

SFI President of Ireland Future Research Leaders Award Programme FAQs

APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

Q. What is the definition of a senior author?

A senior author is one who is listed as first or joint first author, reflecting the fact that s/he has provided the greatest intellectual contribution, has held the primary responsibility for collecting and analysing the data, and for writing the manuscript and associated draft. The last author (or joint last author) will also be considered as a senior author, since this position generally reflects his/her overall responsibility for the study and suggests a level of mentorship has been provided. Different publishers have different 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.); what is important is that the applicant could convince and reassure reviewers that they were the key author on these publications. Please note that this does NOT mean that they were responsible financially for the research that was reported. Note also that only primary research articles are considered – secondary research articles such as reviews, essays and book chapters in which the research of peers is discussed rather than the author's own results, will not contribute to the required three senior author publications.

Q. Are Irish researchers not eligible?

This call is open to all nationalities of researchers who are currently undertaking research in an overseas academic institution or industry, or who have been recruited to Ireland within 2 years of the Expression of Interest deadline.

Q. Can those under review for SIRG and CDA apply?

No, applicants under review for SFI SIRG, SFI CDA and any PI-like awards may not apply to FRL. See section 4.2 of the call document.

Q. Eligibility rules say that you cannot apply to SFI CDA if under active review for SFI FRL. Does this mean that you cannot apply to SFI FRL if under active review for the current CDA programme?

Yes, if you are under active review for SFI CDA, you cannot apply to SFI FRL.

Q. May a President of Ireland Future Research Leaders applicant apply in parallel for other SFI research awards?

No. Individuals may not, while their SFI President of Ireland Future Research Leaders proposal is under active review, submit an application named as an applicant or co-applicant to any of the following programmes: SFI Investigators Programme, SFI Research Professorship, SFI SIRG/CDA or similar career development programmes. Please refer to individual call documentation for additional information.

Q. Would academic staff (e.g. Lecturer) based in Northern Ireland for more than 2 years, and who have held research grants as PI be eligible?

Yes, if all other eligibility criteria are fulfilled, a researcher based in Northern Ireland is eligible to apply.

Q. If unsuccessful in this round, is it possible to apply again in the next round?

Yes, if the programme is run again, it will be possible to re-apply.

Q. What qualifies as an independent research grant?

The Lead Applicant is expected to have demonstrated research independence through securing at least one independent research grant as lead investigator or as co-investigator. The grant must have been competitively awarded and internationally peer reviewed. Eligible research grants would be expected to support at least one full-time equivalent, excluding the applicant(s), and include research

team costs (e.g., materials and consumables). This EXCLUDES smaller awards such as travel grants, equipment grants, post-graduate fellowships, postdoctoral fellowships, and awards of short duration (12 months or less). Laboratory fit-out / setup funding, awards from the applicant's institution, and awards that have not been subject to external international peer review are also excluded. You will be required to provide evidence to support the validity of an award if required. If you are uncertain regarding the eligibility of funding you have received, please contact SFI at fri@sfi.ie

Q. Is a Marie Curie IEF (Intra-European Fellowship) grant considered to be an independent research grant for eligibility to the programme?

As this award is a fellowship, it is not considered to be an independent research grant – see previous question.

Q. I am an outstanding mid-career researcher who is 10 years post-PhD and has been working in Ireland for the past 5 years. Am I eligible to apply to the President of Ireland Future Research Leaders Award?

No, as the President of Ireland Future Research Leaders programme is a recruitment-only programme, the call is open to applicants based outside of Ireland as well as those recently recruited from overseas (i.e. within 2 years of the Expression of Interest deadline).

Q. What does SFI consider as the official date of a PhD award?

The official date is defined as the 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. The number of years since the degree is defined from the date of submission to SFI of the Expression of Interest. That is, those wishing to apply in 2017 for the President of Ireland Future Research Leaders programme, which requires candidates to be 3-15 years post PhD, must have been conferred with their degrees in the period 2002-2014.

Q. Is the three years post-PhD eligibility rule applied at the EoI deadline or the full proposal deadline?

The EoI deadline is the programme deadline as applicants who are successful at EoI stage will be invited to full proposal, therefore an applicant must have had their EoI reviewed to have the possibility of being invited to full proposal. The number of years since the degree is defined from the date of submission to SFI of the Expression of Interest. That is, those wishing to apply in 2017 for the President of Ireland Future Research Leaders programme, which requires candidates to be 3-15 years post PhD, must have been conferred with their degrees in the period 2002-2014.

Q. I am a clinician scientist and hold an MD degree. Can my MD be considered equivalent to a PhD?

For medical doctors (or applicants holding a degree in medicine), an MD degree will not be accepted by itself as equivalent to a PhD award. To be considered eligible, these candidates, in addition to their medical degree must also either hold a PhD degree, or have at least two years of research experience (supported by peer reviewed publications) in order to further substantiate the equivalence of their overall training to a PhD. As such, to fulfil the criterion of being 3 – 15 years post-PhD for this programme, the certified date of the medical doctor degree completion plus two years is the time reference for calculation of the call eligibility window. Please see further information at the following link: <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/eligibility-related-information/>

Q. Is any allowance made for those applicants who have taken documented eligible leave?

Allowance is made for those applicants who have taken documented eligible leave – the maximum extension to the period of eligibility under this scheme is 4 ½ years (54 months). Please see Section 4.2a of the call document for further details.

Additionally applicants may extend their period of eligibility by 12 months for each year spent working in a science or engineering related industry post award of PhD. The maximum extension to the period of eligibility under this scheme is 2 years (24 months).

Q. Are permanent members of staff eligible for the President of Ireland Future Research Leaders award?

Yes. Both permanent and contract staff are eligible for nomination by a Research Body, provided all other eligibility criteria are fulfilled.

Q. If an individual was not previously an independent investigator and has obtained research funding only as a contributor (i.e. postdoc under the PI to whom the grant was awarded), are they eligible to apply to the FRL programme?

No, the Applicant is expected to have demonstrated research independence through securing at least one independent research grant as **lead investigator** or as **co-investigator**. The grant must have been competitively awarded and internationally peer reviewed.

COLLABORATORS AND ADVISOR

Q. Is there a limit to the number of academic and industry collaborators?

No there is no limit but the applicant should ensure that all collaborators are making meaningful contributions to the proposed research. In addition, the letters of support from collaborators should be genuine and meaningful.

Q. Is it possible to have a co-applicant on a President of Ireland Future Research Leaders proposal?

As this programme is focused on the recruitment of outstanding new and emerging research leaders to Ireland, there can only be a single applicant on a President of Ireland Future Research Leaders proposal. It is possible to have collaborators associated with specific tasks on an application be they academic or industry collaborators. Please see section 4.1 of the call document for further details.

Q. Does an application to the President of Ireland Future Research Leaders programme need to have an associated mentor?

No, the applicant does not have a mentor but due to the recruitment nature of the programme, an **Advisor** is required. All successful SFI President of Ireland Future Research Leaders awardees will have been stringently reviewed and assessed on their scientific independence and leadership capability, but continuous guidance from an established and experienced local member of faculty will be beneficial as they establish an independent research group and integrate into their respective school. The function of the Advisor is to guide, assist and facilitate the awardee in settling into the new institution. The Advisor is not a collaborator but may also act as a collaborator if appropriate, and if this is the case then they must provide the documentation required for all collaborators, in addition to the documentation required for the Advisor. See section 4.1 of the call document.

RESEARCH BODY

Q. Is there a limit on the number of applicants a Research Body can support?

No there is no limit.

Q. Is the Research Body required to sustain the post beyond the timeframe of the award?

As the objective of the programme is to recruit a new generation of research leaders to Ireland, it is the expectation of SFI that the President of Ireland Future Research Leaders awardee would have moved to a full-time position funded by the host institution by the end of the award.

Q. What level of academic appointment can the applicant expect?

Although SFI makes a contribution of up to 50% of the applicant salary which should be on the SFI Research Fellow/Senior Research Fellow salary scale, SFI does not define the level of the academic appointment. This is for negotiation between the applicant and the host Research Body.

Q. Could you advise on what kind of contractual agreement a candidate should have with the Research Body?

Contractual agreements between the applicant and the Research Body need to be negotiated between these two parties.

Q. Do President of Ireland Future Research Leaders applicants have to have an existing relationship with the nominating Research Body?

This prestigious award is aimed at recruiting the best early/mid-career scientists from around the world. No pre-existing relationship is necessary.

LETTERS OF SUPPORT

Q. Are letters of support from industry a benefit?

Meaningful letters of support are of benefit assuming the inclusion of industry adds value to the proposed research programme.

Q. Can supplementary information not solicited in the call be included with the proposal?

Only information requested in the call document should be submitted. Proposals are submitted via SESAME, SFI's online grants and awards management system. Additional information may cause your application to be returned without review.

PROGRAMME

Q. Will this call be run on an annual basis?

SFI hopes to run this call on an annual basis, budget permitting.

Q. Is this programme designed to be an early stage Research Professorship Programme?

This programme is aimed at outstanding researchers who are 3-15 years post PhD who have demonstrated potential to be research leaders of the future.

SFI REMIT

Q. Will the programme fund blue sky research proposals?

Research carried out through this programme must align with SFI's legal remit to fund oriented, basic and applied research in STEM that is scientifically excellent and demonstrates potential economic or societal impact. For guidance on SFI remit, please see documentation at the following link: <http://www.sfi.ie/about-us/about-sfi/what-we-do/>

Q. Can SFI fund clinical trials through the President of Ireland Future Research Leaders programme?

Funding requests for clinical studies or investigations for the purposes of product development or optimisation will not be considered. This includes clinical trials designed to test the safety and/or efficacy of drugs, devices or treatments. However, SFI recognises that certain fundamental explorations, which do fall under SFI's remit, may require use of human volunteers and/or human samples. Please direct any queries you may have to fri@sfi.ie. Further information regarding SFI's

policy can be found at the following link: <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/ethical-and-scientific-issues/>

Q. Are proposals of Clinical Translational Research supported?

Funding requests for clinical studies or investigations for the purposes of product development or optimisation will not be considered, however certain fundamental explorations under SFI's remit may require use of human volunteers and/or human samples. Please review SFI's policy at <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/ethical-and-scientific-issues/>

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Q. What is required in the two-page research description section of the EoI?

The research description section of the Expression of Interest (EoI) application should include a two-page description of the proposed research, its scientific importance and potential applications. Please clearly describe the specific aims and objectives of the programme and link with real deliverables. Describe how this proposal will advance the state-of-the-art. Ensure that information is provided regarding how collaborators (if any) will input on aspects of the proposed research as well as how the research proposed fits with/complements current activity within the host institution/other institutions in the state. It is important to clarify how the proposed research is independent of work ongoing with previous supervisors. Please note that references are to be included within the 2-page limit.

Q. Can an individual who submitted an EoI last year and was not invited to submit a full proposal, resubmit this year?

Yes, it is possible for an unsuccessful applicant from the previous call to apply to the call this year. If this is the case, please ensure that you complete the resubmission statement in Sesame.

FULL PROPOSAL

Q. Is it necessary to combine the programme documents into a single upload for the full proposal stage?

It is no longer necessary to combine the programme documents i.e. Impact statement (2 pages max.), Development/Leadership plan (2 pages max.) and Research description (15 pages max.) and References (5 pages max.) into one single upload document. These documents should be uploaded separately as indicated in SESAME.

Q. What is the duration of a SFI President of Ireland Future Research Leaders award?

The duration of an SFI President of Ireland Future Research Leaders award is 5 years.

Q. What is expected from a leadership plan?

Please refer to Section 5, page 21 in the call document for details of what is expected from a leadership plan.

FUNDING

Q. Is the salary contribution from SFI maintained for the duration of the award?

Yes, salary contribution from SFI in conjunction with the Research Body is maintained for the duration of the award. SFI will make a maximum contribution of 50% to the salary of the applicant for the duration of the award assuming the applicant is not in receipt of salary from the Research Body.

Q. Must the 50% salary contribution be paid directly from the host institution, and not from another research grant?

Yes, SFI is making a commitment to the awardee up to a level of 50% of the applicant salary and the Research Body is expected to make a similar if not greater commitment to the salary of the applicant that is not funded by a research grant.

Q. Are start-up costs only allowed for those currently external to the Research Body or is it available to applicants already within the Research Body?

Start-up costs are offered to all applicants to the President of Ireland Future Research Leaders programme. These start-up costs should be entered into the budget template under the equipment section as a single line item. These costs then need to be clearly detailed (including costs for each item requested) and fully justified in the budget justification. If this justification is unclear and not fully detailed, the start-up costs will not be considered for funding.

Q. What is the total amount of funding available?

The level of funding available is €1 million direct costs. In addition, SFI can offer start-up costs of up to €250,000. The start-up costs are not eligible for an overhead contribution.

Q. Can collaborators receive funding?

Yes, collaborators in Irish Research Bodies can receive funding, as long as it is fully detailed and justified in the application, but overseas collaborators cannot receive funding from the award.

Q. Can permanent academic staff request salary i.e. buyout of their time for the duration of the grant?

No. SFI does not contribute to the salary of permanent academic faculty staff within Irish Research Bodies who are in receipt of salaries from the Research Body. An independent non-academic/non-faculty contract researcher is eligible to apply for salary according to the SFI Grant Application Budget Policy, and SFI will make a contribution of up to a maximum of 50% of their salary for the duration of the award.

Q. Can the Research Body's contribution to the programme be in a form other than salary (for example, research costs)?

No. The Research Body must undertake to provide at least 50% of the successful applicant's salary over the course of their President of Ireland Future Research Leaders award. The Research Body may, however, elect to gradually increase their contribution over the course of the award, rather than contributing 50% each year. It is the expectation of SFI that the President of Ireland Future Research Leaders awardee would have moved to a full-time position funded by the host institution by the end of the award.

Q. Is the Research Body contribution to salary included in the total value of the award?

No, the total value of the research award will be up to a maximum of €1,000,000 exclusive of the Research Body's salary contribution and start-up costs. Due to the recruitment nature of the award, start-up costs of up to €250,000 are offered.

Q. What are the start-up costs designed to cover?

The start-up costs are designed to facilitate the establishment of a lab in a new location and can cover the purchase of equipment and/or access to large facilities, but should not include a salary contribution. The start-up costs are not subject to an overhead contribution.

REVIEW PROCESS

Q. Are all applicants who submit a full proposal invited to interview?

No, only those deemed to be excellent at full proposal stage will be invited to interview.

Q. Is the career stage of the applicant taken into account? For example, 15 years post-PhD is very different to 5 years post-PhD.

Yes, the career stage is taken into account by reviewers. SFI are looking for excellent, cutting edge, top-tier applicants. Awards will be made to the most competitive applicants.

Q. Is it a competitive review process?

Yes, it is a competitive review process. Only proposals deemed to be outstanding by an international panel of expert reviewers will be awarded.

Q. Is there a preference for applicants seeking their first permanent academic post (following the award), or are those seeking to leave an established position overseas to relocate to Ireland equally considered?

All applicants will be fully considered on a competitive basis.

ORCID ID

Q. What is ORCID and what are the benefits of creating an ORCID iD?

ORCID (<http://orcid.org/>) provides a unique identifier for all researchers which can then be linked to their different research works across different platforms.

There are a number of benefits to creating an ORCID iD that include:

1. ORCID allows you to pull information from different platforms creating a centralised reference to your different works (e.g. publications, patents, awards) in one location using a single sign in.
2. Your ORCID iD is a unique identifier which distinguishes you from other researchers with a similar name.
3. Using the ORCID iD assists in making your research works more visible to funders and publishers. You are able to build a complete picture of your research in one location.

Q. Is it necessary to link my SESAME Researcher Profile to my ORCID iD prior to submission of the President of Ireland Future Research Leaders' application?

Yes, it is necessary to link your SESAME Researcher Profile to your ORCID iD prior to submission of the President of Ireland Future Research Leaders' application.