



# **RESEARCH IRELAND**

## **2025 ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP SCHEMES**

### **(POSTGRADUATE)**

#### **CALL DOCUMENT**

<b>Key Dates</b>	
Call open	12:00 (Irish time) 26 February 2025
FAQ deadline	16:00 (Irish time) 3 April 2025
Applicant deadline	16:00 (Irish time) 10 April 2025
Supervisor and mentor deadline	16:00 (Irish time) 17 April 2025
Research office endorsement deadline	16:00 (Irish time) 24 April 2025
Waiver deadline	16:00 (Irish time) 15 May 2025
Outcome of scheme	End of June 2025
Grant start date	1 September 2025 or 1 March 2026

**Due to heavy server traffic on the day of the applicant, supervisor and mentor deadlines, all participants are strongly advised to submit their forms well in advance of the relevant deadline.**

**Applications cannot be submitted once the deadline has passed. Supervisor/mentor forms cannot be submitted once the deadline has passed.**

**Amendment 26/02/2025 – Section 8.16: Deadline dates for undergraduate results verification removed.**

**Amendment 02/04/2025 – Addition of Section 5.5 on invoicing the enterprise partner**



**An Roinn Breisoideachais agus Ardoideachais,**  
**Taighde, Nuálaíochta agus Eolaíochta**  
Department of Further and Higher Education,  
Research, Innovation and Science

## **Terms of Reference**

While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy and reliability of this document, it is provided for information purposes only and as a guide to expected developments. It is not intended, and should not be relied upon, as any form of warranty, representation, undertaking, contractual, or other commitment binding in law upon Taighde Éireann | Research Ireland (“Research Ireland”), the Government of Ireland, or any of their respective servants or agents. Research Ireland Grant Conditions (to include General Terms and Conditions and Letters of Offer) shall govern the administration of Research Ireland grants and awards to the exclusion of this and any other oral, written, or recorded statement. All responses to this Call for Submission of Proposals will be treated in confidence and no information contained therein will be communicated to any third party without the written permission of the applicant except insofar as is specifically required for the consideration and evaluation of the proposal or as may be required under law, including the Research and Innovation Act 2024 and the Freedom of Information Acts 1997, (Amendment) 2023 and 2014.

**Taighde Éireann - Research Ireland** (“Research Ireland”) is the national research and innovation funding agency which was established on 1 August 2024. Research Ireland amalgamates the activities of the Irish Research Council and Science Foundation Ireland.

Please note that some linked pre-existing policies of the Irish Research Council are applicable to grants made under this call.

## Table of Contents

1. About Research Ireland .....	4
2. Enterprise Partnership Scheme .....	4
3. Purpose of this call document.....	5
4. What we offer .....	5
5. Information for Eligible Research Bodies .....	5
6. Information for Enterprise Partners .....	6
7. State Aid .....	7
8. Eligibility .....	8
9. Ineligible applications.....	10
10. Thinking about applying? .....	11
11. Gender.....	12
12. San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA) .....	12
13. Research Ireland's External Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy 2023-2028.....	12
14. ORCID .....	13
15. Assessment process .....	13
16. Notification and feedback.....	14

## 1. About Research Ireland

Taighde Éireann - Research Ireland (“Research Ireland”) is the national research and innovation funding agency which was established on 1 August 2024. Research Ireland amalgamates the activities of the Irish Research Council (IRC) and Science Foundation Ireland.

## 2. Enterprise Partnership Scheme

The Enterprise Partnership Scheme was formerly administered by the Irish Research Council (IRC) and is part of the consolidated funding programme plan for Research Ireland for 2025. It provides a unique national initiative linking excellent researchers in all disciplines to enterprise; in the context of this call, enterprise partners can range from multinational corporations to SMEs, non-governmental organisations, and, where justified, public-sector agencies. The scheme provides researchers with the opportunity to pursue research in collaboration with enterprise while based at an [Eligible Research Bodies](#) (ERB). Through this co-funded programme, researchers develop new, advanced knowledge and skills linked with industry and employer needs. The programme trains early-career researchers for the diversity of employment opportunities in industry, the public sector and the non-government sectors. For the enterprise partner, the scheme provides an opportunity to collaborate with academia-based research, talent, and innovation in an area closely aligned with its strategic interests.

With consideration to national and global challenges, the involvement of those organisations, both large and small, who seek technological, social and sustainable solutions and opportunities for people and planet is welcomed. Pioneering proposals addressing new and emerging fields of research or those introducing creative, innovative approaches, as well as proposals of an interdisciplinary nature are also encouraged as it is recognised that advancing fundamental understanding is achieved by integrating information, techniques, tools and perspectives from two or more disciplines. The application should be written by the applicant in collaboration with their host institution and enterprise partner.

The Enterprise Partnership Schemes support suitably qualified research master's and doctoral candidates pursuing, or intending to pursue, full-time research in any discipline. Please consult the [research categorisation document](#) for further descriptions of the primary areas, disciplines and other research areas covered.

As per Research Ireland’s Grant Terms and Conditions (inclusive of the Letter of Offer and Research Ireland Policy documents), all funding granted under this Call is subject to, and must be compliant with, State aid legislation based on Article 107(1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU)<sup>1</sup>. Applicants and their supervisory team<sup>2</sup> are required to assess whether the project will give rise to State aid before applying under this Call and must outline in their application whether they believe State aid will or will not apply to a project. Where State aid does apply to a project, funds may be granted to successful applicants in accordance with the De Minimis Regulation<sup>3</sup>. De minimis

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<sup>1</sup> See Commission Notice on the notion of State aid as referred to in Article 107(1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union for further guidance on what constitutes State aid.

<sup>2</sup> The supervisory team is made up of the academic supervisor and enterprise mentor named in the application, both will be required to submit separate endorsement forms for the application once the initial application is submitted by the postgraduate applicant.

<sup>3</sup> Commission Regulation No 2023/2832 of 13 December 2023 in the application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to de Minimis aid (De Minimis Regulation) [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legalcontent/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:L\\_2023028](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legalcontent/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:L_2023028)

aid is deemed not to meet all the criteria laid down in Article 107(1) of the TFEU and therefore is not subject to the notification requirement and approval from the European Commission.

### **3. Purpose of this call document**

- 3.1. This call document provides information for applicants in preparing and submitting an application for an Enterprise Partnership Scholarship (Postgraduate). It also provides a general overview of the assessment process.
- 3.2. This document sets out the terms and conditions for application to the funding call; please note that post award terms and conditions will be provided through General Terms and Conditions and the Letter of Offer issued by Research Ireland to successful awardees.
- 3.3. This document is subject to amendments at any time, any alterations made after the call launch will be highlighted and dated below the table of contents.

### **4. What we offer**

- 4.1. These grants will support suitably qualified research master's and doctoral candidates pursuing, or intending to pursue, full-time research as a full-time registered student in any discipline in an eligible research body.
- 4.2. The duration of an Enterprise Partnership Scheme (Postgraduate) grant ranges from one to four years depending on the type of degree being pursued and the date of first registration (where relevant).
- 4.3. The total value of the scholarship will be up to a maximum of €34,000 per annum in any approved year and consist of the following:
  - a stipend of €25,000;
  - a contribution to fees, including non-European Union fees, paid to the host institution, up to a maximum of €5,750<sup>4</sup>;
  - eligible direct research expenses of €3,250 to enable the awardee to carry out the research project.

### **5. Information for Eligible Research Bodies**

- 5.1. All applications submitted by the applicant, and endorsed by the academic supervisor and enterprise mentor, must subsequently be endorsed by the host ERB. The endorsement deadline is two weeks after the application deadline and any applications not endorsed by the deadline will be deemed ineligible and not progress.
- 5.2. Host ERBs, will be asked to review and endorse any declared conflict of interest between the academic supervisor and the enterprise partner. 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 of the Enterprise Partner.
- 5.3. Funding for the Enterprise Partnership scheme must adhere to State aid regulations and as such the host ERB should make themselves aware of the regulations set out in the State aid section below.
- 5.4. The ERB will be responsible for ensuring the eligibility criteria with regards to graduation dates for undergraduate studies and postgraduate studies (as applicable) are met. Random spot checks will also be carried out from time to time.

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<sup>4</sup> Any differential in fees must be paid by the awardee and/or host institution. Awardees who hold a fee waiver from their host institution, or where no fee is required, or where fees are paid in full or in part by a third party, must inform the enterprise team and the appropriate offices in their host institution and will not be eligible for the fee portion of the scholarship.

- 5.5. The ERB will be responsible for invoicing the Enterprise Partner for their contribution to the annual cost of the grant. The invoicing schedule should be agreed between both parties and detailed in the Research Agreement.

## 6. Information for Enterprise Partners

- 6.1. 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<sup>5</sup> 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.
- 6.2. The State aid rules only apply where the direct or indirect beneficiary of a measure is an “undertaking”. An undertaking is broadly defined by the European Court as any entity engaged in economic activity, regardless of their legal status and the way in which they are financed. An economic activity consists of offering goods and services in the market. The concept of undertaking has been applied to limited companies,<sup>6</sup> partnerships,<sup>7</sup> agricultural companies,<sup>8</sup> sports associations,<sup>9</sup> sole traders and self-employed professionals<sup>10</sup> and State non-profit organisations (e.g., state-run employment recruitment agency,<sup>11</sup> medical aid organisations).<sup>12</sup>
- 6.3. In general, State aid will not be deemed to be a concern where a project does not involve an “economic activity”, or the direct or indirect recipient is not considered an undertaking. Where any or the entities involved in a project (e.g., the research body, Enterprise Partner) constitutes an undertaking, the funding for the project will be granted subject to compliance with State aid, in particular the De Minimis Regulation.
- 6.4. 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.
- 6.5. The enterprise partner can be based nationally or internationally.
- 6.6. Eligible NGOs can request a fee waiver in respect of their contribution for the first year of the grant provided that the total length of the grant is not less than two years in duration<sup>13</sup>. If a fee waiver is approved, the NGO must be able to make the appropriate contribution in the second and any subsequent years of the grant. NGOs are required to apply for any waiver by submitting a waiver application form found on the relevant call page to [schemes@research.ie](mailto:schemes@research.ie) by 1 May 2025. Waiver approval is subject to the availability of funding, is at the sole discretion of the Research Ireland and may be offered on a ranked or limited basis, with priority given to organisations with limited resources.
- 6.7. Eligible NGOs can apply for a maximum of 3 waivers in total in any given programme call year.
- 6.8. An eligible NGO is any charity registered on Ireland’s Register of Charities,

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<sup>5</sup> An eligible public body is a public service body with specific scientific or cultural infrastructure that is integral to the conduct and completion of the proposed research. If a public body or higher education institution is an eligible research-performing organisation, it is not an eligible enterprise partner under this scheme. The Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, and its associated agencies are also not eligible.

<sup>6</sup> Case C-225/78 *Nungesser v Commission* ([here](#)); Case AF/IV/372, *Fides* ([here](#)).

<sup>7</sup> Case IV/30.017, *Breeder’s right: roses* ([here](#)).

<sup>8</sup> Case 61/80, *Coöperatieve Stremsel-en Kleursel-fabriek v Commission* ([here](#)); Case T-61/89 *Dansk Pelsdyravlerforening v Commission* ([here](#)).

<sup>9</sup> For example, in *Distribution of Package Tours* during the 1990 World Cup, the Commission held that FIFA and the Italian Football Association carried out activities of an economic nature and were therefore undertakings.

<sup>10</sup> Case C-309/99 *Wouters* [2002] ECR I-1577.

<sup>11</sup> Case C-41/90 *Höfner and Elser v Macroton*.

<sup>12</sup> Case C-475/99 *Firma Ambulanz Glöckner v Landkreis Südwestpfalz*.

## 7. State Aid

- 7.1. All Research Ireland funding granted is subject to, and must be compliant with, State aid legislation based on Article 107(1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU).<sup>14</sup>
- 7.2. Applicants and their supervisory team are required to assess whether the project will give rise to State aid before applying under this Call and must outline in their application the reasons why they believe State aid will, or will not, apply to a project. See appendix 3 below.
- 7.3. Funding for the Enterprise Partnership Scheme (Postgraduate) is provided under the De minimis regulation for State aid. The De Minimis Regulation allows for the provision of aid up to €300,000 per undertaking over a three-year period (36 months) subject to certain conditions:
  - a. The undertaking must declare any other De minimis State Aid received as part of the application process.
  - b. Where De minimis State Aid is declared it must be sufficiently below the €300,000 aid limit to allow for the support of a grant for 1-4 years. The annual funds received for a postgraduate grant will be €22,700 as outlined in section 6.4 above (this amount will be €34,000 in the first year where a waiver has been approved).
  - c. The undertaking must not be in receipt of any other State aid through any other mechanism for the same purpose.
- 7.4. The De Minimis Regulation does not cover aid measures in respect of the following:
  - a. aid granted to undertakings active in the primary production of fish or aquaculture products;
  - b. aid granted to undertakings active in the primary production of agricultural products
  - c. aid granted to undertakings active in the processing and marketing of fishery and aquaculture products, where the amount of the aid is fixed based on price or quantity of products purchased or put on the market;
  - d. aid granted to undertakings active in the processing and marketing of agricultural products where in one of the following cases: (i) where the amount of the aid is fixed on the basis of the price or quantity of such products purchased from primary producers or put on the market by the undertakings concerned or (ii) where the aid is conditional on being partly or entirely passed on to primary producers;
  - e. aid for export related activities where the aid is linked to the quantities exported; or
  - f. aid contingent on the use of domestic goods and services over imported goods and services.
- 7.5. For all applications where State aid is confirmed, Research Ireland will notify the appropriate bodies at the point of awarding the grant, as required by prevailing State aid guidance. Additional financial reporting may be requested at intervals over the duration of the grant.
- 7.6. All documents relating to a successful application where state aid is granted will be kept for a minimum of 10 years.
- 7.7. Where the application identifies that State aid applies, Research Ireland may award grants to successful applicants and their teams in accordance with the De Minimis regulation. The total De Minimis aid that can be given to any single undertaking over a three-year period is €300,000, regardless of the source of the public funds. De Minimis aid, is deemed not to meet all the criteria laid down in Article 107(1) of the TFEU (i.e., to have no appreciable effect on competition or trade) and, therefore is exempt from the requirement to notify the aid to the European Commission. Where Research Ireland grants De Minimis aid

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<sup>14</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/EN/legal-content/summary/state-aid-framework-for-research-and-development-and-innovation-rdi-framework.html>. Under Article 107 TFEU “[A]ny aid granted by a Member State or through State resources in any form whatsoever which distorts or threatens to distort competition by favouring certain undertakings or the production of certain goods shall, in so far as it affects trade between Member States, be incompatible with the internal market.”

to an organisation, it shall inform the organisation about the De Minimis character of the aid and obtain from those concerned full information about other De Minimis aid received during the previous three years. Research Ireland may only grant the new De Minimis aid after having checked that this will not raise the total amount of De Minimis aid received during the relevant period of three years to a level above the €300,000 ceiling (at the time of awarding the grant).

- 7.8. The application form will require details of all other De Minimis aid – which has been granted to those involved (i.e. research body, the Enterprise Partner) within the past 36 months – to be declared at the point of submission. It should be noted that a false declaration by those concerned resulting in the threshold of €300,000 being exceeded could later give rise to the aid being recovered with interest.

## 8. Eligibility

- 8.1. Potential applicants should carefully ascertain whether they are eligible in advance of applying to the programme.
- 8.2. There is no age limit for applicants to be eligible for this programme type.
- 8.3. All applicants must be affiliated with an Eligible Research Body. On 25 September 2024, the Taighde Éireann-Research Ireland Board approved an interim Eligible Research Body Policy for the agency. The policy is guided by the Research & Innovation Act 2024, which provides for the establishment and functions of Research Ireland. Although the Act refers to the Eligible Research Body as ‘the applicant’, for the purpose of this call, the applicant will be deemed to be the individual submitting an application on behalf of the Eligible Research Body.
- 8.4. Please note that Research Ireland cannot accept applications for funding concerning research that is not permitted by law.
- 8.5. Applications will only be accepted in either the Irish or English language<sup>15</sup>.
- 8.6. Applicants must not have had two previous unsuccessful applications to the programme. This applies regardless of whether the applicant has changed their host institution or research topic since a previous submission.
- 8.7. Applicants from any country may hold an Enterprise Partnership Scheme grant<sup>16</sup>.
- 8.8. Applicants must state during the online application process whether they have submitted, or intend to submit, the same or a similar application to any other Research Ireland, Irish, or international funding programme.
- 8.9. An applicant who is a new entrant to the postgraduate degree for which they are seeking funding is eligible to apply for funding for the full duration of the degree as outlined below:

Degree type	Duration of funding to be awarded
Research master’s degree	1 year
Structured research master’s degree	2 years
Traditional doctoral degree	3 years
Structured doctoral degree	4 years

<sup>15</sup> In order to facilitate assessment, those submitting an Irish language assessment are invited to accompany it with an English language translation. Should an English translation not be provided by the applicant, Research Ireland will provide a translation to the relevant assessors.

<sup>16</sup> 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.



- 8.10. 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 below:

Degree type	Date of first registration <sup>17</sup>	Academic year	Duration of funding to be awarded
Structured research master's degree	1 Sep 24 – 31 Aug 25 (registrations prior to 1 Sep 24 are ineligible)	2024/25	1 year
Traditional doctoral degree	1 Sep 24 – 31 Aug 25	2024/25	2 years
	1 Sep 23 – 31 Aug 24 (registrations prior to 1 Sep 23 are ineligible)	2023/24	1 year
Structured doctoral degree	1 Sep 24 – 31 Aug 25	2024/25	3 years
	1 Sep 23 – 31 Aug 24	2023/24	2 years
	1 Sep 22 – 31 Aug 23 (registrations prior to 1 Sep 22 are ineligible)	2022/23	1 year

- 8.11. Applicants with registration dates prior to the dates listed above, may still be eligible to apply if they have a properly documented eligible career break, provided the eligible career break started before the call deadline and is at least equivalent to the adjustment being sought. Eligible career breaks include maternity leave, paternity leave, adoptive leave, parental leave, parent's leave, extended sick leave and carer's leave.
- 8.12. If an applicant wishes to adjust their period of eligibility, they must have evidence, birth certificate(s), and/or documents from the host institution at the time of the eligible break(s):
- 8.13. For maternity leave, applicants will be granted an 18-month adjustment for each child born after the date of first registration for the postgraduate degree being pursued, regardless of how long the applicant took for maternity leave. If the applicant can document a longer maternity leave, the eligibility period will be adjusted by the documented amount of actual leave taken until the call deadline. The same principle also applies for child adoption.
- For paternity leave, applicants will be granted an adjustment equal to the documented amount of paternity leave actually taken for each child born after the date of first registration for the postgraduate degree being pursued. The same principle also applies for child adoption.
  - For long-term illness (over ninety days for the applicant or a close family member, i.e. child, spouse, parent, sibling), applicants will be granted an adjustment equal to the documented amount of leave actually taken by the applicant for each incident which occurred after the date of first registration for the postgraduate degree being pursued.

- c. For all other eligible career breaks, applicants will be granted an adjustment equal to the documented amount of leave actually taken by the applicant for each incident which occurred after the date of first registration for the postgraduate degree being pursued.
- 8.14. Documented evidence of an eligible career break should be retained by the applicants as it may be requested at any stage of the application, assessment or award process. Should it become apparent at any stage of the application, assessment or award process that an applicant does not meet the conditions set out herein for adjustment of the period of eligibility, or cannot provide documented evidence of same, the application may be deemed ineligible and any offer of an award rescinded.
  - 8.15. All applicants must have a first class or upper second-class honours<sup>18</sup> bachelor's, or the equivalent, degree. If the applicant does not have a first class or upper second-class honours bachelor's, or the equivalent, degree, they must possess a master's degree. Research Ireland's determination of an applicant's eligibility on these criteria is final.
  - 8.16. If undergraduate examination results are not known at the time of application, an expected grade can be given in the application. If the application subsequently meets the funding threshold, the final degree result must be confirmed before a Letter of Offer can be issued.
  - 8.17. All degree results as entered in the application form and endorsed by the host institution must be the applicant's overall results and verifiable as such on official transcripts. Regardless of whether they are relevant to the eligibility requirements listed in clause 8.15, 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<sup>19</sup>. If such transcripts cannot be presented to the host institution, or do not verify the information exactly as detailed in the application, any offer of funding will be withdrawn.
  - 8.18. Applicants for a research master's degree must not currently hold, or have previously held, a Government of Ireland or Enterprise scholarship.
  - 8.19. Applicants for a doctoral degree must not currently hold, or have previously held, any Government of Ireland or Enterprise scholarship other than one which would have enabled them to obtain a research master's degree.
  - 8.20. All applications require an academic supervisor willing to guide the proposed research project and an enterprise mentor designated by the enterprise partner as being responsible for supporting and mentoring the awardee in relation to the enterprise partner's involvement. The academic supervisor and enterprise mentor cannot be same person. Research Ireland is not in a position to assist applicants in finding an academic supervisor, enterprise partner or enterprise mentor for their application. It is possible to include a secondary academic supervisor or co-supervisor on the application.

## 9. Ineligible applications

- 9.1. In addition to section 8 above, applications will be deemed ineligible and will not be considered for funding if:
  - an applicant submits more than one application to this year's Enterprise Partnership Scheme call<sup>20</sup>;

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<sup>18</sup> Host institutions are expected to be guided by QQI and the NFQ in terms of the recognition and equivalence of a degree.

<sup>19</sup> Supporting, non-returnable material must be forwarded in a timely manner to the host institution for inspection before the grant can commence. On request, this material must also be forwarded by the host institution to Research Ireland for inspection before the grant can commence. All transcripts must be appropriately stamped and signed to confirm that they are official documents of the institution.

<sup>20</sup> An applicant may have applied to the Government of Ireland Postgraduate Scholarship Programme or the Government of Ireland Postdoctoral Fellowship Programme in addition to either the Enterprise Partnership Scheme or the Employment-Based Postgraduate Programme. If they have submitted, or intend to submit, the same or similar application to another programme call this year they must state so in their application.

- an application has not been submitted via the online system by the relevant deadline. No hardcopies or email forms will be accepted;
- an application does not have all the required participant forms, i.e. academic supervisor and enterprise mentor forms, completed in full and submitted via the online system by the relevant deadline. No hardcopies or email forms will be accepted;
- an application is incomplete or exceeds the word limits;
- an application includes additional materials other than those requested;
- an application includes materials in a format other than those requested;
- it is found at any stage during the process that any section of an application has been plagiarised or is not the applicant's own work;
- any information supplied in an application is false, misleading or unverifiable with appropriate documentation;
- the research project as proposed in the application form has previously been funded either in full, or in part, by the Research Ireland or any other funding agency;
- the application is not endorsed by the applicant's host institution, i.e. the vice-president/dean of research or their authorised nominee, via the online system by the relevant deadline;
- any potential or perceived conflict of interest between the applicant, enterprise partner, enterprise mentor or academic supervisor was not declared at the time of application;
- if the enterprise partner has outstanding payments under the scheme at the time of application or there have previously been significant delays in payment of their contribution or progress reporting on a current or expired award;
- canvassing on behalf of the applicant occurs.
- it is not evident to the assessors that the application is an original project; written by the applicant in collaboration with the academic supervisor and enterprise mentor; and distinctively different to any other proposals supported by the same supervisor.
- it becomes apparent at any stage of the application, assessment or award process that an applicant does not meet the eligibility criteria, an application will be deemed ineligible, and any award offer shall be withdrawn.

## 10. Thinking about applying?

- 10.1. For reasons of transparency and fairness to all applicants, Research Ireland will not enter into written or telephone correspondence with any individual about the assessment process or their eligibility to apply.
- 10.2. In the first instance, applicants should contact the research office in their proposed host institution for information and clarification on the call. It is highly recommended that applicants contact the research office well in advance of submitting an application.
- 10.3. If the research office is unable to answer a query, the research office should email it to [schemes@researchireland.ie](mailto:schemes@researchireland.ie) for answer through the frequently asked questions (FAQ) process. An updated FAQ document will be published weekly on the [funding call](#) website.
- 10.4. Applicants should not add an academic supervisor or enterprise mentor to their application without their prior approval.
- 10.5. Prior to creating an application, applicants should contact and discuss their research project with the proposed academic supervisor and enterprise mentor, projects must be co-designed.
- 10.6. It is the sole responsibility of the applicant to inform the proposed academic supervisor and enterprise mentor of their nomination. This should be done well in advance of completing the online application.
- 10.7. It is strongly encouraged that application and participant forms are submitted well in advance of the relevant deadline as heavy server traffic on the day may slow down their submission. Applicants are advised not to wait until the day of the deadline to register on the system or submit their application. If an

applicant needs to submit their application on the closing day, it is strongly recommended to do this at least six hours before the deadline.

- 10.8. While an academic supervisor at an Irish host institution is permitted to support more than one award holder under each programme, this should not be used as a means for academic supervisors to form research teams. Each application must be in support of an individual and original project, written by the applicant in collaboration with the supervisory team and distinctively different to other applications which may be received under the same academic supervisor. Applications that do not meet this requirement may be deemed ineligible at any stage of the process. Research Ireland reserves the right to request additional detail from the supervisor outlining how these new grants will be integrated into the supervisor's current activities, as well as the planned time management of each individual's research programme and career development plan.

## **11. Gender**

Research Ireland seeks to provide equal outcomes for all applicants so that Ireland can attract and retain the most talented, creative and innovative researchers, thereby maximising its collective research intelligence. To ensure a level playing field for all applicants, the applications to this funding call will adhere to a gender-blind assessment process. Details of the applicant's gender will not be provided to the international assessors. As such, profile information containing the name and gender of applicants is not provided to reviewers during the assessment process.

Applicants are therefore asked to refrain from identifying their gender when completing their application forms. We also ask that supervisors use 'the applicant', 's/he' and 'his/her' when providing their observations rather than the person's name or pronouns which would identify their gender. Applicants are advised to consult the sex/gender dimension statement in appendix 1 in advance of completing the personal, ethical and sex/gender statements section of their application.

## **12. San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA)**

Research Ireland is a signatory to the [San Francisco Declaration of Research Assessment \(DORA\)](#) and, as such is aligning its review and evaluation processes with DORA principles. Research Ireland has reinforced its commitment to the core principles by joining DORA as a member<sup>21</sup>. To this end, all types of research output are recognised, and Research Ireland is committed to assessing the quality and impact of research through means other than journal-based indicators/metrics and research performance-based indicators/metrics such as impact factors and H-index. In the spirit of supporting open research and as a signatory to Ireland's National Action Plan for Open Research 2022-2030<sup>3</sup> and a signatory of Plan S<sup>4</sup>, Research Ireland will also consider a commitment to making data and other types of research open and accessible. To complement these activities and further reinforce Research Ireland's commitment to the overarching objectives of DORA, Research Ireland is a signatory to the Agreement on Reforming Research Assessment<sup>22</sup> and is a member of the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA)<sup>23</sup>.

## **13. Research Ireland's External Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy 2023-2028**

Research Ireland is committed to building equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) within the Irish research and innovation sector. The Agency recognises that excellent research stems from diverse and inclusive teams, which reflect our society and the communities we serve. As such, Research

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<sup>21</sup> Contributor level membership

<sup>22</sup> [https://coara.eu/app/uploads/2022/09/2022\\_07\\_19\\_rra\\_agreement\\_final.pdf](https://coara.eu/app/uploads/2022/09/2022_07_19_rra_agreement_final.pdf)

<sup>23</sup> <https://coara.eu/>

Ireland aspires to proactively lead in driving the EDI agenda forward through the research and research teams that it funds.

In Research Ireland's External Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy 2023-2028, increasing the number of women and members of Historically Underserved Communities in Applicant Teams are key objectives. As such, women and members of Historically Underserved Communities are strongly encouraged to apply to this programme.

Furthermore, as part of its EDI Strategy, Research Ireland also aims to increase awareness of the sex and gender dimension in research, by requesting that researchers demonstrate that they have considered any potential biological sex and/or socio-cultural gender aspects in their proposed research programme.

## **14. ORCID**

ORCID provides a persistent digital identifier that distinguishes you from every other researcher and, through integration in key research workflows such as manuscript and grant submission, supports automated linkages between you and your professional activities ensuring that your work is recognised.

If you do not currently have an ORCID, please register for one at [www.orcid.org](http://www.orcid.org) in advance of submitting your application.

## **15. Assessment process**

- 15.1. Applications are first checked by the Research Ireland for eligibility. Please note that assessment of an application should not be taken as confirmation that all eligibility requirements for the programme have been met. The status of applications in terms of eligibility may change over the course of the Call process.
- 15.2. All applications will be assessed solely based on the material provided at the time of submission. Applicants should not include any additional links to online research profiles or supplementary information. Any such additional material will render your application ineligible in line with section 9.1 above.
- 15.3. Award holders will be selected following a transparent, merit-based, impartial and equitable selection procedure, based on international peer review.
- 15.4. Profile information containing the name, date of birth and gender of applicants is not provided to reviewers during the assessment process.
- 15.5. Each application is assessed by at least two independent, international reviewers. Each assessor submits their evaluation, and the applications are preliminarily ranked.
- 15.6. Applications are then discussed at an international assessment board meeting to determine the final ranking, arrive at an overall judgment of standard, and make final recommendations to Research Ireland.
- 15.7. Research Ireland will then fund down the ranked list presented to it by the international assessment board until funding is exhausted. The decision on whether to make an award is final.
- 15.8. Applications are assessed under four headings:
  - applicant;
  - project;
  - training and career development;
  - and environment.
- 15.9. Assessors consider all four headings and allocate scores as per the evaluation criteria detailed in Appendix 2. Applicants are advised to familiarise themselves fully with the evaluation criteria prior to making an application.

15.10. If the total average score is the same between two or more applications, applications with the same average scores will be ranked according to the higher average score under the project category.

## **16. Notification and feedback**

- 16.1. Research Ireland is precluded from discussing results of the competition or the outcome of individual applications over the telephone or in writing.
- 16.2. Feedback to unsuccessful candidates will consist of the score assigned by the international assessment board. No additional qualitative feedback will be provided. The score assigned by the international assessment board is final and no correspondence will be undertaken in relation to individual assessments or scoring.
- 16.3. Under no circumstance will feedback provided compromise the confidentiality of any participant in the process.

## APPENDIX 1

### GUIDANCE ON THE SEX/GENDER DIMENSION STATEMENT

While there are research projects in which biological sex and/or gender may not be relevant in terms of the research content, it is well established that, where relevant, integrating sex and gender analysis into the design, implementation, evaluation and dissemination of the research can lead to better results and opportunities. If relevant sex-gender issues are missed or poorly addressed, research results will be partial and potentially biased. In worst-case scenarios poor consideration of the sex-gender dimension in research can result in real-world applications based on inaccurate results or conceptions. Full consideration of the sex-gender dimension in research content is a requirement for all Research Ireland grants.

The integration of the sex-gender dimension in research is commonly mistaken for the integration of gender balance in research teams. These are two distinct matters, and the gender balance of a team should not be used to answer the sex-gender dimension in research question. We recommend this short video [here](#) from the European Commission on the integration of sex/gender dimension in research.

#### *Definitions*

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

Gender refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviours, expressions and identities of girls, women, boys, men, and gender diverse people. It influences how people perceive themselves and each other, how they act and interact, and the distribution of power and resources in society. Gender is usually conceptualised as a binary (girl/woman and boy/man) yet there is considerable diversity in how individuals and groups understand, experience, and express it. The Irish charity, BelongTo provides a list of terminology associated with gender [here](#).

#### *Resources*

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

#### *General*

- [Stanford University resource concerning the sex-gender aspects of research](#)

#### *STEM*

- [Online training for integrating sex and gender in health research](#)
- [Article about the dangers of drug testing on all-male animal populations](#) (animal studies, drug design)
- [Gender research focus in agricultural technology and botanical science](#) (agriculture, botanical science)
- [Transport Infrastructure Ireland report on the implications of transport design for women in Ireland](#) (transportation engineering)
- [Machine learning reinforcing gender stereotypes](#) (machine learning)

#### *AHSS*

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

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

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

The following is provided to help applicants complete the sex/gender dimension statement in the application. This is taken from the [‘Gender in EU-funded research’ toolkit](#), which aims to give the research community practical tools to integrate gender aspects into their research, including gender equality (equal outcomes for women and men) and integration of sex/gender analysis in research content.

1. The best possible research validity: Research should consider the differences between men and women in the research population, and results will be more representative. General categories such as ‘people’, ‘patients’ or ‘users’ do not distinguish between men and women. Research based on such categories may well draw partial conclusions based on partial data. For example, research on a new breast cancer treatment should include male patients, so as to draw a complete picture. Most basic research with animal models focuses on males to the exclusion of females (Zucker et al., 2010; Marts et al., 2004). Research on economic migrants cannot limit itself to male points of view if it wants to understand the whole migrant population.
2. Research ideas and hypotheses: The relevance of biological sex and/or gender for and within the subject matter needs to be analysed and an assessment made as to whether these are relevant variables. The formulation of hypotheses can draw upon previous research and existing literature. Indeed, the body of knowledge on sex/gender issues has been steadily growing over recent decades and can serve as interesting reference material to build new hypotheses for future research.
3. Project design and research methodology: While research methodologies may vary, they all strive to represent (aspects of) reality. Whenever this reality concerns humans, any sound methodology should differentiate between the sexes and consider the men’s and women’s situations equally. Groups such as ‘citizens’, ‘patients’, ‘consumers’, ‘victims’ or ‘children’ are therefore too general as categories.
4. Research implementation: *Data collection tools* (such as questionnaires and interview checklists) need to be gender-sensitive, use gender neutral language, and should make it possible to detect the different realities of men and women. This will help to avoid gender bias. For example, answers to be provided by the ‘head of household’ are not necessarily valid for all household members.
5. Data analysis: In most research concerning human subjects, data is routinely disaggregated by sex, which would logically lead to analyses according to sex. However, to date this is still not common practice. Systematically taking sex as a central variable and analysing other variables with respect to it (e.g. sex and age, sex and income, sex and mobility, sex and labour) will provide significant and useful insights. Involving gender-balanced end-user groups during the research is also a good way of guaranteeing the highest impact.
6. Dissemination phase – reporting of data: Collecting and analysing sex and/or gender specific data is not enough if they are omitted from the published results. Sex and/or gender should be included in ‘mainstream’ publications as it is as much part of daily reality as any other variable studied. Specific dissemination actions (publications or events) for sex and/or gender findings can be considered. Institutions and departments that focus on gender should be included in the target groups for dissemination. Publications should use gender-neutral language.

#### *Checklist for sex and/or gender in research content*

##### Research ideas phase:

- If the research involves humans as research objects, has the relevance of biological sex and/or gender to



the research topic been analysed?

- If the research does not directly involve humans, are the possibly differentiated relations of men and women to the research subject sufficiently clear?
- Have you reviewed literature and other sources relating to differences in the research field?

Proposal phase:

- Does the methodology ensure that (possible) sex/gender differences will be investigated: that sex/gender differentiated data will be collected and analysed throughout the research cycle and will be part of the final publication?
- Does the proposal explicitly and comprehensively explain how sex/gender issues will be handled (e.g. in a specific work package)?
- Have possibly differentiated outcomes and impacts of the research on women and men been considered?

Research phase:

- Are questionnaires, surveys, focus groups, etc. designed to unravel potentially relevant sex and/or gender differences in your data?
- Are the groups involved in the project (e.g. samples, testing groups) gender-balanced? Is data analysed according to the sex variable? Are other relevant variables analysed with respect to sex?

Dissemination phase:

- Do analyses present statistics, tables, figures and descriptions that focus on the relevant sex/gender differences that came up during the project?
- Are institutions, departments and journals that focus on gender included among the target groups for dissemination, along with mainstream research magazines?
- Have you considered a specific publication or event on sex/gender-related findings?

## APPENDIX 2 EVALUATION CRITERIA

### ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP SCHEME (POSTGRADUATE)

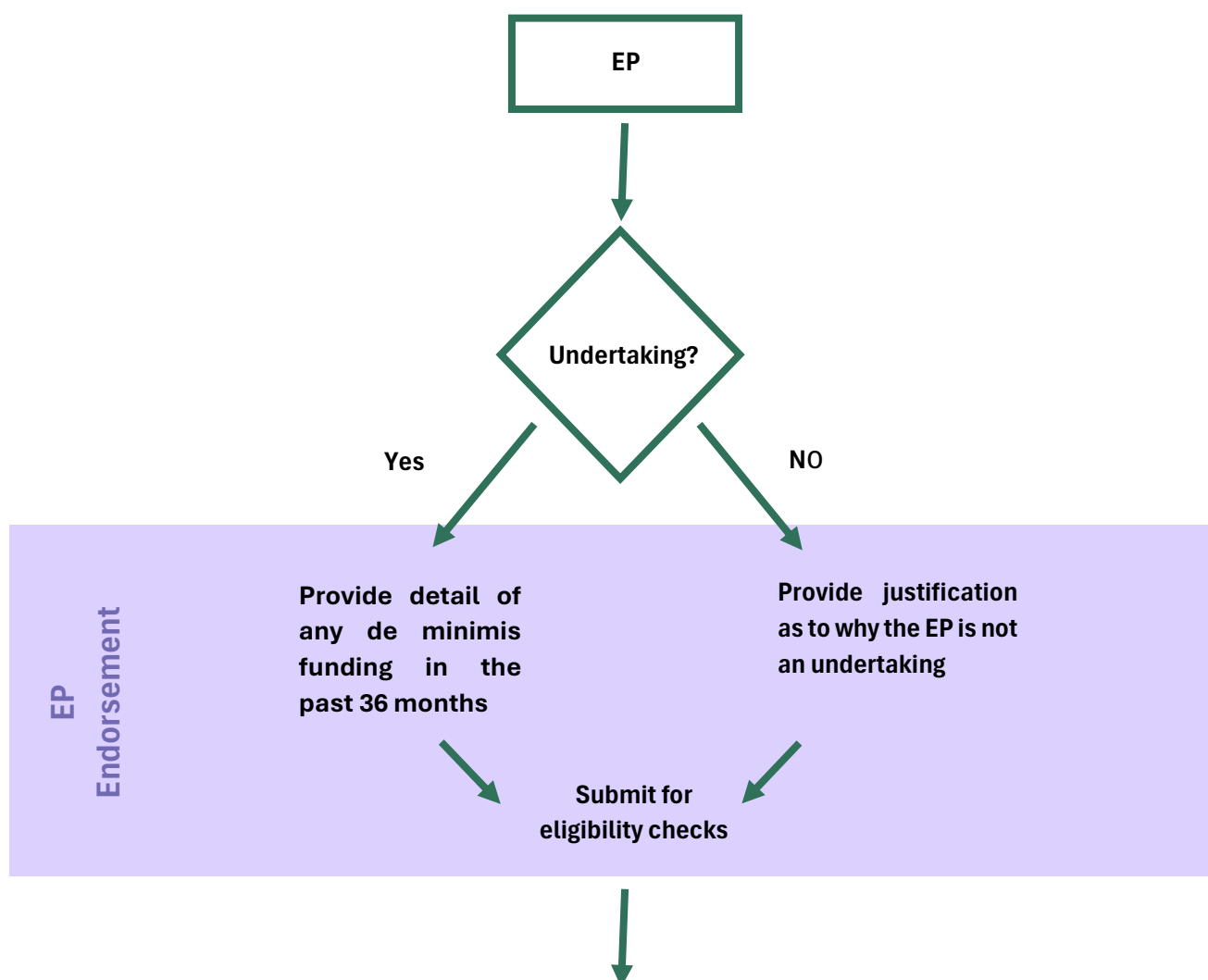
Evaluation criteria and detail	Maximum marks
<b>PROJECT, including:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarity and coherence of the proposed research</li> <li>• Quality of the proposed research design and methodologies</li> <li>• Feasibility of the proposed milestones, deliverables and contingency plans</li> <li>• Consideration as to how the proposed research will advance state of the art and make a contribution to existing knowledge</li> <li>• Plans for dissemination and knowledge exchange of the proposed research</li> <li>• Consideration of the relevant ethical issues and sex/gender dimension</li> </ul>	40
<b>APPLICANT, including:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Track record and research potential of the applicant</li> <li>• Quality, significance and relevance of the applicant's key achievements, taking their personal statement into account</li> <li>• Match between the applicant's profile and the proposed research project</li> <li>• Evidence of independent thinking</li> <li>• Quality of the references provided by the academic supervisor and enterprise mentor</li> </ul>	30
<b>ENVIRONMENT, including:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suitability and ability of the academic supervisor(s) and enterprise mentor to provide adequate supervision</li> <li>• Quality of infrastructure and facilities provided by the host institution and enterprise partner</li> <li>• Match between the applicant, academic supervisor(s), enterprise mentor, host institution and enterprise partner</li> </ul>	20
<b>TRAINING AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT, including:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarity and quality of training and career development plan</li> <li>• Potential for the development of new research-related and transferable skills and competencies, including those relevant to employment outside the traditional academic sector</li> <li>• Capacity to acquire new knowledge</li> <li>• Clarity of thought as to how the scholarship will impact on the applicant's career path</li> </ul>	10

### APPENDIX 3

#### STATE AID – DE MINIMIS DECISION CONSIDERATIONS

Questions to consider before applying?

- ✓ Can the enterprise partner determine whether they are an undertaking as defined by state aid law? I.e. Do they offer any goods or services on the market, regardless of whether the money received is used to support charitable activities or other not for profit ends?
- ✓ Can the enterprise partner provide a declaration of any de minimis aid received in the past 36 months? If yes, is it sufficiently below the €300,000/36 month ceiling to allow them to support my grant application?
- ✓ Will the host ERB support and sign a research agreement with the enterprise partner outlining any matters relating to intellectual property, publication rights and confidentiality arising from this research?



If the application is successful, the applicant, EP and ERB must complete and sign the following:

- Research Ireland Letter of Offer, committing to the [Grant Terms and Conditions](#)
- Research Agreement ([EPSPG Webpage](#))