that they are a collaborator on the project. PI presented an earlier version of the project at an online research workshop attended by a number of the most relevant potential international peer reviewers. Would individuals who asked questions or made comments on that occasion be excluded on this basis?"

A: The criteria to determine conflicts of interest are provided to peer reviewers, and are provided here for transparency. Applicants should have regard to these extensive criteria for conflicts of interest in finalising nominations for peer reviewers:

1. Was involved in the preparation of the proposal.

2. Stands to benefit directly or indirectly if the proposal is accepted.
3. Has, or has had, during the last five years, a collaboration with the applicant of the proposal.
4. Has, or has had, a relationship of scientific rivalry or professional hostility with the applicant of the proposal.
5. Has, or has had, in the past, a mentor/mentee relationship, including PhD supervisor, with the applicant of the proposal.
6. is employed, or was employed within the three previous years, by the proposed host institution^[1];
7. Considers any other reason as might be relevant in their consideration of applications to this programme.
8. Has close family ties (spouse, domestic or non-domestic partner, child, sibling, parent etc.) or other close personal relationship with the applicant of any proposal s/he is requested to evaluate.

F. Post-Award

Q: Can the start date of the award of the 1st of September be pushed out in the case of unexpected leave, e.g. carer's leave, sick leave etc?

A: The start date cannot ordinarily be changed. However, the awardee may seek to suspend or to extend the duration of the award in the case of unexpected leave. As stipulated in the [Terms and Conditions for Principal Investigator-led awards](#), a request for a no cost extension must be made in writing by the awardee and host institution and must comply with the Irish Research Council's No-cost Extension Policy, as may be amended from time to time. Please note that specific time limits do not apply in cases of eligible career breaks such as maternity leave, adoptive leave, carer's leave or prolonged sick leave.

Q: Are IRC awards attached only to the researcher (like ERC) or are they also attached to institutes? For example if one gets an ERC, they are free to move institute (within Europe) before it commences. Is the same true with the researcher free to move (within Ireland) for an IRC award?

A: IRC Laureate Awards are granted to the individual. It is possible to move to another eligible HEI/RPO during the award ([here](#)), provided the move is endorsed by the proposed host institution.

Q: Is there any possibility of deferral of the start date of the award - say from Sept 2022 to Jan 2023?

A: No, it is not possible to defer the start date of an award.

Q: Does the IRC stipulate a timeline that applicants must make an ERC application within?

Q: Is there a requirement to submit an application for ERC Starting/Consolidator grant as well in order to be eligible for this IRC scheme or is this not linked to the conditions of this IRC call?

A: Applicants must submit a proposal for an ERC Starting, Consolidator or Advanced award (as appropriate) during, or within 1 year of finishing, their Laureate Award. It is a requirement of all awardees that they make a follow-on application to the ERC.

Q: We have had queries from a number of applicants who are considering applying for a 2022 IRCLA award specifically applicants who are at the latter stages of the eligibility window for the consolidator awards i.e. 12-15 years post PhD.

By the time these applicants would know the results of the IRCLA competition in 2022 they may not be eligible to apply for the ERC consolidator awards anymore given it has an eligibility ceiling of 12 years Post PhD (assuming the applicant doesn't qualify for any exemptions in this regard).

If they were to be successful under the laureate call, the next available ERC call such an applicant could apply for with a follow-on grant would be an ERC advanced grant. It is likely that a large number of applicants of between 12-15 years post PhD would not be competitive for an ERC advanced grant.

We were wondering does the IRC have any advice for prospective applicants in this situation? Will they be required to submit an ERC advanced grant by the end of their laureate award regardless?

A: As stated in section 2.12 of the Starting and Consolidator Laureate Awards Call Document, it is a requirement of all awardees that they make a follow-on application to the ERC.

The IRC Laureate Awards are a highly competitive funding call which will enable awardees to enhance their track record and international competitiveness.

The specific 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. These applicants should also be able to demonstrate a promising track record from an early stage, appropriate to their research field and career phase.

It is expected that, any Laureate who undertakes a Consolidator Laureate Award will be well positioned to apply to the ERC by the time they have completed their award.

Q: In this HEI, postgraduate students teach 2 hours per week of their supervisors classes, for which they are typically not paid e.g. if they are funded under an internal programme. These 2 hours are viewed as training and coupled with additional taught modules in Teaching & Learning, are part of the student's learning how to teach. For postgraduate students (Masters or PhD) whose stipend is funded under the IRC Laureate programme, is this arrangement permitted? i.e. that the students are not paid for the 2 hours.

A: Postgraduates and Postdocs employed under Laureate Awards are bound by the same terms and conditions as all IRC early career researchers, with regards to additional duties (apart from article 14.4). These conditions are explained in the "Terms and Conditions for Early Career Researchers", which are available on the IRC website. The relevant terms for the question posed are:

14.1 The awardee is permitted to engage in additional duties such as teaching, tutoring or demonstration work in their host institution during the award, provided:

- (a) the work does not take place in the first year of the awardee's PhD or master's degree in the case of postgraduate awardees;
- (b) the work is relevant to the research project and consistent with the awardee's training and career development plan;
- (c) the awardee has the written permission of their academic supervisor or mentor (as relevant);
- (d) the work does not exceed a total of 50 hours per academic term, including contact and non-contact hours, and does not prevent the awardee from carrying out their research activities;
- (e) such additional duties are detailed as part of the required progress reporting.

14.2. The Irish Research Council requires host institutions to ensure that additional duties such as teaching, tutoring or demonstration work is appropriately remunerated, contributes to the professional development of the awardee and is taken into account as part of the relevant evaluation or appraisal systems

G. Other Queries

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

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

*** [09.07.21] A recording of the session has been provided on the call website.*

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

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

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

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

Q: How does the Starting Laureate Award differ compared to other awards given at a similar career stage?

A: 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.

Q: Is it expected that the Laureate will be offered again next year, or will there probably be a gap of a couple of years before it is offered again (as happened last time)?

Q: Will this be a regular award (will there be a call next year)?

A: An IRC Laureate Awards Advanced call will open in 2022.

The Council's goal is to embed the Laureate Awards programme as an annual, core feature of the funding landscape for frontier basic research across all disciplines. The Council welcomes the additional funding provided under Budget 2021 to enhance the number of

awards under the 2021/22 Starting and Consolidator Awards (the current call). Submissions have been made to the Department of Further & Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science to secure the requisite funding to run calls annually. The Council continues to emphasise in engagement with the Department the importance for the health of the research system of a stable, long-term funding stream for frontier basic research across all disciplines through the Irish Research Council Laureate awards.

*** [30.07.21] This response has been updated.*

Q: Could you discuss the motivation for the 3-8 years post-PhD eligibility, when the ERC StG window is 2-7 years post PhD? Are there any conditions that would allow flexibility on this window?

A: The Laureate programme co-exists with and is complementary to a range of funding instruments within Ireland's research eco-system, many of which serve the initial years post PhD. In this context, certain differences between the ERC Starting and Consolidator and IRC Laureate Awards are considered to be appropriate.

Q: Given the ERC starter grant's emphasis on originality, do I put a future ERC starter grant at risk if I apply to the IRC starter grant with a similar project I had in mind for an ERC starter grant, and then ended up publishing my IRC starter grant work?

A: As stated in the ERC 2021/22 Work Program:

"In general, projects wholly or largely consisting in the collation and compilation of existing material in new databases, editions or collections are unlikely to constitute ground-breaking or 'frontier' research in themselves, however useful such resources might be to subsequent original research. Such projects are therefore unlikely to be recommended for funding by the ERC's panels."

It is therefore up to the judgement of the IRC Laureate Applicant whether the research to be undertaken would preclude eligibility for an ERC grant. The ERC 2021/22 Work Program document might be useful for further information ([here](#)).

Q: There is no obvious panel for criminal justice research, and I was wondering where you thought it might fit. In social sciences there is a sub-discipline 'Aggression and violence, antisocial behaviour, crime' which seems to focus on the causes and committing of crime, rather than the state response to crim (i.e. criminal justice), and a sub-discipline 'Legal studies, constitutions, human rights, comparative law', which might include criminal law but not necessarily criminal justice. What are your thoughts? Might the IRC consider an explicit criminology and criminal justice subdiscipline in the future?

A: The panel disciplines outlined in the Call Documentation align to the disciplines used by the ERC ([here](#)). The available discipline domains for the Laureate Awards will only be modified to stay in line with ERC practices. Note that, in the full proposal submission, it is possible to select keywords that elucidate the multi-, trans- or inter-disciplinary aspects of the proposal.

Q: I would have a question about if there is any plan for the number of awardees?

A: The number of awards will depend on the budget sought from each award granted. If each application seeks the maximum budget, roughly 50 awards can be made in total: 25 for Starting and 25 for Consolidator.

Q: Hi, you said that stats on previous successful applications are available (e.g. years post PhD...). Where is that information?

A: The Technopolis Pre-Award Process Review can be read online here: [Technopolis report link](#).

Q: Is there a preference for certain types of research? That is, are you looking for any types of projects in particular?

Q: Do the Starting and Consolidator Laureate Awards Programme fund global health research?

A: The Laureate Awards are open to applicants in any discipline or across disciplines. The sole criterion for selection is excellence. The budget for the 2021/22 Laureate Awards is allocated equally between the 4 panel domains (Physical Sciences and Engineering; Life Sciences; Humanities; Social Sciences).

Q: For each call, the ERC publish the 'Guide for Peer Reviewers Starting and Consolidator Grant Calls'; will similar be published for the IRC Laureate Programme?

A: Guidance for reviewers and panel members is currently being prepared. The Evaluation criteria are described in full in section 5.4 of the Call Document; among other information, these same criteria will be provided to all reviewers.