

# Guidance on the Process for Changes to Directors of Research Ireland



## Document Information

Document Title:	RC_001 Guidance on the Process for Changes to Directors of Research Ireland Centres
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Document Type:	Guidance
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Document Version:	March 2025
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## **1. Process for Changes to Directors of Research Ireland Centres**

As per the Research Ireland Letter of Offer for Research Centre awards, the agency must be notified in advance of any changes involving the Director of a Research Ireland funded Research Centre at any point in the lifetime of the Centre. For changes involving a Director, the Vice President for Research of the lead Host Institution for the Centre award should submit a written request to Research Ireland to consider the change. This request should be submitted by email to the Research Ireland Director of Programmes, the Research Centres Manager and the relevant Scientific Programme Manager within Research Ireland, along with the programmatic email address (i.e. centres@researchireland.ie). The lead institution's request should, at a minimum, contain the following information:

1. The background for the request, providing an explanation as to why the existing Director is stepping down from his/her position.
2. A description of the impact that his/her departure will have on the operations or research activities of the Centre, as well as any steps being undertaken to manage or mitigate this impact.
3. The process to be adopted by the lead Host Research Body for the replacement of the Director. Research Ireland will assess the process to be adopted by the Host Research Body and provide feedback before commencement of recruitment. Two scenarios are envisaged for the process of recruiting a new Director to an existing Research Centre:

**a) Open recruitment process** – whereby the position of Director is filled through an open competition, as laid out by the Host Research Institution. This should involve the advertisement of the position both within the Host Research Institution and externally. It would be expected that an international search would be carried out to provide confidence that the selected Director would be of an international calibre. Internal candidates can apply and should be evaluated, in competition, as part of this process. For Research Centres using the CEO/COO model, this falls under the open recruitment process and Research Ireland requirements will remain the same.



**b) Succession Plan** - where a Centre has a robust succession plan in place, Research Ireland will consider this process for the filling of the Director role. Research Ireland will require assurance from the Host Research Institution that all potential candidates within the Centre, including those not based at the Host Research Institution, have been considered as part of such a succession plan. An assessment of all candidate(s) identified as part of the succession plan by a selection committee should take place to evaluate the calibre of candidate(s).

In both process scenarios, Research Ireland requires assurance from the Host Research Institution that the following conditions are met:

- i. Two internationally recognised researchers, both of whom have been approved by Research Ireland are present on the selection committee. Information, in the form of a CV, on such scientists should be provided to Research Ireland for approval.
- ii. The views of the Governance Committee of the Research Centre on the appointment/role assignment are represented by the involvement of the Governance Chair in the selection committee panel.
- iii. All potential candidates meet the minimum eligibility requirements which were outlined in the call document for the Research Centre programme.

*Research Ireland may also require additional information, requests for which will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.*

**4.** The Research Ireland Board must approve the appointment/role assignment of the Research Centre Director and to facilitate this approval, the following information should be provided to Research Ireland for its consideration:

- i. A summary of the recruitment/role assignment process which was carried out.
- ii. Notification in writing to Research Ireland when the appointment is proposed to be made.
- iii. The CV of the proposed replacement.
- iv. A description of the role and responsibilities of the proposed replacement within the Centre, if different from the incumbent.
- v. A statement from the proposed replacement that he/she is prepared to act as Director in the Centre and will assume the responsibilities for the Centre award that are attached to that role. In all cases where the



proposed replacement is in receipt of significant Research Ireland research funding, Research Ireland will examine their commitment and workload in determining the suitability of such an appointment.

- vi. A letter of support from the Host Research Institution, outlining their support and contractual commitments for the new Director.
- vii. Any additional pertinent information which may be requested by Research Ireland, for example, any potential changes to the Host Research Institution of the Research Centre.

5. The Vice President for Research of the Host Research Institution and the Centre Director will be informed of the decision by Research Ireland.