

SFI ERC Development Programme FAQs

Q: Is the SFI ERC Development Programme open to researchers not based in Ireland?

A: The programme is only open to researchers based in [SFI eligible research bodies](#). If a researcher submitted an ERC proposal at a Host Institution abroad and then relocated to Ireland, the researcher is eligible for the programme.

Q: Is the SFI ERC Development Programme open to co-applicants on ERC proposals?

A: The three ERC schemes dedicated to individual applicants – Starting, Consolidator, and Advanced Grants – do not presently allow co-applicants. Hence this question is not relevant to the SFI ERC Development Programme.

Q: I have submitted a proposal to the ERC in the past, am I eligible to apply?

A: Yes. Proposals must be received by SFI **within three months** of the date on the applicant's ERC notification letter, if they applied to the ERC from a Host Institution in the Republic of Ireland or **within 12 months** of this date if they applied to the ERC from elsewhere.

Q: Can I obtain salary from this award?

A: Only applicants that are moving from an institution outside of the Republic of Ireland, or who applied to the ERC whilst at such an institution but who are now working at one of SFI's eligible research bodies, may apply for a salary contribution through the SFI ERC Development Programme.

Q: Why are only those applicants who applied to the ERC when abroad allowed to apply for a salary contribution?

A: As stated in the call document, one of the objectives of the ERC Development Programme is to "*assist SFI's eligible research bodies to recruit excellent but initially unsuccessful ERC applicants, and encourage them to reapply to the ERC for their own benefit and for the benefit of their new host institution*". It is envisaged that assistance through the provision of salary support might encourage such recruitment and/or the retention of excellent researchers from abroad.

Q: Are prior applications to all ERC schemes considered in this programme?

A: No. Only prior applicants to the most recent calls of the three ERC schemes intended for individuals, that is, the ERC Starting Grant, Consolidator Grant, and Advanced Grant, are eligible to apply to this programme, and only then if their application made it through to the final stage of the assessment and was given an "A" rating (which means that it was deemed fundable) but not eventually supported due to a lack of programme budget.

Unsuccessful applicants to the ERC Proof of Concept scheme are not eligible to apply, since these applicants must already be ERC grant holders in order to apply to that programme. ERC Synergy Grant applicants, who are part of a group of up to four co-applicants to the ERC, are currently not eligible to apply to this programme.

Q: I am currently on a fixed-term contract that will expire in less than two years. Can I still apply for funding through this programme?

A: Yes, so long as your institution is prepared to extend your contract at least up until the time where this award would be completed. Ideally, SFI would like to see institutions extend contracts further, such that the maximum possible amount of time and support is provided to allow for a successful resubmission to the ERC programme.

Q: By applying for this award, am I obliged to resubmit a proposal to the ERC?

A: Certainly, SFI expects that people funded through this programme will make a renewed effort to obtain funding from the ERC in a future application. The funding provided by SFI is intended to enhance aspects of the applicant's work, such that a stronger application to the ERC will ensue. While there is strictly no obligation for an applicant to subsequently resubmit to the ERC, it should be noted that failure to do so may affect both your ability to succeed in other SFI funding programmes, and also your institution's ability to recruit and retain other former ERC applicants through this programme.

Q: Must I make my resubmission to the same ERC scheme?

A: No, the resubmission can be to any eligible individual ERC funding scheme, and may be dictated in any case by the ERC's eligibility criteria.

Q: Will my award continue if I am funded in a future ERC call?

A: No. If a successful resubmission to the ERC is made while the SFI ERC Development Programme award is still active, the SFI award will terminate when the ERC award commences, based on the date agreed between the award holder and the ERC and confirmed in the associated grant agreement.

Q: I applied to the ERC Consolidator Grant scheme and received an "A" rating at Step 2 of the assessment. However, I cannot resubmit to this programme owing to its eligibility criteria on experience beyond the award of a PhD. Am I eligible to apply for an SFI ERC Development Programme award and also submit a proposal to the next open call of the ERC Advanced Grant scheme?

A: Strictly, you would be eligible to apply to the SFI ERC Development Programme and apply to the ERC Advanced Grant scheme, but it would only be expected if the Evaluation Report from the ERC indicated that there were no significant changes required to the original proposal. However, it is worth carefully considering whether it makes sense to do so, given the differences between the two ERC programmes.

Q: I submitted an application to the ERC under a panel in the Social Sciences and Humanities domain. Am I eligible to apply to the SFI ERC Development Programme?

A: In most cases, such ERC applicants will **not** be eligible to apply to the SFI ERC Development Programme since the remit of the SFI ERC Development Programme is the **legal remit** of Science Foundation Ireland. However, it is appreciated that, in certain cases, it may be possible to demonstrate that proposal submitted to a Social Sciences and Humanities panel can be demonstrated to align to this remit. Applicants should contact SFI in advance to obtain approval that an application would be accepted for review.

Q: What constitutes an acceptable strategy in designing a programme of research under the SFI ERC Development Programme?

A: There are various ways to design a programme of research that is acceptable under the SFI ERC Development Programme. These include, but in principle are not limited to, the following:

- A proposal that is based wholesale on one (or more, as appropriate) work packages from the original ERC proposal;
- A proposal that takes into account the feedback from the ERC review process, which has identified actions that need to be taken before a successful resubmission to the ERC could be envisaged, and looks to carry out specific tasks that will deal with the reviewers' concerns;
- A proposal that looks to carry out newly conceived research objectives, where these objectives can be clearly shown to relate to the original ERC proposal, and where they will demonstrably enhance the likelihood of success in a future ERC application.

Q: Can PhD students be hired under an SFI ERC Development Programme award?

A: It is generally expected to hire team members under these awards in positions that would commonly have a duration of 24 months or less (e.g., MSc students or postdoctoral researchers). Applicants may attempt to make a convincing case for the hire of a new PhD student under these awards, but should bear in mind the advice above.