

2025 Enterprise Partnership Scheme Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) 28/3/2025

FAQs will be published every Thursday until 3rd April 2025 (16:00 local Irish time).

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

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

Questions are grouped under the following headings:

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

If you do not find the answer to your query in the call documentation, you should contact the research office in your proposed institution which will provide information and clarification on the call. **Research offices** can send any queries they are unable to clarify to schemes@researchireland.ie.

1. ELIGIBILITY

****New**** I am hoping to get some more clarification on the Enterprise Partnership Scheme, with relation to the 'due diligence' around partner financial stability. Does Research Ireland have a set of guidelines that could be shared around what constitutes a strong enterprise partner? Perhaps in terms of turnover, employees, years operating?

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A: In terms of due diligence, we will be asking about the size of the enterprise (employees and balance sheet) and annual turnover, also source of funding. These questions are outlined in the Enterprise endorsement form. We will also be asking enterprise partners to sign a declaration of solvency and a commitment to the funding over 1-4 years. Any newer or small enterprises may require an internal company check using online tools.

****New**** We have an enterprise partner who is interested in signing up for the 4 years. However, as they are a small enterprise, they obviously cannot confirm that they will not be taken over/fold in that 4 year period. This is a risk relevant to any small enterprise.

A: Part of the confirmation process for new awards is for Enterprise Partners to submit a declaration of solvency and a commitment to funding the award for the full grant term. If these conditions cannot be met the enterprise partner would not be deemed eligible.

****New**** I'll be the mentor on two of our proposed PhDs and a colleague will be the mentor on the third project as it is more within her subject area. Much of the core text on the host

environment, career development opportunities, relationships with central Government for research impact etc., will be consistent across applications. We will of course tailor to the three distinct projects, but I just wanted to flag there will be cross-over in core text across the applications – I assume this is okay?

A: That's fine but we recommend, as you have suggested, you tailor a portion of the response to the specific projects.

****New**** Can Teagasc can act as an Eligible Research Body (ERB) on the Enterprise partnership programme for postgraduate call?

A: Teagasc can act as an ERB on the Enterprise partnership programme for postgrads but we would ask that a secondary supervisor from the accrediting HEI be included on any proposal submitted.

****New**** We want to try the Enterprise Partnership Scheme PG. There is potentially a German company that will be able to provide the funding for it. In the call it says that international companies can apply and this is large company. Can you confirm that it is the case or they have to have part of the company based in Ireland. Is it a requirement to have a physical location or company base in Ireland? I don't think the company has a physical location in Ireland.

A: It is not a requirement to have a physical presence in Ireland, though international undertakings will be asked to declare any de minimis aid they may have received from the Irish state to ensure they are eligible to receive additional funds, if successful.

Current 4th year students will get their results only in boards conducted in June 2025. Are they still eligible for Sept 2025 start date?

A: The Call Document has been amended to reflect that all undergraduate results must be confirmed before a Letter of Offer can be issued. A September start date is permitted as long as the signed Letter of Offer is returned before starting.

Can the partner mentor be part-time employed by the same university as the academic supervisor?

A: No, Enterprise mentors must be distinct from the academic supervisor and not be based in the host higher education institution (HEI). As well, HEIs are not eligible to be Enterprise partners.

Is it possible for two enterprise partners to share the contribution by splitting it equally between them?

A: No. A scholar can only have one enterprise partner organisation and enterprise mentor associated with their application who will pay the contribution.

Can a Master's or PhD be pursued on a part time basis?

A: No, this scheme requires applicants to work full time on their research.

I wish to find out if a recipient of this scholarship is eligible for a hosting agreement.

A: Please contact your research body for information relating to Visas, Research Ireland does not directly manage this process.

Enterprise partner should be from the list provided on the call page? Do you need to source your own? Do you need to submit a joint application? Or do you get paired after submitting the application? Can a statutory agency engaged in research act as an enterprise partner? If you are conducting the research of your PhD in a hospital, can the hospital act as an enterprise partner?

A: Enterprise partners are not limited to those named on the website; they are simply examples of partners willing to engage with potential applicants. Matchmaking is done before the application is submitted to allow for co-creation of the project. An enterprise partner can be a company, registered charity, social, cultural or not-for-profit civic organisation, state-owned enterprise or an eligible public body that will co-fund and co-supervise the researcher for the duration of the grant. Eligible Research Bodies are not permitted to act as an Enterprise partner. Hospitals have acted as partners in past calls, please refer to the [awardee database](#).

Are Level 8 Higher Diplomas a recognised award for the academic requirements?

As per the [QQI National Framework of qualifications \(NFQ\)](#), a Higher Diploma is a level 8 qualification, equivalent to an Honours Bachelor's degree, and a Postgraduate Diploma a level 9 qualification, equivalent to a Master's degree. Irish HEIs and HE/Research bodies are expected to be guided by QQI and NFQ in terms of the recognition and equivalence of a degree. Therefore, an applicant with a first class or upper second-class honours Higher Diploma or with a Postgraduate Diploma is eligible to apply.

Are prospective non EU, international PhD students eligible for the call? What percentage of funding is expected to be reserved for international student applications?

A: Applicants from any country may apply for an Enterprise Partnership Scheme grant; candidates are chosen strictly on the excellence of their project. Arrangements with respect to immigration will be a matter for settlement between the awardee, their host institution and the relevant immigration authorities of the State.

What is the success rate of applications and is there any specific research areas that are more/less likely to be accepted?

A: Success rates vary from year to year based on the number of applications and the available budget. Trends in research discipline also change based on international trends but there is no top-down specification from Research Ireland for this call to fund any one discipline over another.

Can an Enterprise Partner be the current employer of an applicant? Can the enterprise partner have previously employed the applicant?

A: Yes, provided that the award holder is a full-time researcher during the period of funding, and is not employed by the enterprise partner (sabbaticals are permitted), during the term of the award.

I am already in the 2nd year of my PhD. Am I eligible to apply for this funding for the rest of my 2 years?

A: For applicants who have already completed part of the postgraduate degree for which they are seeking funding, the duration of funding to be awarded is dependent on the type of degree being pursued and the date of first registration as outlined in the Call Document found [here](#).

Would DAFM (more specifically the DAFM testing Laboratories) be considered an enterprise partner? would ICBF and Sheep Ireland be suitable enterprise partners?

A: An enterprise partner can be a company, registered charity, social, cultural or not-for-profit civic organisation, state-owned enterprise or an eligible public body, please refer to the [awardee database](#) for examples of past partners.

Is there a preference for PhD over Masters projects? If an applicant is successful under a research MSc application (2 year) can they progress to a PhD if the industry partner agrees to funding for a further 2 years?

A: There is no preference from a Research Ireland perspective to fund Masters or PhD awards. However, if you are successful in a master's award and wish to continue on to complete a PhD you will need to submit a new application for the remaining 2 years funding.

Is there any benefit to applying for the 36-month traditional doctoral degree over the 46-month degree? For instance, is there a higher chance of a 36-month degree being funded

A: No, funding is awarded based on excellence of the research project. The applicant can provide a narrative for the reasoning behind either degree.

I presume it is not possible for an academic to apply with a willing industry partner – and then identify the student afterwards

A: No, the student is the primary applicant on these awards.

Are there any options for postdocs?

A: It is anticipated that an enterprise facing postdoctoral programme will open in Q2.

What constitutes a conflict of interest between the student and the enterprise?

A: A conflict of interest arises when an individual holds a direct or indirect personal interest which, in the opinion of a reasonably informed and well-advised person, is sufficient to call into question the independence, impartiality and objectivity that the individual is obliged to exercise in the performance of his/her duties. Conflicts of interest may be financial, non-financial or both. For example, if your academic supervisor is the founder or financially invested in the Enterprise Partner. Where Conflicts of Interest may exist between the academic supervisor and the Enterprise partner the Research Body will need to vouch that any perceived or real conflicts of interest are declared and managed in accordance with guidance in the National IP Protocol.

Regarding the 'applicant' and 'training and career development' scoring, can you expand on what exactly is considered here?

A: The [Enterprise Partnership Scheme \(postgraduate\) Call Document](#) provides a description of what is assessed in these categories.

Are supervisors who were previously registered with the IRC, required to register again.

A: If a supervisor is on the higher education institution's official list on Smart Simple, and has the required assigned role to their profile, they do not need to register on the on line system again.

2. APPLYING TO THE PROGRAMME

****New****Where is the right place to provide justification for why the Enterprise partner is not an undertaking?

A: The justification for not being an undertaking is done through the EP endorsement form.

Can an applicant submit a similar application to the Government of Ireland Postgraduate Scholarship Programme in 2025 if they are not successful in the current Enterprise round?

A: You will need to state in any future Research Ireland GOI application if you submitted, or intend to submit, the same or a similar application to any other Research Ireland, Irish or international award programme, including formerly named Irish Research Council awards.

I have an ongoing application for the Government of Ireland Postgraduate Scholarship Programme, is it still ok to submit an application for this Enterprise Partnership Scheme even with the outcome of the former still undetermined?

A: Yes, if the outcome is still undetermined you can submit an application to the Enterprise Partnership Scheme. If offered an award by the first programme, you will need to choose at that point whether to accept or decline the offer.

To apply as a prospective PhD, do you have to already have arranged a research proposal with a participating Enterprise? How should students who have not yet applied for their PhD approach the partner?

A: To submit an application for the Enterprise Scheme, you will have arranged an enterprise partner organisation and enterprise mentor. Students who have not yet applied and are seeking an enterprise partner can consult our potential enterprise partners list if they [click here](#). If the enterprise partner is not registered on the on line system, in your application form you can invite them to register. Once registered, the organisation will then be viewable as an Enterprise Partner in the online system. Please note that organisations listed here may not all be eligible partners.

Will there be any industry / enterprise experts on the assessment panels?

A: The use of industry / enterprise experts will be employed in the Postdoctoral call launching later this year and is being explored for the postgraduate call but not yet confirmed.

On the indicative supervisor form, there is only space to enter details about the primary academic supervisor. Can a secondary supervisor be added here? Does a secondary supervisor have to come from a ROI academic organisation? Can the academic supervisor have a collaborating 'partner' in another academic organisation (outside of Ireland)?

A: It is possible to include a secondary academic supervisor or co-supervisor on the application but only the Primary Academic Supervisor will fill out the supervisor form for the application. The secondary supervisor must be an official academic supervisor of a recognised higher education institution nationally or internationally. However, should an award be given and the Primary Supervisor is unable to continue, the secondary supervisor can only be made the Primary Supervisor if in the same higher education institution as the scholar, and on this higher education institution's official list in the on-line system Smart Simple.

Are there any caveats for who academic supervisor can be? Do they have to have seen PhD student through to graduation etc?

A: The Academic Supervisor must be on the proposed higher education institution on our on line system. Academic supervisor evaluation criteria includes their suitability and ability to provide adequate supervision and the match between the applicant, academic supervisor(s), enterprise mentor, host institution and enterprise partner, as well as the quality of infrastructure and facilities provided by the host institution and enterprise partner. They do not need to have a prior relationship with the applicant.

A question about my transcripts, if I got from country outside Ireland and the grading system is different, should I apply the original copies?

A: If your degree results refer to a grading system other than the Irish honours system (first class honours, upper second class (2.1) honours etc.) or the 4.0 grade point average scale, please explain the grading system being referred to in the free text box provided on the application. Successful applicants will be required to submit to their host institution official transcripts for each degree listed in the application confirming the overall result, date of graduation and awarding institution.

How many projects will be funded approximately? How many are on a waiting list until offer letters are sent out?

A: Approximately 35 projects will be funded for this programme.

How does an institution become part of the Eligible Research Bodies (ERBs)?

A: Research Ireland's Eligible Research Body policy can be found [here](#).

Updated* Is this a risky route to pursue Ph.D. research? If the enterprise were to withdraw its funding at any point, would I still be able to continue my studies and receive financial support, or would this impact my ability to stay in the program? What if an enterprise partner becomes insolvent during the Msc or PhD

A: . Research Ireland carries out due diligence checks on all Enterprise partners to minimise this risk.

Can individuals submit multiple applications for consideration of either MRes or PhD funding?

A: Applicants can only submit one application to this programme at a time.

In terms of types of research projects that can be undertaken, is the emphasis on a project that the student has developed, or is there scope that the project is based on a research problem that the enterprise partner wants to develop?

A: The application should be written by the applicant in collaboration with their host institution and enterprise partner. While the Enterprise partner can suggest a research programme that focuses on an area of interest, the overall project should be mutually beneficial to all parties, allowing the applicant to gain appropriate experience and maximising the expertise of the academic supervisor.

3. CONDITIONS OF AWARD

Regarding the Enterprise Partner, I'm not clear on whether the scheme would make them contribute to the research financially? Can the Enterprise Partner provide more than the €11,300? Can enterprise partner supplement the stipend and consumable costs?

A: The Enterprise Partner is required to contribute €11,300 annually towards the cost of funding a researcher under the Enterprise Partnership Scheme (Postgraduate). Research Ireland contributes the remaining €22,700 per annum. The Enterprise Partner can provide more to the researcher than the required contribution, including for stipend and consumable costs, however this arrangement would need to be managed with the research Body directly.

****New*** Will you be uploading a copy of the corresponding Research Agreement for this scheme to the call webpage?

A: Research Ireland is directing Enterprise partners and Research bodies to the [National IP Protocol](#) for advice on collaborative research agreements. If the partner in question, or the HEI, has a standard template, this should be used, whilst still ensuring there are no elements that contradict Research Ireland's Grant General T&Cs.

Updated* Can charity partners only waive fees for the first year on projects over 24 months or can they do this in the 2nd, 3rd or 4th year if they can use 3 waivers? How does a charity apply for a waiver? Are there circumstances where the waiver could be for longer than one year?

A: The waiver is only for use in the first year of the award. Details relating to the waiver application can be found in the Call Document.

****New*** Can you confirm that the General Terms and Conditions for Early-Career Awards (https://research.ie/assets/uploads/2017/07/IRC-Early-Career-TCs_04-October-2023-1.pdf) apply for the current EPS Postgraduate Scheme i.e. for each awardee, the Enterprise Partner transfers €11.3k p.a. to Research Ireland and Research Ireland then transfers €34k p.a. to the HEI.

A: No, this and all other Research Ireland grants are governed by the [Research Ireland Grant Terms and Conditions](#). In a change to previous processes the Enterprise partner will transfer the 11,300 directly to the Research Body and Research Ireland will contribute the remainder bi-annual payments.

****New*** Though publicly funded, Education and Training Boards are registered charities and have a charity number. Does this mean that they qualify for a waiver on their contribution in the first year? Secondly, what is the schedule of payment for a partner? Do they pay their contribution each year or does the total have to be paid altogether upfront?

A: Yes they would be eligible if they have a registered charity number in the Republic of Ireland and the Enterprise partner will transfer the 11,300 directly to the Research Body. Research Ireland will contribute the remainder in bi-annual payments, the payment schedule for the Enterprise Partner can be managed with the Research Body directly.

There was no mention of public and patient involvement or patient partnership in this presentation; is this included in this call in any form?
A: Patient advocacy groups can engage in the programme as a partner and include could public and patient involvement in the research design.
For more information on De Minimis eligibility, is there someone we can ask?
*Updated** A: Applicants should contact their research office and/or technology transfer office in their proposed higher education institution in the first instance. Information can also be found on the State Aid section of the website here .
What does the €11,300 contribution from enterprise contribute to? Is this for the student?
A: The €11,300 represents one third of the annual funds dedicated to the award, this covers student stipend, registration fees and research expenses.
How is any generated IP managed and its subsequent ownership structured?
A: Research Ireland Enterprise awards must comply with the practices and procedures described in the national IP protocol document Ireland's National IP Protocol 2019 . The arrangements related to the management of IP arising from the award are the responsibility of the Research Body and shall reflect the collaborative nature of the project, the level of commitment of the enterprise partner and compliance with State aid regulations.
Are progress reports completed by candidates during the course of the funding period or after the funding period has concluded?
A: Annual progress reports are completed by the award holders, academic supervisor and enterprise mentor. Final reports are completed a month after the end date by this team.
The GOI postgraduate scheme had the same contribution to fees as part of the funding, however it was said that in many cases this tuition funding can be more than this amount to fully fund the applicants tuition, is this the same for this scheme?
A: Yes, the award will cover a contribution to fees, including non-European Union fees, paid to the host institution, up to a maximum of €5,750.
Is the applicant expected to spend a particular or minimum amount of time with the Enterprise partner and would this effect the completion of a structured 4 year PhD programme at the university
A: No, the enterprise mentor is responsible for supporting and mentoring the awardee in relation to the enterprise partner organisation's involvement. As such, the award holder is expected to spend some time liaising with the enterprise mentor, through communication means and/ on site engagement.
Is there a plan for the funding to increase during the lifetime of the project in line with inflation and other stipend increases?
A: Stipend increases are incorporated into the funding over the lifetime of the project as directed by the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation, and Science.
Can a PhD candidate who already has a stipend apply for this funding? (to get an increased funding)
A: No

How much time do you recommend Enterprise partners dedicate to the mentor role? I understand this may vary depending on the project, but any general recommendations would be helpful for gauging resources before committing.

A: The enterprise mentor should meet on a regular basis with the researcher, this may be virtual or in person. Research Ireland is not prescriptive of the extent to this engagement as it can vary between disciplines and topics. However, each mentor will be required to outline the level of engagement in the endorsement form, and this will be evaluated. The mentor is also required to submit annual reporting on the award.

What if the enterprise mentor and my academic supervisor had two complete different ideas of what direction the PhD should take half way through and one no longer wanted to continue?

A: Research projects are expected to be completed in line with the proposal submitted and evaluated at the application stage. If for any reason a change of supervisor or mentor is required throughout the project this can be facilitated on a case by case basis.