

Disability Policy

Effective 27th June 2025

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Research Ireland Disability Supplement Guidance & FAQ Document.

Taighde Éireann | Research Ireland (“Research Ireland” or “the Agency”) is committed to supporting those with the greatest potential to fully realise their role in the research endeavour regardless of their backgrounds, identities, or social characteristics¹ Underpinned by the Research and Innovation Act 2024,² the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty,³ and the Research Ireland External Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy 2023-2028,⁴ Research Ireland aims to be a key driver of an inclusive, engaged research culture by leading in minimising systemic inequities in the Research and Innovation (R&I) ecosystem that prevent individuals from playing a role in addressing societal challenges.

Research Ireland acknowledges that disabled researchers⁵ may require additional supports to participate fully in the research endeavour where funds for these supports are **not** available via other funding mechanisms.⁶ As such, the Agency has established a Disability Supplement underpinned by a Disability Policy for eligible Research Ireland-funded Grant

¹ [External Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion \(EDI\) Strategy 2023-2028](#)

² [Research and Innovation Act 2024](#), p 11.

³ [IHREC – Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty](#)

⁴ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/gender/>

⁵ Aligning with the [National Disability Authority’s Centre for Excellence in Universal Design](#), person-first and identity-first language are used interchangeably throughout this policy and other associated documentation.

⁶ This includes disability funding mechanisms such as the [HEA Fund for Students with Disabilities](#), institutional funds for reasonable accommodations, and NGO/charity organisational supports available for individuals with a disability.

holders and their Research Ireland-funded Team members⁷ to request the costs for required, eligible reasonable accommodations.⁸

The Research Ireland Disability Supplement is, in the first instance, a pilot initiative which aims to increase the engagement of Historically Underserved Communities⁹ with Research Ireland in the design, conduct, and evaluation of research – a key goal of the Agency’s External EDI Strategy. This Disability Supplement will be reviewed periodically to ensure that it is fit for purpose and providing the supports anticipated, with a view to embedding it in the Agency’s offering of supports for its funded researchers. As such, Research Ireland will continue to undertake iterative consultation with disabled researchers, Grant holders, Research Body Disability/Access Offices, Research Body Research and Finance Offices, where relevant.

The Research Ireland Disability Supplement is not meant to replace existent funding mechanisms for reasonable accommodations, and requests for funding under this supplement should only be sought if the required budget is unavailable from other recognised sources.

Who Can Apply

Research Ireland Grant holders and Research Ireland-funded Research Team members on an active Research Ireland Grant¹⁰ and based in an Eligible Research Body,¹¹ including postgraduate students, are eligible to request budget for eligible reasonable accommodation costs via the Research Ireland Disability Supplement.

⁷ Researchers funded by Research Ireland and based in an Eligible Research Body. See the ‘Who can Apply’ section.

⁸ Per [AHEAD](#), a ‘Reasonable Accommodation is any action that helps to alleviate a substantial disadvantage due to disability or medical condition’ and ‘enable a qualified person with a disability to fully undertake the job tasks they are hired to do, without which they would potentially be restricted due to the impact of their disability’.

⁹ For the purposes of this Policy and associated documentation, Historically Underserved Communities encompasses a broad and diverse range of historically marginalised groups including but not limited to the nine protected grounds established in the [Equal Status Acts 2000-2018](#) and socioeconomic status.

¹⁰ The Research Ireland grant must be within its term, as per the Letter of Offer. Retrospective costs for completed/closed Grants are not eligible for funding via the Disability Supplement.

¹¹ <https://www.researchireland.ie/about/policies/>

If a request for budget is submitted while the [relevant Research Ireland Grant is within six months of its end date¹²](#) or is in an approved No-Cost Extension period,¹³ please contact disability.support@researchireland.ie before submitting a completed Disability Supplement request form.

Researchers seeking to request funds via the Disability Supplement must contact the appropriate office at their Research Body to confirm that the requested budget is not available through other institutional or governmental funding mechanisms.

Please refer to the below table for details on who to contact regarding your eligibility and that of the required costs:

Role of Requester	Appropriate Research Body Contact
Member of staff	Human Resources (HR) or EDI Office ¹⁴
Postgraduate student	Disability/Access Office

Per the table, the relevant Research Body contact must confirm **all** the below **before** a Disability Supplement request is submitted to Research Ireland:

- ✓ The individual is registered with the appropriate Research Body Office as requiring reasonable accommodation(s).¹⁵
- ✓ The requested reasonable accommodation cost(s) are not available, eligible for funding, or in receipt of funding from any other institutional and/or governmental funding mechanism for disabled individuals (e.g., the HEA Funds for Disabled Students or institutional funding streams for staff with disabilities).
- ✓ The individual is a Research Ireland Grant holder or Research Ireland-funded Research Team member funded by a Research Ireland Grant.¹⁶
- ✓ The requested reasonable accommodation cost(s) are eligible for funding under the Research Ireland Disability Policy.¹⁷

¹² Per the Letter of Offer.

¹³ For information regarding No-Cost Extensions, please refer to the Research Ireland website at <https://www.researchireland.ie/about/policies/>.

¹⁴ Members of staff should contact either Human Resources (HR) or the EDI Office, whichever office manages staff reasonable accommodations at their relevant Research Body.

¹⁵ Human Resources for Research Body staff. The Disability/Access Office for postgraduate students. For further information, please see the relevant section of the Disability Supplement Guidance Document.

¹⁶ Individuals must either be fully or partially in receipt of their stipend or salary from a Research Ireland Grant.

¹⁷ See Eligible Costs for further details.

Eligible Costs

Reasonable accommodations are unique to an individual's disability/disabilities and related or associated needs. In this context, Research Ireland aims to fund as wide a variety of supports as possible given the legislative remit of the Agency and subject to available funding.¹⁸ As this is a pilot initiative, Research Ireland will periodically review the eligible and ineligible costs based on feedback from relevant stakeholders regarding any ongoing gaps in support, on-the-ground implementation challenges and/or opportunities, and in response to the evolving needs of researchers with disabilities.

As per the instructions on the Disability Supplement Request Form,¹⁹ all requested budget items must be justified and rationale given as to why it cannot be supported by other funding mechanisms.

All requested budget items must be specifically attributed to work that is being undertaken as part of the Research Programme²⁰ on the relevant Research Ireland Grant.

Requests for funds via the Disability Supplement will be assessed by relevant Research Ireland staff on a case-by-case basis.²¹ As such, a relevant Research Ireland staff member may reach out to you to request further details and/or gain clarification concerning the requested support(s) and associated cost(s).²²

¹⁸ <https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/bills/bill/2024/1/>

¹⁹ [Disability Supplement Request Form](#)

²⁰ As defined in the [Research Ireland Grant General Terms & Conditions](#).

²¹ For further details of the request submission and approval process, please see the relevant section of this Policy and the associated Guidance Document.

²² All approved acquisitions must comply with national and EU procurement guidelines, as well as align with Research Body Finance Office policies and relevant government circulars.

Eligible costs may include, **but are not limited to** the categories and example supports in the table below:

Support Category	Example Supports
Bespoke travel supports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taxi fares to and from the Research Body • Care/travel costs for a support animal when travelling • Non-standard hotel and/or transport requirements²³
Ergonomic equipment²⁴	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Height-adjustable chair and/or desk for relevant lab and/or project work • Ergonomic mouse and/or keyboard • Ergonomic monitor equipment, such as a specialised desk mount
Accessibility hardware and software²⁵	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Screen readers • Subscription cost(s) for computer or mobile applications²⁶
Cost associated with a support person(s)²⁷	<p>For necessary support with day-to-day activities related to the Research Ireland Grant Programme of Research, including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal administrative support • Communication assistance • Physical assistance²⁸ • Proofreading/editing support

Ineligible Costs

The Research Ireland Disability Supplement does **not** currently support the costs associated with the items listed in the below table. The ‘example supports’ included in the below table are **not an exhaustive list**:

²³ For example, requiring accommodation near to a conference location.

²⁴ The Eligible Research Body must manage all Programme Assets in compliance with the Research Ireland Grant General Terms & Conditions.

²⁵ As above.

²⁶ For example, applications designed to support those who are neurodivergent.

²⁷ The costs associated with a support person(s) must be quoted pro rata on the Disability Supplement Request form.

²⁸ For example, in a laboratory, archival, or library setting.

Support Category	Example Supports
Building/Infrastructure costs (at home or Eligible Research Body)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access ramps • Stairlifts • Accessible bathrooms
Healthcare/Medical related costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private health insurance costs • Occupational health assessments and/or therapy • Medical appointment costs – including those associated with receiving a diagnosis for a condition and/or disability • Home healthcare equipment²⁹ • Home healthcare assistance³⁰ • Medication costs (prescribed and over the counter)
Childcare/carer's costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Childminder costs • School/crèche fees and/or associated costs • Companion travel costs
Statutory Sick Pay and costs associated with Sick Leave	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrative 'Leave of Absence' fees³¹ • Payment of the PhD stipend during periods of sick leave when not in full-time research • 'Return to Work/Study' Assessments and associated costs • Costed extensions

While the above cost categories are not currently eligible for funding via the Research Ireland Disability Supplement, the Agency will continue to work with the Research Ireland Eligible Research Bodies, DFHERIS,³² the HEA,³³ LaunchPAD,³⁴ AHEAD, the National Disabled Postgraduate Advisory Committee (NDPAC),³⁵ and other relevant community stakeholders to advocate for and support the disabled researcher community in Ireland.

²⁹ For example, respiratory machine(s), hospital bed(s), blood pressure monitor(s)

³⁰ For example, medical professional care such as home healthcare nurses

³¹ This includes any fees associated with going 'Off-Books', i.e., an interruption to studies.

³² <https://www.gov.ie/en/organisation/departments-of-higher-education-innovation-and-science/>

³³ <https://hea.ie/>

³⁴ <https://www.ahead.ie/postgraduate>

³⁵ <https://www.ahead.ie/postgraduate>

Request Submission Process

Research Ireland Grant holders and/or their Research Ireland-funded Research Team members seeking to apply for funds via the Research Ireland Disability Supplement should contact the appropriate HR or Disability/Access Office³⁶ at their Eligible Research Body.

Completed [request forms should be submitted by the eligible individual seeking funding for reasonable accommodation costs to \[disability.support@researchireland.ie\]\(mailto:disability.support@researchireland.ie\)](#).³⁷ The request form should be completed and signed by an official, duly authorised by the Research Body, including the Finance Office within the relevant host institution. Please do not include any personal health and/or medical information in your correspondence with Research Ireland.³⁸

The requested budget must be for the current financial year (2025). Where an individual requires support costs that span multiple calendar years of a grant, a separate form must be completed for each year a budget is being requested.

If the individual requesting the funds is **not** the Research Ireland Grant holder, the Research Ireland Grant holder **does not** need to be informed of the request submission and **does not** need to sign the request form. For further information regarding disclosure and the submission process, please see the Research Ireland Disability Supplement Guidance Document.

If the requested budget is approved by Research Ireland, a supplement will be made to the relevant Research Ireland Grant.

If the requested budget is not approved by Research Ireland, the requester and the relevant Eligible Research Body representative will be informed via email. Given that the Disability Supplement is a pilot, Research Ireland does not anticipate considering appeals as all feedback will be taken into consideration in the development of future iterations of the Disability Policy and associated Supplement.

³⁶ See the 'Who Can Apply' section.

³⁷ For further information about completing the Disability Supplement Request Form, please see the Research Ireland Disability Supplement Guidance Document.

³⁸ Including but not limited to, medical diagnoses and associated documentation, prescription medication information, or medical certificates.