

Guidance on the Change/Addition of Funded Investigators to a Research Centre



Document Information

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1. Scope

This guidance applies to a change in status to a Funded Investigator (FI), or where a Research Ireland Centre would like to add a new FI to the award.

A Research Ireland Funded Investigator (FI) is a Research Ireland designated title which recognises the level of input of a researcher to a large-scale Research Ireland award such as a Research Ireland Centre. This guidance document, although targeted towards investigators in Research Centres, is also relevant to other awards of scale, including large-scale Strategic Partnerships Programmes. Please refer to the [webpage](#) for further information.

An FI is an academic member of staff or independent researcher¹ employed by an eligible Irish Research Body, who is undertaking a management role in a research project within the Research Centre. FIs have responsibility for a research project, budget and, where relevant, personnel within the Research Centre and will serve under the direction of one or more of the Research Centre co-Principal Investigators (co-PIs).

A change in status may include, but not be limited to, a change of FI's affiliation with the Research Body, or any other change that may have a material effect on the Grant stewardship and/or progress relating to the research programme.

In the event of a change in the status of an FI, the affiliated Research Centre must notify Research Ireland in writing (centres@researchireland.ie), promptly, and in any event, within thirty days. In the event of the sudden or unforeseen departure of an FI, the Research Body should endeavor to inform Research Ireland as early as possible.

The addition of an FI must be approved by Research Ireland in advance of it taking effect.

¹ Being an independent researcher means that the FI is not tied to a particular award or funding agency and has the freedom and capacity to carry out research within the Research Centre.



2. Eligibility Criteria

The following eligibility criteria should be considered prior to submitting a change/addition of FI request:

1. **Academic Status:** The FI must be one of the following:
 - a. A permanent member of the academic staff of an eligible Research Body² or
 - b. A contract researcher with a contract that covers the period of the project, who is recognised by the Research Body as an independent investigator and will have an independent office and research space at the host Research Body for which the applicant will be fully responsible for at least the duration of a Research Ireland project. Postdoctoral researchers, research fellows or other non-independent researchers are not eligible to be FIs.

Consideration should be given to time commitments on existing awards, including other Research Ireland awards. Where applicants have significant time commitments on existing awards, the relevant research funder should be consulted as required. It should be noted that FI salaries are not an eligible cost for the Research Ireland Centres Programme³.

2. **Academic Qualifications:** The FI must hold a PhD or PhD equivalent for at least 3 years⁴ The official date of the PhD is defined as the year the degree was conferred, i.e., the year printed on the official PhD certificate. The number of years is determined by calendar year.

² Retired or emeritus members of academic staff, meeting all other eligibility criteria, are eligible to apply if their institution makes the necessary commitments. Further details are available on the Research Ireland [eligibility information](#) webpage

³ Exceptions may apply, see [Research Ireland's Grant Budget Policy](#).

⁴ For individuals who do not hold a PhD, please refer to the [Research Ireland Policy on PhD Equivalence](#)



3. **Research Publications:** The FI must be the senior author on at least 3 international peer-reviewed articles. Only original research publications are acceptable; review articles and book chapters do not count towards this requirement. For this programme, senior authors are defined as follows:
 - Authors that are listed as first or joint-first author, reflecting the fact that they have provided the greatest intellectual contribution, have held the primary responsibility for collecting and analysing data, and for the writing of the manuscript and associated drafts. Joint-first authorship may only be claimed where the article clearly states that two (or more) authors have provided equal and significant contributions to the work described.
 - Last authors will also be considered as a senior author, since this position generally reflects their overall responsibility for the study and suggests that a level of mentorship has been provided.
 - Senior authors may, or may not, have had financial responsibility for the research findings that are disseminated in the publication.
 - It will be noted that different publishers have differing rules on how the senior authorship is indicated (e.g., by using asterisks, underlining, placing the name first or last in the list of authors, etc.); in cases or specific fields where, for any reason, senior authorship is not evident from a contribution-based author list on a publication, applicants should briefly, but convincingly, detail the critical contributions of the author in the relevant CV section.

4. **Budget:** An FI is expected to manage a portion of the Research Centre budget. FIs can be added to existing Centre projects, as long as they will be assigned part of the budget to manage going forward. This budget can be from Research Ireland, industry, NE-NC (cash only), exchequer (cash only) or any combination of these sources. For FIs being added to a Centre with industry and/or NE-NC and/or exchequer budget that is new to the Centre, the start date of the newly funded project is required to start after the submission date of the request for addition of the FIs. Once this condition is met then the industry/NE-NC/exchequer funding can be counted as Centre cost-share.



To facilitate the addition of FIs who are awaiting confirmation of funding, a conditional request for the addition of an FI can be made by a Centre. This is a request where the approval of the FI application is conditional on successfully obtaining NE-NC, exchequer or industry funding. This means that, for example, a Centre can collaborate with an external researcher to help secure additional funding. If the funding is awarded, the researcher can then join the Centre, and the funding can be attributed to the Centre. Conditional FI applications should be clearly communicated in the request, including the expected date of the funding decision, with the result promptly communicated to the Centre's Scientific Programme Manager. Research Ireland may apply a time limit for conditional FI applications at their discretion.

*Research Ireland may consider applications for FIs which do not meet one or more of the above eligibility criteria, if a strong rationale and strategic case is provided by the Centre Director regarding the added value to the Centre, and how the addition of this individual as an FI will positively impact on the delivery of the Research Centre objectives.

3. Request Submission Process

The following documents must be submitted via the Centre's SESAME Admin profile under the "Changes/Additions to Personnel" process:

1. A completed [FI request application form](#).
2. A letter of support from the proposed FI's Research Body, including mention of the individual's employment status that meets the eligibility criteria laid out above.
3. A DORA-compliant Curriculum Vitae (CV) of the proposed FI, clearly showing the PhD conferral date and publications, with senior author publications highlighted.
4. A signed statement from the proposed replacement/addition that the applicant is prepared to act as an FI in the Centre and will assume the responsibilities for the Centre award that are attached to that role.

Additional pertinent information may also be provided. Upon review, Research Ireland may seek additional information that is considered relevant and/or appropriate.



Please note that the date when an FI officially joins a Centre is:

- a) The date of submission of the request, in the case of a standard FI addition.
- b) For a conditional request awaiting confirmation of funding, the FI joins on the date that notification is sent to Research Ireland of a positive funding decision.

In each case, Centres are responsible for ensuring that only Research Outputs (of the FI addition) arising after the date of the FI joining the Centre are affiliated to the Centre award on SESAME.

4. Affiliation of Funded Investigator SESAME Profile

The aggregated Research Outputs from all affiliated team members (i.e. Co-Applicants, FIs, etc.) are used to calculate the KPI results of the Centre, which are updated regularly. Researchers (i.e., FIs) can choose to affiliate their SESAME profile to the Centre Award Admin profile during the “Changes/Additions to Personnel” process. This is optional and can be managed under the 'Award Admin Affiliation' tab on the researcher’s individual SESAME profile. If the researcher (i.e., FI) should choose not to affiliate their SESAME profile, the Centre SESAME Admin must make arrangements to obtain the Researcher’s Research Outputs manually, outside of SESAME.

Upon affiliation, the Centre SESAME Admin will be able to run an automated report that extracts relevant Research Outputs that the FI has entered on their SESAME profile. The Centre SESAME Admin will not be able to view or report on any other part of the FI’s profile, (such as their date of birth, year of PhD, etc.), nor edit any records on the FI’s SESAME profile (i.e. the report is a ‘read only’ operation).

Further information on SESAME, as well as guidelines on how to update Research Profiles, can be found on the [Research Ireland website](#).

Any personal data collected by Research Ireland is processed and stored in accordance with all applicable data protection law, including the General Data Protection Regulation, in accordance with [Research Ireland privacy policy](#).