SFI Public Service Fellowship Call 2019 FAQs

Version 2 13th Jan 2020

START DATES:

Q: If I am successful in the Public Service Fellowship 2019 call, when can I expect to start my fellowship?
A: SFI expects that the Fellowship applications submitted for the 23rd Jan deadline will commence in May 2020 at the very earliest. Please note that placements are expected to commence within 6 months of the notification of the award and, in some cases, placements will need to commence as soon as possible.

HOST ORGANISATIONS:

Q: Is there a possibility of working with a Host Organisation that is not listed in the Public Service Fellowship programme call document?
A: Applicants can apply to work on one of 15 projects within seven Host Organisations for this pilot call that are detailed in the call document. There is no option to include projects or Host Organisations that are not included in the call document.

Q: Is it possible to apply to more than one project or more than one Host?
A: Applicants are permitted to apply to work on one project within a specified Host. However, there is the option to indicate a second and third project preference, in either the same Host or a different Host in the additional Information section. Within this 1-page section, you are requested to provide a statement to demonstrate your suitability for your second and third project preference.

ELIGIBLE COSTS:

Q: What costs are supported by this programme?
A: Eligible costs for this programme include salary or teaching buy-out for the applicant, where relevant, and a mobility allowance as outlined in the call document. All other costs for equipment and other staffing are not permitted.

Q: I am a Senior Lecturer and intend to apply to the Public Service Fellowship Programme. How do I calculate teaching buy-out and will a replacement staff member at the same level be covered by the Fellowship Award?
A: Teaching buy-out costs should be calculated based on hiring a temporary lecturer (e.g. at point 1 on the Assistant Lecturer salary scale, or equivalent point on the institutional scale) regardless of the seniority of the Academic Fellow applying to the Public Service Fellowship Programme. Full justification should be included in the Budget justification section of the application, including details of how many teaching hours per week the temporary lecturer is required.

Q: Is mobility allowance only for applicants based outside Dublin (for placements in Dublin) or can Dublin-based applicants also apply for it?

A: Mobility allowance is not intended to support short distance daily commuting. Therefore, it is unlikely that Dublin based applicants will be eligible to apply for it.

Q: I am a Research Officer and intend to apply to the Public Service Fellowship Programme. Which category do I apply under and how do I calculate costs?
A: Research Office Staff and SFI Research Centres administration staff should apply to the programme under Category A. Buy-out costs should be requested to cover the hiring of a temporary research officer or other administrative position. It is expected that the buy-out costs are calculated at point 1 on the relevant scale. Full justification should be included in the Budget justification section of the application and should include reference to the relevant salary scale.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA:

Q: Do applicants need to have officially graduated at the time of application deadline? What does SFI consider as the official date of a PhD award?
A: Yes. PhD must have been conferred at the time of application. The official date is defined as the day, month and year that the degree was conferred, i.e. the year printed on the official PhD certificate. Verification of this official date by the awarding research body must be available upon request.

Q: Is a PhD in a STEM discipline an eligibility requirement to apply?
A: Applicants must have experience working in a STEM discipline, whether it be at PhD or Post-doctoral stage of their career. Importantly, they must have the requisite skills to carry out the projects.

Q: I am a lecturer on a temporary contract at an eligible Research body. Can I apply?
A: Yes. Faculty staff on temporary contracts can apply. A Faculty researcher is defined as a STEM researcher who holds a PhD at the time of application and who is currently employed as a permanent or temporary academic staff member of an eligible Irish Research Body (e.g. Lecturers, associate and full professors).

Q: Are applications from administrative staff in SFI Centres or Research offices permitted?
A: The main objective of the programme is to enhance collaboration of the research community with Government bodies. Administrative staff in SFI Research Centres or in Research Offices may be considered if they meet all eligibility criteria and possess the requisite skills outlined in the relevant project outline.

Q: Can a researcher carry out a Fellowship through an eligible Irish Research Body that is different from the Applicant's current employer?
A: Yes. If an applicant is currently employed at an eligible Research Body and is intending to move to another Research Body, the application must be submitted through the prospective employing Research Body, and not the current one.

Q: Can researchers working in a STEM area (e.g. data analytics) but currently based in a non-STEM faculty e.g. Business School) apply for this fellowship?
A: Eligibility is based on the qualifications of the applicant; a STEM researcher currently working in a business school would therefore be eligible to apply, once all other criteria met.

Q: I have a PhD in a Social Science discipline and I am currently working on the implementation of Information Systems as part of an SFI Research Centre. Am I eligible to apply?
A: SFI recognises the interdisciplinary and convergent nature of research and will consider applications from researchers with a non-conventional STEM background where those applicants have experience of working in areas to advance STEM research. All applicants will be required to demonstrate that they possess the requisite skills to carry out the proposed project to justify their candidacy for the fellowship.