SCIENCE FOUNDATION IRELAND

SFI Research Professorship Programme

Call for Submission of Proposals

Key Dates

The SFI Research Professorship Programme is to be run as a rolling call **until further notice**. Expressions of Interest aligned to the preferential themes described herein may be submitted by Eligible Research Bodies **at any time**. Where a proposed application does not align to these themes, Research Bodies **must first seek pre-approval**. Potential candidates wishing to apply to the Programme should contact an Eligible Irish Research Body.

Full Proposals will only be accepted by invitation, following the submission and evaluation of Expressions of Interest (EoI I and EoI II) and a Candidate Letter. Full Proposals must be received **within four months** of receipt of an invitation.

Terms of Reference

While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy and reliability of this document, it is provided for information purposes only and as a guide to expected developments. It is not intended, and should not be relied upon, as any form of warranty, representation, undertaking, contractual, or other commitment binding in law upon Science Foundation Ireland, the Government of Ireland, or any of their respective servants or agents. SFI Terms and Conditions of Research Grants shall govern the administration of SFI grants and awards to the exclusion of this and any other oral, written, or recorded statement.

All responses to this Call for Submission of Proposals will be treated in confidence and no information contained therein will be communicated to any third party without the written permission of the applicant except insofar as is specifically required for the consideration and evaluation of the proposal or as may be required under law, including the Industrial Development (Science Foundation Ireland) Act, 2003, the Industrial Development (Science Foundation Ireland) (Amendment) Act 2013 and the Freedom of Information Acts 1997 and 2003.

Key Changes to the SFI Research Professorship Programme

- This call to the SFI Research Professorship Programme will run as a rolling call for proposals **until further notice**. SFI will notify all Eligible Research Bodies in advance of any further changes or the launch of a new call.

- For this call, proposals will be accepted under all areas of SFI's legal remit; however, applications are **strongly preferred** where they align to at least one of two strategic themes: **Theme 1 – Women in Research Professorship Roles**; **Theme 2 – Joint Appointments with UK Research Institutions**.

- There will be **no order of preference** for the themes outlined in this call.

- **Pre-approval** to submit an Expression of Interest will be required where the application does not align to the preferential themes.

- Awards made through this call will have a duration of **up to 10 years**; funding will be provided over **two five-year cycles**, subject to a review of progress.

- Applications will include a budget tailored to the requirements of the proposed research programme for the first five-year cycle. **No maximum budget is applied under this call**; however, applicants must clearly articulate the need for the budget and value for money will be considered as part of the review criteria for this programme.

- Funding through a second five-year cycle will be provided following a successful review of progress in the first funding cycle; award holders will be invited to submit a "**Continuity Proposal**" to support the activities in the second cycle; this proposal must be approved to allow funding to continue.

- While noting the specific nature of Theme 2 in this call, joint appointments will be considered under Theme 1 where the foreign institution is based **outside of Ireland, including the United Kingdom**. Applicants will need to demonstrate that research funding is available in that country to allow activities to continue; SFI funding through this programme may not be used to directly support research activities in other countries.

- Host Research Bodies of awardees funded under Theme 1 of this call may apply for a supplemental award of **up to €100,000** to support costs associated with recruitment. The application must be submitted within 12 months of the official start date for the award.

1   Introduction

The legal remit of Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) is to promote, develop and assist the carrying out of oriented basic and applied research in strategic areas of scientific endeavour that concern the future development and competitiveness of industry and enterprise in the State.[1] **Oriented basic research** is "*research that is carried out with the expectation that it will produce a broad base of knowledge that is likely to form the background to the solution of recognised, or expected, current or future problems or possibilities*". Additionally, **applied research** is defined as "*an original investigation undertaken to acquire new knowledge and is directed primarily towards a specific practical aim or objective. The results of applied research are intended primarily to be valid for a single or limited number of products, operations, methods, or systems*".

Attracting outstanding research talent to Ireland is one of the principal ambitions of SFI. Since its launch in 2003, the **SFI Research Professorship Programme** has sought to support national strategic priorities by assisting research bodies in the recruitment of world-leading researchers for Professorial Chairs, or similar research leadership positions in targeted scientific areas. The programme has also acted as a mechanism to support the recruitment of individuals who possess a strong industry background and may also allow for the recruitment of those intending to hold senior roles in SFI Research Centres or other centres of scale.

The SFI Research Professorship Programme will not only provide Research Bodies in Ireland with an opportunity to identify and create strategically relevant, timely and critically needed posts, but will also ensure that those posts are filled by world-class researchers who will be recognised by their peers for their achievements and who will have already demonstrated their excellence by obtaining funding through extremely competitive funding calls (such as those coordinated by the European Research Council and/or major national science funding agencies), or who are able to convince their peers that they have the potential to win such funding in the near future.

Through this call and in the future, the SFI Research Professorship Programme will introduce **preferential themes**, which will be associated with areas of **key strategic, disciplinary or societal importance**, and which are seen as being highly important to Ireland's research and innovation landscape. Applications under these preferential themes are **strongly encouraged**.

Under this call, SFI is reinforcing its commitment to providing opportunities for women in leadership throughout our portfolio of programmes. As laid out in SFI's *Shaping Our Future Strategy 2025*,[2] the Foundation is seeking to achieve gender balance in the leadership of awards funded by SFI, with **women holding at least 35% of leadership roles by the end of 2025**. In addition, SFI is mandating that almost all eligible Research Bodies adhere to the Higher Education Authority (HEA) Athena SWAN Bronze and Silver Award timelines to be eligible to host SFI awards. These timelines can be found in the HEA statement on the Athena SWAN Charter in Ireland.[3] To date, Research Bodies in Ireland have rarely utilised the SFI Research Professorship Programme as a mechanism for the recruitment of researchers who are women. Nonetheless, it is recognised that addressing gender imbalance in senior academic roles can help to inspire more widespread change at all levels within academia. **This call includes a preferential theme (Theme 1) dedicated to the recruitment of women into Research Professorship roles**.

SFI acknowledges that many world-leading researchers are keen to have greater flexibility in where they carry out their work and will often manage large teams and have the necessary funding to be able to successfully hold positions in more than one institution or country. Given appropriate resources and ensuring that the activities are properly planned, and carefully managed, such joint appointments have the potential to be mutually beneficial to the institutions involved and to increase the productivity and visibility of the researcher concerned.

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[1] About SFI - What we do
[2] https://www.sfi.ie/strategy/SFI-Strategy-2025-Shaping-Our-Future.pdf
[3] https://hea.ie/assets/uploads/2019/11/HEA-Statement-on-Athena-SWAN-Charter-in-Ireland-2019_July-2019.pdf

An option to create joint appointments through applications to the SFI Research Professorship Programme was first introduced in 2018. **For this call, a preferential theme (Theme 2) will focus on joint appointments with institutions in the United Kingdom (UK)**. As well as being Ireland's closest neighbour geographically, the UK shares many commonalities with Ireland that may serve to enhance the potential for successful joint appointments. Coming at a time when the UK leaves the European Union (EU), the option of a joint appointment with an institution in a country that is still a member of the EU will be seen by many to be highly attractive. Applications proposing joint appointments with any research institution in the UK will be considered through this call, but SFI notes the potentially exciting opportunities available through this programme to create cross-border joint appointments with Queen's University Belfast and the University of Ulster; such interactions could have the potential to catalyse larger-scale activities in the future, such as creating Research Centres involving institutions on both sides of the Irish border. More details on joint appointment applications are provided in Section 2.4.

For clarity, it should be noted that applications submitted to SFI under Theme 1 may also seek to create joint appointments; however, such appointments may be with institutions **anywhere in the world, including the UK**. Researchers seeking to create a joint appointment are required to have appropriate research funding available in the country of their overseas research institution; funding provided by SFI through this call may **not** be used to support research activities in other countries.

It is recognised that the creation of Professorial-level positions with support from leading industrial partners or philanthropic organisations has the potential to reinforce the benefits of recruiting excellent researchers. SFI **strongly encourages** applications through this programme which, if successful, create **Endowed Chairs** in which the recipient of the award will hold a position with a title that can be clearly associated with both the Foundation and the industrial or philanthropic partner(s). Applicants and host Research Bodies are encouraged to contact potential partners for Endowed Chairs in advance of an application to this programme; should such an approach be considered; details may be added in relevant parts of the application (see, for example, Section 5.4.14).

Given the outstanding nature of the individuals this programme is intended to support, SFI will commit to providing financial support for **up to 10 years**. Funding will be provided to successful applicants for an initial five-year programme of work; a second five-year cycle of funding may be provided, following a successful progress review of the initial activities and subject to available SFI budget.

1.1 Objectives of the SFI Research Professorship Programme

- To provide a mechanism for recruiting world-leading researchers to Ireland's research institutions
- To encourage institutions to appoint women to senior academic positions in Ireland, as prioritised through Theme 1
- To allow world-leading researchers to hold a joint appointment between institutions in Ireland and an institution abroad; joint appointments with research institutions in the UK are prioritised through Theme 2
- To increase the number of current ERC awardees working in Ireland and to provide a strong platform for future ERC successes
- To increase the number of leadership roles held by Ireland-based PIs in major European initiatives, in particular those supported under current and future European Union Framework Programmes
- To add critical expertise and excellence to SFI Research Centres and other centres of scale
- To increase Ireland's success in winning top-tier international prizes
- To build reputation that helps to attract new partnerships with industry
- To further enhance the quality of academic outputs from Ireland's research institutions, such that they are recognised as being amongst the best in the world
- To increase the proportion of invention disclosures, patents, licences and spinouts recorded by Enterprise Ireland that are directly linked to SFI-funded research

2   The Applicant: Eligibility and Programme Remit

2.1   Calibre of Applicant

Suitable applicants for an SFI Research Professorship Programme award will be outstanding researchers in academia or industry, recognised as world leaders in their discipline, with a demonstrated capacity for strategic and dynamic leadership on the international stage. They will have already been successful in obtaining funding through extremely competitive funding calls or will demonstrate clear potential to do so in the near future.

SFI expects researchers funded through this programme to be exceptional people with the clear potential to bring about significant advancements for their chosen host institutions and for Ireland as a whole. In addition to their success (or potential for success) in winning competitive funding, applicants will meet many, if not all, of the following criteria:

- Holder of a full professorial position (or equivalent) at a major international research institution, **or** demonstrating an outstanding career trajectory that indicates that such a position will be earned in the near future
- Holder of a senior position in industry
- Recognised within their field(s) for their influential scientific and/or technological achievements
- Significant professional achievements in the generation of knowledge, the development of individuals, support for the broader society and the economy, and support for the research community
- Senior authorship of a considerable body of literature that has made a significant impact in their field
- Recipient of significant international awards and fellowships
- Plenary/keynote speaker at top-tier international conferences, and organiser of such meetings of importance
- Distinguished service record on national or international grant review boards
- Successful track record in securing independent funding from competitive, publicly funded sources and/or through private investment

Applicants from industry are required to demonstrate equivalent measures of esteem (e.g., serving on corporate boards, receipt of industry awards or fellowships). A successful track record in technology transfer, technology commercialisation and academic–industrial collaborations, where appropriate, is also highly desirable.

SFI has recently become a signatory to the San Francisco Declaration of Research Assessment (DORA), [4] and as such is aligning its review and evaluation processes with DORA principles. To this end, all types of research output are recognised and SFI is committed to assessing the quality and impact of research through means other than journal impact factors. Applicants are required to submit a CV (see Appendix A) as part of this application, the template for which provides an opportunity to detail a broad variety of research and impact achievements. In the spirit of supporting open research and as a signatory of Plan S, [5] SFI will also consider a commitment to making data and other types of research, open and accessible.

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[4] https://sfdora.org/read/
[5] https://www.coalition-s.org/

2.2 Eligibility of the Research Body

The Research Body is the institution responsible for the overall financial and administrative co-ordination of research programmes supported by funding from SFI. Host Research Bodies must be situated in the Republic of Ireland. A list of eligible Research Bodies is available on the SFI website.[6]

The terms 'Research Body' and 'Institution' are equivalent and interchangeable in SFI documentation and in the SFI SESAME system.

2.3 Programme Remit

In 2018, the Irish Government undertook a review of the objectives of National Research Prioritisation, building upon the original exercise carried out in 2012,[7] and taking into account a number of important challenges and developments, including the growth of disruptive technologies, Brexit and the adoption of UN Sustainable Development Goals, amongst others.[8] Research Prioritisation will continue to demand that the majority of Ireland's competitive funding is concentrated on areas deemed likely to yield the greatest economic and societal impact. For this call, proposals must either be aligned to one of the 14 *Refreshed Priority Areas* for 2018-2023, which are the constituents of six broad Research Priority themes that underpin the updated prioritisation exercise, or they must demonstrate significant industrial relevance and strong economic impact. In addition, for this call, **proposals will ideally align to at least one of two preferential strategic themes**; this call specifically seeks applications promoting the recruitment of women in Research Professorship posts and aims to create joint appointments with institutions based in the United Kingdom.

2.4 Joint Appointments

Joint appointments proposed through this call must be meaningful and beneficial arrangements to all parties. Proposals submitted to this call will require detailed planning and scheduling of the applicant's time over the duration of the award; it will be mandatory to provide a plan in which the applicant will demonstrate an intention to be located within the Irish host Research Body for **at least 40% of their total working time**. This figure is considered an absolute minimum to allow a viable programme of research to be carried out and for the award holder to demonstrate the level of influence and leadership that is expected of an SFI Research Professor; ideally, applicants will allocate more than the minimum time to the Irish host Research Body. Teams funded through this award may include a senior researcher (i.e., a Senior Research Fellow), who would be expected to lead the team and ensure smooth progress during those periods where the Research Professor is fulfilling obligations at the overseas institution.

This call includes a preferential theme to create joint appointments with institutions in the United Kingdom. However, it should be noted that the other preferential theme for this call – the recruitment of women into Research Professorship roles – may also take the form of a joint appointment with an institution outside of Ireland, including the United Kingdom.

Importantly, applicants seeking to utilise this call to create a joint appointment must have appropriate funding in both of the countries in which they will be based; **funding awarded through this call may only be used to support teams and activities based in the Irish host Research Body**. Where an applicant holds research funding that can be moved to another country (e.g., an ERC grant), the applicant may either choose to move such funding to the Irish host Research Body or leave the award at the original host institution. In any case, **appropriate funding must be in place to support the work being carried out outside of Ireland**.

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[6] http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/eligibility-related-information/index.xml
[7] Report of the Research Prioritisation Steering Group (2012)
[8] https://dbei.gov.ie/en/Publications/Publication-files/Research-Priority-Areas-2018-to-2023.pdf

> **Joint appointments may only proceed where agreements have been reached on the commitments being made to both institutions involved. Agreement must also be reached by both institutions on the mechanism by which intellectual property (IP) rights will be managed, and thus how maximum impact will be generated; this agreement must be compliant with Irish regulations. [9]**

3   Economic and Societal Impact

Science Foundation Ireland funds research on behalf of the Government of Ireland. As with all public spending, it is necessary to demonstrate and articulate the potential impact and benefits of scientific research.

For the SFI Research Professorship Programme, proposals will not only need to demonstrate scientific excellence, but must also clearly articulate the potential for economic and societal impact arising from the recruitment of the applicant. Applicants should be aware that proposals that are not seen to have the potential to deliver impact, or which have not successfully articulated how this impact can be delivered, will not be funded through this programme, **regardless of scientific excellence**.

3.1 Defining Impact

Impact can be described as *the demonstrable contribution that excellent research makes to the economy and society*. Impact embraces the diverse ways in which research-related knowledge and skills benefit individuals, organisations and nations by:

- Powering an innovative and enterprising economy
- Creating high-value jobs
- Attracting, developing and nurturing businesses, scientists and talented people
- Increasing the effectiveness of public services and policy
- Enhancing quality of life, health and creative output
- Developing the country's international reputation
- Educating and training the population
- Solving major national and global problems and challenges, such as food security and world hunger, climate change, energy security, ageing population, rural sustainability, and other sustainability challenges

3.2 Measuring and Assessing Impact

SFI recognises that some research projects may have immediate impact, whereas other projects may take much longer to achieve impact. For example, an output such as a filed patent is unlikely to create significant impact until the patent is licensed to develop a product, which can then generate revenue and jobs. The adoption of a project output such as a new standard or protocol could improve the performance of an existing business, which could also impact revenue and jobs. The discovery of a new treatment or medical device will have obvious health impacts, as well as potential economic benefits. Researchers applying to the SFI Research Professorship Programme have an obligation to articulate how and when they believe their proposed research programme will deliver impact on Ireland's economy and society in the Impact Statement section of the application (see below).

Reviewers will be asked to assess the potential impact and the likelihood of the delivery of that impact, as described in the Impact Statement. The relevant impact review criterion is:

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[9] https://www.knowledgetransferireland.com/Reports-Publications/Ireland-s-National-IP-Protocol-2019-.pdf

- *Quality, credibility and relevance of the impact statement, including the likelihood, scale and value of societal and/or economic effects on Ireland*

3.3 Impact Statement

As part of the proposal, applicants must prepare an impact statement that should articulate the planned and potential impact of the proposed research. SFI recognises that impact can take time and, in many cases, is unforeseen; as such, it is not possible to predict all impacts at the time of submission.

The impact statement should be as specific as possible and should provide information that external reviewers will find helpful in assessing the potential impact of the proposed research activity. Appropriate plans, milestones and deliverables associated with the potential impact may also be indicated. Plans to utilise appropriate SFI and other funding sources to assist with achieving impact should be included if relevant. However, considering that impact is a key review criterion, applicants are advised to make full use of the space provided to make a strong, unambiguous, and **realistic** impact case with appropriate emphasis and an objective view on how long it may require for the potential impact to be fully realised.

Applicants are encouraged to consult the SFI website and relevant national strategy documents before writing their impact statement.[10] For more information and guidance on how to successfully articulate impact, detailed information and a dedicated webinar can be found on the SFI website.[11] Applicants are advised to refer to this information in advance of preparing the impact statement in an application.

Applicants intending to hold a joint appointment <u>must</u> illustrate how this arrangement will affect and/or enhance the likely impact of the research programme given the planned amount of time spent away from the Irish host Research Body.

The impact statement should be written primarily in lay, non-technical language. It should be as specific and comprehensive as possible, and it should describe potential economic and societal impacts by answering the following overarching questions:

- **Who will benefit from this research?**
- **What plans will you put in place to increase the chances of economic and societal impacts from the proposed research?**
- **Over what timeframe might the benefits from this research be realised?**

In order to best describe the possible impacts in an impact statement, the following points should also be considered:

- What is the potential impact of the proposed research on the development of Ireland's industry, economy, competitiveness and development?
- Are there potential international beneficiaries or collaborations with international industry or partner organisations?
- Is an Endowed Chair being proposed? If so, how will such an endowment yield additional impact(s)?
- The SFI Research Professorship Programme encourages industry collaborations where appropriate to the topic of the research. How will the Industry Collaborators contribute to increased impact? What supports/contributions are they offering? Have routes to commercialisation been considered?
- With whom might you partner to increase the likelihood of potential impacts? It may be valuable to include one or more Industry Collaborators in your application. Letters of support must be provided if Industry Collaborators are included. The letters should provide full details of the intended

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[10] For example, http://npf.ie/
[11] http://www.sfi.ie/funding/award-management/research-impact/

intellectual input and, where relevant, the level of financial (cash, in-kind, or both) contribution to the research programme. Industry letters of support that do not originate from officially listed Industry Collaborators will be removed from the proposal, as will letters from listed Collaborators that merely provide theoretical or general support without specifically describing a meaningful and impactful contribution to the proposal.

- How will the proposed research impact on the education, training and career of students and research team members? Will there be infrastructural benefits for further research and education (e.g., facilities and instrumentation)? Applicants should note that all SFI Research Professorship Programme grants will offer training opportunities of some degree, therefore it is important to highlight the added value from the training provided under your award; for example, highlight where past researchers/students have found employment in industry.
- Highlight industrial interest in past/current research (e.g., consultancy, projects funded, collaborative publications, licenses granted, companies formed, VC funding, problems solved, etc.).
- How will the potential impacts of your research best be realised?
- What benchmarks or metrics can be applied to clearly demonstrate in the future that the various impacts outlined in the impact statement are both realistic and achievable?
- How will the proposed research impact on society and the quality of life for Ireland's citizens?
- If relevant, how will the proposed research impact on the natural and built environment, together with societies, individuals or groups of individuals who benefit as a result?
- If relevant, describe how your research will impact policy or public service?
- Are there potential beneficiaries within the private sector, public sector, third-level sector or any others (e.g., professional or practitioner groups, charities or patient groups)?

4   Programme Details

4.1 Applicant

In addition to demonstrating the exceptional quality of the applicant, most, if not all the following conditions must also be demonstrated as part of an SFI Research Professorship Programme proposal:

- Recruitment of the applicant is timely and important for the Host Institution; in particular, the SFI Research Professorship Programme mechanism may be used as part of a targeted strategic recruitment process for a Professorial Chair (or similar research leadership position)
- The applicant is currently active and productive in an academic or industrial setting, and can demonstrate that sustained or upward research productivity is likely
- The applicant's research must clearly advance the strategic research planning of the nominating Research Body

4.2 Host Institution

The Host Institution must also demonstrate their commitment to recruiting the applicant by, for example:

- Stating their intention to offer the identified applicant a full professorship that will continue after the funding provided through this application, if successful, expires. It is expected that this position will be **a full-time, permanent appointment** in those cases where the applicant intends to move full-time to Ireland. Where the applicant is seeking to create a joint appointment, appropriate employment arrangements to cover the time commitment indicated in the proposal will be expected. Applications may seek to leverage private funding from industry sources or individual donors (e.g., an Endowed Chair)

- Providing the physical infrastructure and support services appropriate for a world-leading researcher
- Offering the identified researcher a leadership role in, for example, a major SFI investment (e.g., in an SFI-funded Research Centre, etc.)
- Providing applicants who hold mobile research funding (e.g., ERC awards) with the required facilities and infrastructure to successfully move activities associated with this funding to the new host institution, where applicable.

The nature and extent of these commitments **must** be explicitly stated within the proposal.

4.3 Funding

The SFI Research Professorship Programme offers awards that will allow the successful recipient to carry out an ambitious and challenging programme of research requiring a team of scale to achieve its objectives. The awards are intended to contribute significantly to a competitive package that will encourage world-leading researchers to move their activities to Irish host institutions. In addition, support will be made available over an extended time period, subject to evidence of satisfactory progress, in order to provide security to those that have been successfully recruited to Ireland.

SFI expects experienced researchers applying to this programme to have a clear understanding of their requirements in terms of staffing, equipment, consumables and travel costs. Applicants are invited to submit a research proposal outlining **a five-year programme of research**. There is **no maximum budget** applied to this proposal; applicants must carefully articulate the need for all requested costs such that they are considered reasonable when subjected to peer review. **Applications failing to demonstrate reasonable value for money will not be supported through this programme**.

The funding described above represents the first of two cycles of support offered under this SFI Research Professorship Programme call. Following a review of the progress made under the first funding cycle, awardees deemed to have made sufficient progress will be offered an opportunity to submit a second research proposal for **a further five years of support**. This proposal, known as a **Continuity Proposal**, will allow the awardee to consolidate their research team and continue the successful work carried out under the first period of funding. While there should be clear consistency between the two proposals, it is recognised that awardees may wish to move into related fields of research, translate the work from the first funding cycle into more applied activities, or take up new and exciting challenges – the Continuity Proposal will need to justify the reasons for such changes in direction. For the second five-year cycle, there will again be **no maximum budget applied**.

For applicants seeking to take up a joint appointment through an SFI Research Professorship Programme award, the requested budget may be influenced by the applicant's intended time commitment to the Irish Host Institution. In any case, applicants must provide strong justification for all requested costs. Awards made to create joint appointments may also be supported for **ten years over two five-year cycles**. The time commitment to the Irish Host Institution may differ for the second five-year cycle from the first, thus offering maximum flexibility to awardees. However, the commitment may **never** be lower than 40% of the total working time over a given funding cycle.

4.4 Supplementary Support for Host Institutions of Women in Research Professorship Roles

A key strategic objective of this call (see Section 1) is to recruit women into Research Professorship roles in Ireland. Only one woman was funded through this programme during the period of 2003 to 2020. It is recognised that attracting excellent women into leadership roles can be challenging and that additional assistance to support applications from women may be crucial. For this call, institutions hosting awards made under **Theme 1** will be permitted to seek an additional supplementary award of up to **€100,000 within 12 months of the official start date of the award**. The additional support may help overcome challenges that are often faced most acutely by women as a result of relocating for work, assist Host Institutions with

managing costs accrued in the recruitment of a woman into a Research Professor position, and/or contribute to the institutional start-up package of a woman commencing a Research Professorship, where relevant.

The application for supplementary support will include a clear description of the costs that will be accrued; SFI may seek additional documentary evidence for any or all of the costs before approving the application. Host Institutions seeking to apply for the supplementary support will be required to contact SFI and notify the Foundation of their intention to seek the additional funding; further details on how to apply for this funding will be provided upon notification.

5   Application Process

In advance of an invitation to submit a Full Proposal to the SFI Research Professorship Programme, the host Research Body is required to prepare an **Expression of Interest (EoI)**, which consists of three elements (see Section 5.1 for full details).

This call has two preferential themes (see Section 1). Where an institution intends to submit an EoI that does <u>not</u> align to either of these themes, SFI must be contacted in advance such that pre-approval to submit the EoI can be obtained. An e-mail must be sent to researchprof@sfi.ie, which will provide brief details on the post that the institution wishes to create, the area(s) of research that will be impacted by the new post and the identity of the proposed candidate. SFI will consider the details submitted and will respond as promptly as possible.

SFI reserves the right to decline to review an EoI where the required pre-approval has not been sought.

Where a proposed EoI is clearly aligned to the preferential themes, pre-approval <u>is not required</u> and the EoI may be submitted to SFI directly.

Full Proposals will only be considered by SFI following the assessment of an EoI, and only after an invitation has been sent to the relevant Research Body. Full Proposals may only be submitted through SESAME, SFI's grants and awards management system.

Access to SESAME is controlled by staff at the research office of your host Research Body. Please follow your internal organisational process to request this access.

Once you have been registered by your research office, **you will receive an email** containing your:

- **Username**
- **Password**
- **SFI PIN number**
- **SESAME website address**

Your **username** and **password** are needed to log in to SESAME. SESAME is accessed using the internet; no additional software needs to be installed. You can access SESAME online from any location. The configuration of some browsers and internet infrastructure (popup blockers, firewalls, etc.) can restrict an individual's access to the internet and as a result to the SESAME system. If you are having any such difficulties, please contact your organisation's internal IT support team.

> **The SESAME system is accessed using the following Internet address:**
> **https://grants.sfi.ie**

Please see the **SESAME Researcher User Guide** for more detailed information. [12]

Once an applicant has been added to the SESAME system, the host Research Body should contact SFI to request that the applicant is made the Lead Applicant on an application to the SFI Research Professorship Programme; once this process has been completed, the applicant may commence the submission of the Full Proposal (details on how to complete the application are provided in Sections 5.2 to 5.15).

Please note that the submission of an application to the SFI Research Professorship Programme may affect eligibility to submit to other SFI programmes – please refer to the appropriate call documents. **For certain SFI programmes, individuals may only be under active review for one programme at any one time**. These programmes include, but are not limited to, SFI Frontiers for the Future, SFI Future Research Leaders, and the SFI Research Professorship Programme. If an applicant (or co-applicant, where relevant) submits more than one proposal to an open SFI programme, the second submission will be withdrawn without review.

Once submitted by the host Research Body to SFI through SESAME, an application cannot be withdrawn and subsequently modified for resubmission in the same call, regardless of the date of submission.

5.1 Submission of an Expression of Interest and Candidate Letter

Research Bodies wishing to recruit through the SFI Research Professorship Programme must first submit a two-part Expression of Interest (EoI) and a Candidate Letter (following pre-approval, where applicable). The first part (EoI I) will be evaluated to determine the eligibility and appropriateness of the intended position for an SFI Research Professorship Programme award. The second part (EoI II) will be evaluated to appraise the calibre and suitability of the candidate identified by the Research Body to fill the role in question, the suitability of the recruitment package that will be offered to the candidate, and the strength of the host Research Body's financial and infrastructural commitment to the candidate. The Candidate Letter, **signed by the candidate only**, will be evaluated on its ability to successfully outline the candidate's commitment to moving to the post being described in the EoI, and on the demonstrable progress made by both the candidate and the Research Body in planning the candidate's move to the new post in Ireland.

The EoI and Candidate Letter must be submitted by email to researchprof@sfi.ie by the Research Office of the proposed host Research Body. EoI I, EoI II and the Candidate Letter should be submitted together in a single PDF document, and must include the following information:

EoI I:

- A description of the targeted area in which the Research Body is seeking to recruit and the nature of the position to be filled, including the leadership or potential directorship component of the envisaged post; proposed roles in **SFI Research Centres** should be detailed (max. 1 page).
- A justification of the importance and timeliness of filling this position to the host Research Body's strategic plan and how the targeted area aligns to national strategic priorities (max. 1 page).

EoI II:

- An explanation by the Research Body of how the selected candidate and the candidate's research focus will optimally fill the role outlined in EoI I, taking into consideration the criteria outlined in Section 2 of this Call Document (max. 1 page).
- Details of the recruitment package to be offered to the candidate by the host Research Body, including the financial and infrastructural commitments provided by the Research Body both during and after the SFI Research Professorship Programme award (max. 1 page).
- A DORA-compliant CV of the candidate, using the template provided in Appendix A. The template provides guidance on the information that should be detailed in the CV; note that references to metrics such as journal impact factors, h-indices and total numbers of publications should **not** be included.
- A brief list of **relevant** previous (within the last 10 years), current and pending research funding associated with the candidate as a Lead PI or as a co-PI (not as a collaborator). The list should provide the title of the proposal funded, the amount awarded specifically to the candidate in each case, and the funding source; industry-funded research projects should be detailed, where relevant (max. 1 page).

Candidate Letter:

- A statement of the candidate's commitment to moving to the new host Research Body in Ireland from their current position, **including the rationale and any planning for a joint appointment or an Endowed Chair**, where relevant (max. 1 page).
- An indication of the steps that have already been taken, and the commitments that have been made by both the candidate and the host Research Body, to ensure a successful transition to the new host Research Body following the successful review of a Full Proposal to the SFI Research Professorship Programme (max. 1 page).

SFI reserves the right to seek further detail and clarification as part of the EoI evaluation process.

5.2 Submission of a Full Proposal

Submission of a Full Proposal to the SFI Research Professorship Programme is **by invitation only**. SFI will only accept a Full Proposal where the Candidate Letter provides reassurance that appropriate plans have been put in place by the candidate and the host Research Body. Full Proposals must be submitted to SFI **no later than four months** after receipt of an invitation; failure to submit a Full Proposal within this period may lead to the invitation being rescinded.

SFI would generally expect the host Research Body to have completed its institutional appointment processes prior to submission of a Full Proposal and to have offered the candidate a professorial-level position. A letter outlining whether the applicant has already accepted the position of Research Professor within the institution, or the situation that exists should this not be the case, forms a component of a Full Proposal submission.

Full Proposals must be submitted online through SESAME to SFI by the applicant, with approval from the Research Office of the candidate's host Research Body.

Applicants should carefully follow the instructions below and in the SESAME Researcher User Guide to complete the various sections of the application. In addition, a checklist of requirements is provided in Appendix B of this document.

Full Proposal submission requirements:

- **All text in uploaded PDFs** should be provided in Times New Roman font or similar, with minimum font size of 11, and at least single-line spacing as well as a minimum margin size of 2.5cm. Text in diagrams may be in any clearly legible font.
- Uploads in SESAME must be submitted in **Adobe or Microsoft PDF format only**.
- The number of pages in uploads <u>must not</u> exceed the specifications for any given section. **Applications that do not comply with these requirements will be deemed ineligible and will not be reviewed**.
- Appendices or other unsolicited documentation are not permitted. **Applications that include such unsolicited documentation will not be reviewed.**
- The currency to be used is the **euro (€).**
- File sizes of attachments should be **less than 5MB**
- Applicants must complete all mandatory SESAME profile fields (marked in red) before submitting an application. It is not possible to submit an application without this information.

Applications not adhering to these requirements, or with incomplete content, will be deemed ineligible and will not be accepted for review.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that eligible proposals are received by SFI within <u>four months</u> of the invitation from SFI. In order to safeguard against ineligibility, applicants are reminded to adhere rigorously to the guidelines in the call documentation and to review the proposal document prior to submission in SESAME.

Applications cannot be withdrawn and subsequently modified for resubmission in the same call.

5.3 ORCID ID

ORCID provides a unique identifier for all researchers, which can then be linked to their different research works across different platforms. [13] There are a number of benefits to creating an ORCID iD, which include the following:

- 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
- Your ORCID iD is a unique identifier, which distinguishes you from other researchers with a similar name
- Using the ORCID iD helps to make your research works more visible to funders and publishers. You are able to build a complete picture of your research in one location

As part of the integration of SESAME with ORCID, it is possible for researchers to import publication data from ORCID directly into their SESAME Research Profile. Applicants are required to link their SESAME Research Profiles to an ORCID iD **before an application can be submitted**.

5.4 Proposal Preparation in SESAME

5.4.1 Proposal Summary

- **Proposal Title (max. 30 words)**
  The proposal title should clearly convey the nature of the research to be undertaken and should not contain confidential details, given that the titles of funded proposals are published by SFI.

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[13] http://orcid.org/

- **Duration of Award Requested**
  SFI Research Professorship Programme awards are funded for a period of **60 months**.

5.4.2   Proposal Alignment

- **Priority Area and Alignment**
  Applicants should select one of the 14 Refreshed Priority Areas from the drop-down menu as the **Primary Priority Area**, which best describes the proposed research. It is also possible to detail **Secondary Priority Areas** that the research will be relevant to. Alternatively, applicants may select "Other"; in this case, applicants must demonstrate that the proposed research will be of <u>significant industrial relevance and strong economic impact</u>. In all cases, the applicant must justify the alignment of the proposed research (max. 250 words) to the selected Priority Area(s), or must describe the industrial relevance and economic impact, as applicable. This statement will be used to determine the eligibility of the application.

- **Research Area (Primary)**
  Applicants should select a primary SFI research area from the drop-down menu, which best describes the proposed research.

- **Research Area (Secondary)**
  Applicants should select a secondary SFI research area from the drop-down menu, which in combination with the primary SFI research area already selected best describes the proposed research.

- **Alignment to SFI Legal Remit (max. 250 words)**
  This section must be used to describe how the proposed research aligns to SFI's legal remit, as defined in Section 1. This statement will be used to determine the eligibility of the application.

5.4.3   Lead Applicant Details

- **Location of Applicant at the Time of Submission**
  Indicate the location (country) of the applicant at the time of submission (i.e., the country from which the applicant intends to relocate to Ireland from).

- **Joint Appointment**
  Applicants should state whether their application is submitted as part of a planned joint appointment.

- **Time Commitment to Irish Host Research Body**
  Applicants must indicate the proposed time commitment to the Irish host Research Body where a joint appointment is planned. The time commitment to the Irish host Research Body **may not be lower than 40%**, and a commitment of 40% to 60% is generally expected. The figure added in this section provides an indication of the planned commitment to being located within Ireland, rather than the proposed amount of working time allocated to the planned research activities (see below).

- **Time Commitment to Project**
  Applicants should indicate the time commitment to the proposed research project as a percentage of their **total working time, <u>irrespective of location</u>**. The time committed should reasonably reflect the amount of funding being requested.

- **Lead Applicant CV**
  A DORA-compliant CV of the Lead Applicant, using the template provided in Appendix A, must be completed and uploaded **(upload; max. 6 pages). Please click on "Save Draft" after completing the**

upload. The template allows for the provision of additional information such as periods of leave from research if relevant. **References to metrics such as journal impact factors, h-indices and total numbers of publications are not permitted.**

Failure to use this template or any deviation from the instructions in the template may result in an application being deemed ineligible.

5.4.4   Supervisory Experience

- Applicants must provide summary information on their supervisory experience to date.

5.4.5   Expired, Current and Pending Support of Applicants

The applicant must report on **expired**, **current** and **pending** funding:

- The applicant should include details of any financial support pending or received over the previous ten years. This should include competitive research funding received from funding agencies (international and national), charities, industry, etc.

- The applicant must include details of any financial support from another body currently provided, or currently being sought. SFI will not support research programmes currently being funded by another source.

- For each current and pending grant listed, the applicant should provide a brief description of the associated research. Applicants must also indicate their time commitment to these other projects, as a percentage their total working time.

- For pending grants, please include the expected decision date in the description box.

- For grants for which the applicant is/was contractually responsible (expired or current), the applicant must indicate the funding source, the value of the grant (€), the grant number, and the duration. The grant-specific website, where possible, should also be provided in the description box.

- For expired and current collaborative grants where the applicant is not the sole grant holder, indicate the funding source, whether the applicant is the Principal Investigator or co-Investigator, name the other partners on the grant, state the total value of the grant (€) and the amount of the grant (€) allocated in the applicant's name, state the grant number, and the duration. The grant-specific website, where possible, should also be provided.

- If the applicant is/was solely a collaborator on a collaborative research project, the grant should not be included here; only awards where the applicant is/was either the Principal Investigator or Co-Investigator should be listed.

- The portion of research funding claimed in an applicant's name must be an accurate and a fair reflection of their responsibility in the projects listed and will be verifiable as such. SFI may conduct audits to verify such claims and reserves the right to reject proposals where the above principle of proportionality is not observed.

- This section of the proposal will be reviewed as part of the applicant's track record. Applicants with extremely large numbers of expired grants over the previous ten years may be selective with which

funding grants to include in this section. The most prestigious grants and those most relevant to the proposed research should be included.

Research funding may be added directly to the application or added from the applicant's profile (see the SESAME Researcher User Guide).[12] **If this section is left blank it will indicate that the applicant has NO expired, current or pending funding. Please ensure that research funding added to the profile of the applicant has actually been included in the application.**

The applicant must complete a textbox detailing potential overlap between current and pending funding and the proposed research in this application. For each current and pending grant listed above, the applicant must clearly indicate any scientific overlap with this application, based on the methodologies being employed and the stated objectives of the funded project(s). In an additional textbox, the applicant must outline the experience they have gained in the management of significant research grants and the supervision of research teams of scale; strong evidence of possessing such experience is expected within a competitive SFI Research Professorship Programme application.

5.4.6   Collaborator Details

- Applicants must provide the name, contact information and other requested details of official Collaborator(s), if any, indicating whether they are based in academia or industry. CVs (max. 2 pages) for all Academic Collaborators **must** be uploaded. CVs may also be provided for Industry Collaborators; failure to provide Industry Collaborator CVs may disadvantage an application during the review process. A template is not provided for Collaborator CVs.

SFI recognises that applicants may have a prior relationship with an Industry Partner engaged in an application for funding to SFI (e.g., a decision-making role in company, such as being the CEO or a major shareholder in the company), which may be perceived as a conflict of interest. Where a potential conflict of interest exists, SFI requires that it is disclosed by the applicant to the Foundation and Research Body and is managed by the Research Body in accordance with the principles and mandates laid out in the document: *Inspiring Partnership - the National IP Protocol 2019.*[14]

Potential conflicts of interest with respect to Industry Partners named in the application should be directly declared within the applicant CV. Furthermore, the Host Research Body Letter of Support (see Section 5.4.14) should contain a description of the institutional policy regarding management of such conflicts.

5.4.7   Main Body of Proposal

- **Keywords (max. 15)**
  These should be descriptors that best characterise the proposed research.

- **Scientific Abstract (max. 200 words)**
  This should be a succinct and accurate summary of the proposed work when separated from the application. Confidential information should **not** be included in the Scientific Abstract.

- **Lay Abstract (max. 100 words)**
  This should be a succinct and accurate summary in lay, non-technical language of the proposed work when separated from the application. Confidential information should **not** be included in the Lay Abstract.

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[14] https://www.knowledgetransferireland.com/Reports-Publications/Ireland-s-National-IP-Protocol-2019-.pdf

5.4.8   Ethical Issues

- **All applicants** are required to answer the questions related to ethical issues (see below).

- **Use of Animals**
  Applicants must indicate whether animals are to be involved in any of the research planned in their proposal. Selecting "Yes" in the drop-down menu will provide access to a downloadable Ethical Issues Table, which is also shown in the *SFI Guidance for Applicants on Ethical and Scientific Issues*.[15]

- **Research Involving Human Participants, Biological Material or Identifiable Data**
  Applicants must indicate whether their research programme will involve human participants, human biological material, or the use of identifiable (or potentially identifiable) human data. Selecting "Yes" in the drop-down menu will provide access to a downloadable Ethical Issues Table, which is also shown in the *SFI Guidance for Applicants on Ethical and Scientific Issues*.[15]

Ethical Issues:
All applicants, in particular those expecting to carry out research involving the use of animals, human participants, biological material or identifiable (or potentially identifiable) data, are required to complete an Ethical Issues Table, which forms part of the application. The Research Programme section must include a description of the proposed research and methodology relating to the intended animal- and/or human-based studies. Guidance on the ethical and scientific issues in carrying out such studies is provided on the SFI website.[15] SFI will require evidence that relevant ethical and regulatory approval has been granted for studies involving human or animal subjects prior to an award commencing. In exceptional cases where such research may not commence until a later stage of an award, SFI may permit submission of ethical and regulatory approvals following the award start date but prior to commencement of the research involving animal and/or human subjects.

Clinical Trials:
SFI permits early-stage regulated clinical trials (Phase I or combined Phase I/II) and investigations through the SFI Research Professorship Programme only where a successful candidate also becomes a Lead Investigator or Co-Lead Investigator within an SFI Research Centre. More information can be found on the SFI website.[15]

5.4.9   Sex and Gender Dimension in Research

- **Sex and Gender Dimension in Research Statement (max. 1000 words)**
  In accordance with the SFI Gender Strategy (Strand 3: Integrating Gender in Research and Innovation),[2] all applicants must complete a statement articulating the consideration of biological sex and/or social gender variables in their research programme. Applicants must consider how the sex and/or gender dimension impacts their research. Please consult the *SFI Guidance for Applicants on Ethical and Scientific Issues* for resources on how to address the sex and/or gender dimension of research in your grant.[15]

  Do **not** include information on how you have addressed gender equality, diversity and inclusion in your research team/environment; these details should be addressed in Section 1 of your CV (Part B), should you wish to do so.

  In completing this section, please consider the following:

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[15] https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/ethical-and-scientific-issues/

1. *Is sex as a biological variable taken into account in the research design, methods, analysis and interpretation, and/or dissemination of findings?*

2. *Is gender as a socio-cultural factor taken into account in the research design, methods, analysis and interpretation, and/or dissemination of findings?*

   If the answer is yes to either or both of these questions, please describe how sex and/or gender considerations will be integrated into your research proposal. If not, please explain why sex and/or gender are not applicable to your research proposal.

5.4.10   Proposed Budget

SFI funding supports the research programme costs of the applicant and his/her research group. Eligible costs include:

- Contributions to salaries/stipends for staff hired specifically to carry out the research programme. Please consult the SFI website for more information on the **SFI Grant Budget Policy (GBP)**. [16]
- Relevant research expenses, including equipment, consumables and travel.
- Access charges for the use of large items of infrastructure or testbed facilities may be requested in certain situations; see the GBP for details.

In addition to direct costs, SFI also makes an indirect or overhead contribution **to the host Research Body**, which is reflected as a percentage of the direct costs (excluding equipment). Overheads are payable as a contribution for the indirect costs of hosting SFI-funded research programmes and are intended to enable the Research Body to develop internationally competitive research infrastructure and support services.

Funding under the SFI Research Professorship Programme may <u>only</u> be used to support the activities of applicants and their proposed teams within Irish host Research Bodies. Applicants seeking to apply under a planned joint appointment with an institution outside of Ireland <u>must</u> utilise alternative funding sources to carry out their activities at that institution.

SFI may carry out an audit to determine that its funding is being used in an appropriate manner in this regard. It is <u>not</u> permissible for research funded through an SFI Research Professorship Programme award to exhibit significant scientific overlap with work already funded elsewhere through other research awards, held either in Ireland or in another country.

The costs eligible for grant support under the SFI Research Professorship Programme are those costs which can, uniquely and unambiguously, be identified with the proposed research programme. Applicants must give details of all relevant costs, including staff, equipment, materials and travel. Ensure that the final total provided includes all direct costs requested from SFI. Costs that will be covered by industry partners should not be included. All grants are made directly to the host Research Body. Please also refer to the **SFI General Terms and Conditions**, [17] and the GBP.

- **Staff: Salaries and Benefits**
  SFI Research Professorship Programme grants do **not** fund the core salary or benefits of the applicant. Contributions to team-member salaries, and fees and stipends for postgraduate students (PhD and MSc by research) may be requested. Salary contributions for Collaborators are not permitted. All information required to complete the Staff section of the budget can be found in **Section 4.1** of the

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[16] https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/budget-finance-related-policies/Grant-Budget-Policy-June-2021.pdf
[17] http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/sfi-general-terms-and-conditions/index.xml

GBP and the associated **SFI Team Member Budget Scale**. [18] Please note that the submission of an application by the host Research Body must only take place once salaries requested have been approved by the relevant Research Office.

- **Equipment**
  All information required to complete the Equipment section of the budget can be found in **Section 4.2** of the GBP. It is permissible through this programme to seek funds to purchase the key research infrastructure required to carry out the proposed research. Applicants seeking such large items of equipment must ensure that **strong justification** is provided.

- **Materials and Consumables**
  All information required to complete the Materials and Consumables section of the budget can be found in **Section 4.3** of the GBP. Where relevant, a list of current **SFI Approved Access Charge Plans** and associated key contacts is available. [19]

- **Travel**
  All information required to complete the Travel section of the budget can be found in **Section 4.4** of the GBP.

- **Ineligible Costs**
  Under the SFI Research Professorship Programme, the salary of the applicant is **not** an eligible cost. Information regarding other ineligible costs can be found in **Section 5** of the GBP.

> **Requests for the supplemental funding available to the host Research Bodies of successful awardees applying through Theme 1 of this call, as described in Section 4.4 of this call document, should <u>not</u> be included in proposals. Applications will be managed separately once awards have been approved and have started. Details on how to apply for the additional funding will be provided in a separate communication.**

5.4.11   Budget Justification (max. 3 pages)

All information required to complete the budget justification can be found in **Section 7** of the GBP.

If cash and/or in-kind industry contributions have been agreed, provide details and describe how they complement the requested budget from SFI. Similarly, provide details of cash and/or in-kind contributions from international Academic Collaborators. Costs that will be covered through leveraging of funds from Industry or Academic Collaborators should not be included in the proposed budget.

Clear information should be provided where funding is to be apportioned to Collaborators. Please note that Collaborators based outside the Republic of Ireland or those not located within eligible Research Bodies in the Republic of Ireland are **not** eligible to receive funding through the SFI Research Professorship Programme.

If funding is sought for overseas services, this should be clearly justified and the rationale for carrying out this activity outside of Ireland must be explained.

If a joint appointment is being sought, the budget justification **must** demonstrate that the funding being requested is appropriate to the proposed time commitment to the Irish host Research Body and the research programme that will be carried out.

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[18] https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/budget-finance-related-policies/SFI-Team-member-scales_June-2021-with-pension-and-increments.pdf

[19] http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/budget-finance-related-policies/

5.4.12 Programme Documents

- **Excellence in Leadership (max. 2 pages)**
  This should provide a statement of the applicant's principal leadership achievements over their career to date. It should be clear from this statement that the applicant is well placed to occupy a position of senior leadership on an international stage.

- **Leadership Plan (max. 3 pages)**
  A description should be provided of how the applicant will fill the identified gap in research leadership within the host Research Body. This should describe how the applicant will help to advance the international competitiveness of the host Research Body by fostering research excellence and new enterprising opportunities, how the appointee's vision for the Research Body will steer its progress, consistent with the strategic objectives of the Research Body, SFI and the national research agenda, and how the appointee's leadership plan will complement existing management structures and implement change where appropriate. Those applying as part of a planned joint appointment must indicate how their ability to act as a research leader will not be diminished (and will ideally be enhanced) through such an employment strategy. Such applicants should also detail how the joint appointment will be managed, including the steps that will be taken by the applicant to ensure that team members will be supervised and managed appropriately while the applicant is away from the Irish Host Institution.

- **Research Programme (max. 15 pages)**
  Applicants are requested to provide sufficient detail for peer reviewers to comment on the quality of the ideas and proposed implementation. Applicants should aim to:

  - Describe clearly and concisely the specific aims and objectives of the proposal. They should be coherent, well-planned and should be linked with real deliverables.
  - Align the objectives of the programme of work with the strategic focus of the host Research Body, linking them with tangible deliverables.
  - Explain the background and significance of the proposed research – does the study address an important research problem? Is it strategically important to Ireland and the host institution? What is the current state of the art in this research field? Describe and explain how the proposed work, if successful, will advance the state of the art. The background section should reference the state of the art in this research field.
  - Ensure that the novelty of the approach is clearly explained, again with reference to the state of the art.
  - Describe the methodology within the proposed programme, which should be well developed. How the proposed methodology advances the current state of the art should be described in detail. Is the proposed scientific approach (including the competencies and activities of the team members) feasible and realistic?
  - Ensure that all ethical issues relating to the proposed research are appropriately considered (see below).
  - Detail how the work to be carried out in Ireland will differentiate from, and add value to, work being carried out elsewhere under a proposed joint appointment, where applicable.

  The application should also include:

  - Appropriate timelines, milestones and expected outputs for the proposed research (e.g., a Gantt chart), and the roles of the applicant, collaborators and team members in the work programme need to be clearly described.
  - Relevant preliminary data, which may either take the form of a) supporting reference(s) from the applicant's previous research, or b) a summary of results where the data has yet to be

published. In the latter case, this should be included within the 15-page research description as evidence that the applicant team has a track record in the field of the proposed research.

o   Include a brief, longer-term perspective of how the research programme will develop over a ten-year period, assuming that a second cycle of funding is granted by SFI.

- **Research Programme References (max. 5 pages)**
  Appropriate references and citations for the research programme should be provided.

- **Impact Statement (max. 3 pages)**
  The impact statement should be as specific as possible and provide information that reviewers will find helpful in assessing the potential impact of the proposed research activity. Appropriate milestones and deliverables associated with the potential impact should be indicated; short-term and longer-term impacts may be equally valuable – the applicant is expected to provide detail on the likely timeframe required to deliver on the described potential impact(s); see Section 3.3 for further details. Where appropriate for the topic of the research, industry collaborations and co-funding (cash or in-kind) should be discussed. In addition, applicants seeking a joint appointment should indicate how the potential impact of their research may be enhanced through employment at two institutions. Such applicants must also indicate that an agreement has been reached between both institutions on how IP rights will be managed over the duration of the award – SFI **must receive confirmation** that an agreement has been put in place before an award can commence, which is in compliance with the National IP protocol and State aid rules.[14,20]

5.4.13   Infrastructure, Facilities, Services and Space Provided by the Research Body (max. 1 page)

The application must provide details on the infrastructure, facilities and space to be provided by the host Research Body. This should include details of the office, laboratory, computing, animal or other facilities as necessary, where the research will be carried out, including all of the equipment that will be available, but **excluding** equipment requested in this application. Indicate what IP/technology transfer services are provided by the Research Body. A letter of support from the host Research Body must be included (see Section 5.4.14).

5.4.14   Letters of Support (uploads; max. 2 pages for each letter)

The following letters of support **must** be included:

- A letter of support from the **host Research Body of the applicant**, which should comment on the infrastructure and services available, as outlined by the Applicant (see Section 5.4.13). This letter should contain a brief description of the institutional policy regarding the management of conflicts of interest. Where a joint appointment is envisaged, the letter **must** indicate the plans put in place in conjunction with the relevant institution outside of Ireland to ensure that the applicant will have a successful period of employment at both institutions, and that the indicated time commitments to both institutions in the proposal have been accepted and will be honoured.

- A letter of support from **each Academic and Industry Collaborator**. Letters from Academic Collaborators should provide full details of the intended intellectual and/or technical input to the proposal. In addition, Academic Collaborators seeking funds through the award must describe how these funds will be utilised. Letters from Industry Collaborators should provide full details of the intended intellectual input and, where relevant, the level of financial (cash and/or in-kind) contribution to the research programme. Similarly, letters of support from international Academic Collaborators should provide details of any cash and/or in-kind contributions being offered. Letters

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[20] http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52014XC0627(01)&from=EN

of support from listed Collaborators that merely provide theoretical or general support without specifically describing a meaningful and impactful contribution to the proposal will be removed.

- Where the applicant will be offered a position in which there will be additional support from either an industry partner or a philanthropic organisation, **such that an Endowed Chair will be created**, a letter of support should be provided by an appropriate representative of the relevant industrial or philanthropic organisation. The letter should describe how the endowment will help with the progress of the applicant and team in their new location and should also indicate how any funding being provided will lead to reciprocal benefits for the donor organisation(s). Any activities envisaged by the endowing organisation in partnership with either the applicant or the host Research Body should be detailed in the letter.

- Where an applicant is seeking to take up a joint appointment, a letter of support should be provided **by an appropriate senior representative of the overseas institution involved** (e.g., a Dean/Head of the relevant School or the Vice President for Research, or equivalent). The letter should demonstrate that the institution concerned is supportive of the applicant's plans for taking up a joint appointment, and should describe what measures are planned, or have already been put in place, to ensure that the applicant will carry out successful and meaningful work in both institutions. Where the applicant has not yet started working at the institution concerned, the letter should also indicate whether the applicant has already signed a contract of employment with the relevant institution and, if this is the case, provide the date that the applicant has agreed with the institution to commence employment.

- In cases where the applicant is expected to take up a senior role (e.g., a Principal Investigator) within an **SFI Research Centre**, the application should also include a letter from the **Director of the Research Centre** concerned, which describes how the Centre will benefit from including the applicant within the team and, where possible, provides specific details on the areas in which the applicant will make a significant contribution. If the senior role is to be that of a Research Centre Director, the letter **must** come from the Vice President for Research (or equivalent) and should detail how the applicant will manage the role of Director alongside the activities envisaged under an SFI Research Professorship award.

Applicants are requested to note that a process for formally joining a Research Centre as a Principal Investigator must also be completed.[21] This is separate to, and not necessarily dependent upon, the outcome of an application to the SFI Research Professorship Programme and requires a written request to SFI from the Centre Director. The process of taking up such a role should be completed following the outcome of the application to this programme.

Additionally, letters from the **industry sector** are permissible where a prior or existing collaboration with the applicant can be identified. Such letters may be included to help support the case for recruitment of the applicant through the SFI Research Professorship Programme and **must** describe the nature of the collaboration that has taken place or is ongoing at the time of application.

Submission of an application through SESAME serves as the host Research Body's endorsement of the eligibility of the applicant as well as approval of the budget requested, the infrastructure to be provided by the Research Body and, furthermore, confirms the validity and accuracy of the details provided in relation to the current, pending and expired grants as detailed in the application.

5.4.15   Excluded Reviewers

Up to **three** individuals may be excluded from acting as reviewers for reasons of competition.

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[21] http://www.sfi.ie/funding/award-management/research-centres-award-management/process-for-changesadditi/

5.4.16 View Proposal Prior To Submission

Before submission, applicants are strongly encouraged to review the proposal and to ensure that the specified word and page limits have been adhered to, and that any required supporting information (e.g., letters of support) are included.

5.5 Research Body Approval

It should be noted that the Research Body's submission of an application represents their approval of an application and agreement to SFI's Grant General Terms and Conditions. In particular, the host Research Body is approving:

- The eligibility of the applicant
- That the applicant will be, upon receipt of the grant, recognised as an employee of the Research Body for the duration of the grant
- That the requested budget, including salaries/stipends, equipment, travel and consumables, is in line with accepted institutional guidelines and appropriate to the intended time commitments
- The availability of infrastructure within the institution, as outlined by the applicant in the research proposal
- That the proposed research programme has not been funded by other sources
- That relevant ethical approval has been or will be sought and must be granted prior to the award commencing
- That the relevant licences will be in place at the time of award
- That the details provided in relation to the applicant's research funding history (i.e., current, pending or expired grants, as detailed in the application) are valid and accurate
- That permission from all team members and collaborators has been obtained, such that SFI may receive their personal information, and may process such data for the purpose of peer review

5.6 Applicant Agreement to Terms and Conditions

It should be noted that submission of an application represents an agreement to SFI's Grant General Terms and Conditions.[17] Applicants that fail to comply with the above terms and conditions, or with requirements outlined in this call document, will not be eligible and their application will be withdrawn without review.

6 Proposal Review Procedure and Criteria

The submission of an application to SFI shall be construed as consent by the applicant to participate in the peer-review process. SFI reserves the right to withdraw applications without review where they do not meet the eligibility criteria.

6.1 Expression of Interest and Candidate Letter

EoI I, EoI II and the Candidate Letter will be reviewed to determine the appropriateness of the role identified by the Research Body and the suitability and commitment of the selected candidate for an SFI Research Professorship Programme award. SFI will review these documents through internal assessments and may also engage external reviewers, should this be deemed appropriate for the process. SFI may seek further details and clarifications prior to coming to a decision on whether an invitation to submit a Full Proposal will be sent. Should an invitation be sent, any feedback from the assessment of the EoIs and Candidate Letter that is provided to the host Research Body should be used to help develop the Full Proposal. Where a host Research Body is invited by SFI to proceed to the Full Proposal stage, the Research Body and the applicant should jointly develop the Full Proposal as outlined in this document.

The following criteria will be considered during the review of the EoI and the Candidate Letter:

- *Justification of the need to create a new professorial position, at both the national level (e.g., alignment with areas of current national priority) and at the institutional level (e.g., to help with local strategic objectives)*
- *Quality and significance of the candidate's track record, and suitability to hold a senior position funded through the SFI Research Professorship Programme*
- *Appropriateness of the selected candidate for the position that the Research Body wishes to fill*
- *Level of planning and demonstrated commitment of the candidate and the host Research Body, including the recruitment package offered, the infrastructure being made available, and the progress already made in completing the recruitment of the candidate*

In addition, where candidates are intending to apply as part of a joint appointment, a further criterion will be applied:

- *Appropriateness of the planning, and clarity of the rationale for seeking to work in an Irish host Research Body as part of a joint appointment with an institution outside of Ireland*

6.2 Full Proposal

The assessment of the Full Proposal will be carried out using an external peer-review procedure. In accordance with such processes used to evaluate proposals submitted to SFI, invited Full Proposals will be forwarded to international scientific experts for evaluation. The applicant may specify up to three individuals who should not act as reviewers for the application due to the competitive and confidential nature of the research programme; SFI will not refer the application to any of these individuals. Otherwise, selection of reviewers shall be at the sole and exclusive discretion of SFI.

The reviews returned by the peer experts will be collated and forwarded to the applicant, who will be provided with a defined period of time to submit a response to the comments made (advanced notice of dates and guidelines relating to the response will be indicated to applicants). The applicant's response may be sent back to the expert reviewers, where deemed necessary and at the discretion of SFI, to obtain further clarification.

The following five review criteria, which are **equally weighted**, will be used for the review of Full Proposals:

- *Quality, significance, and relevance of both the recent research record and the career achievements of the applicant, including their suitability to receive an SFI Research Professorship Programme award.* [22]
- *Quality, significance, feasibility and relevance of the proposed research programme and its potential contribution to the economic, scientific and educational development of Ireland.* [23]
- *Quality, credibility and relevance of the impact statement, including the likelihood, scale and value to Ireland of any societal and/or economic impacts*
- *Quality, significance, and relevance of the applicant's leadership plan and how it will complement existing management structures at the host Research Body*
- *The appropriateness of the budget and resources requested (i.e., whether this proposal represents good value for money), and the appropriateness of the skills, composition and size of the team requested*

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[22] Including, but not limited to, publication record (content, quality and availability (openness) of the publication, and not publication venue); record of securing relevant funding; visibility at and involvement in international conferences; stakeholder engagements; collaboration and partnerships; success with patent applications; relevant industrial experience; participation in reviews, etc.
[23] Including importance and timeliness of the proposed research; quality of institutional support; communication and description of the research; comprehension of the current state of the art, addressing potential sex and/or gender aspects, etc.

Where a proposal is seeking to create a joint appointment, reviewers will also be requested to comment on whether the applicant has provided a clear plan for such an arrangement and has convincingly demonstrated the additional benefits of dividing their time between institutions in two countries. This detail will not be a scored review criterion, but the information provided by reviewers will be taken into account when making a decision on whether a proposal may be approved for funding.

SFI reserves the right to modify the review process. Applicants will be notified of any relevant modification to the review procedure.

6.3 SFI Reviewer Code of Conduct

Experts engaged by SFI are required to abide by the **SFI Reviewer Code of Conduct**.[24] Amongst other requirements, this includes operation in a confidential, fair, independent and equitable manner. Experts are required to confirm, in advance of carrying out their review(s), that they will do so in a confidential manner.

The identity of experts who conduct the external expert reviews shall remain confidential and shall not be disclosed to the applicant. SFI shall not be liable for the release of information concerning proposals to third parties by those international experts involved in the peer-review process.

Adherence to the SFI Reviewer Code of Conduct also requires experts to immediately identify and declare where a conflict of interest exists or arises; in such cases, alternative reviewers will be appointed.

Reviewers must adhere to high standards of integrity during the peer-review process. They must not compromise the intellectual property integrity of the application and may not appropriate and use as their own, or disclose to any third party, ideas, concepts or data contained in the applications they review.

7   SFI Policies and Positions

In advance of applying to any SFI programme, applicants are expected to be familiar with all relevant national and SFI policies including, but not limited to, the following:

Clinical Trials – Research programmes that include clinical trials as part of the study (see Section 5.4.8) must adhere to the **SFI Clinical Trial and Clinical Investigation Policy**,[15] as well as with the requirements set out by the Health Products Regulatory Authority (HPRA).[25]

Animal Usage – Applicants intending to use animals in their research projects are obliged to comply with the **SFI Use of Animals in Research Policy**,[26] and should also ensure that their studies are in line with the HRPA's position on the use of animals in research.

Research Integrity – SFI places paramount importance on ensuring the highest standards of research integrity underpin all aspects of the research that it supports. To this end, SFI endorses the **National Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland**;[27] that is, all institutions and award holders are expected to abide by this policy statement and the **European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity**.[28]

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[24] https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/review/SFI_-_Reviewer_Code_of_Conduct.pdf
[25] https://www.hpra.ie/
[26] http://www.sfi.ie/resources/SFI-Policy-on-the-Use-of-Animals-in-Research_June_2016.pdf
[27] https://www.iua.ie/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/IUA_Research_Integrity_in_Ireland_Report_2019.pdf
[28] https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/european-code-of-conduct-for-research-integrity_horizon_en.pdf

Doctoral Education – For postgraduate students funded by SFI, the host Research Body is expected to adopt the principles, standards and good practice for doctoral education as described in the **National Framework for Doctoral Education (2015)**,[29] which SFI has endorsed.

Intellectual Property Management – Intellectual Property (IP) should be managed according to the policies set out in the Government publication: **Inspiring Partnership – the National IP Protocol 2019**.[9] In cases where additional guidelines are specified by SFI they must also be followed. The IP arrangements are the responsibility of the Research Body and shall reflect the collaborative nature of the project, the level of cash and in-kind commitment made by the Industry Partner and compliance with State Aid Regulations.

Gender Strategy – Research should fully consider potential biological sex and socio-cultural gender dimensions as key analytical and explanatory variables. As articulated in the **SFI Gender Strategy (Strand 3: Integrating Gender in Research and Innovation)**, applicants are advised to demonstrate that they have considered any potential sex/gender aspects in their proposed research programme.

The strategy also sets out a target for 30% of SFI's portfolio of award holders to be women and for research teams to be composed of at least 40% of each gender by the end of 2020. As such, applicants should consider how these targets can be achieved at all levels of the research team.

Maternity Supplement – SFI is committed to removing and mitigating any existing or perceived factors that may limit the participation of women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) careers. SFI invites its award holders to apply for a supplemental discretionary allowance to support their SFI-funded award when either an SFI awardee or a team member (including PhD students) funded on an SFI award takes a period of maternity or adoptive leave.[30]

Appeals Process – This policy establishes procedures and responsibilities for the appeal of the declination of a proposal by SFI.[31]

State Aid – All SFI funding granted under this call will be subject to, and must be compliant with, State Aid law. As such, proposals must be designed to ensure that any funding received from SFI does not, directly or indirectly, give rise to the granting of State Aid. Potential applicants are referred to the guidance provided by the European Commission in Section 2 of its **2014 Framework for State aid for research and development and innovation (2014/C 198/01)**,[20] and that which has been developed by Knowledge Transfer Ireland.[32] If in any doubt as to the interpretation or application of this guidance, potential applicants are advised to seek independent legal advice.

Child Protection – Where relevant, applicants and Research Bodies are required to comply with the provisions of the **Children First Act 2015**,[33] and the **National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017**.[34] It is the responsibility of the Research Body to ensure that they are compliant with all applicable law.

Data Protection Policy – **The General Data Protection Regulation** is a legal framework that sets out guidelines for the collection and processing of personal information of individuals within the European Union.[35] Applicants are advised that they must be compliant with this regulation if they collect or process personal data.

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[29] http://hea.ie/assets/uploads/2017/04/national_framework_for_doctoral_education_0.pdf
[30] https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/gender/SFI-Maternity_Adoptive-Policy-V2.3-Sept-2019.pdf
[31] https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/review/
[32] https://www.knowledgetransferireland.com/Model-Agreements/Practical-Guides/Practical-Guide-to-State-Aid-Considerations-in-Research-Development-and-Innovation-for-RPOs-and-Industry.pdf
[33] http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2015/act/36/enacted/en/pdf
[34] http://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Children_First_National_Guidance_2017.pdf
[35] https://gdpr-info.eu/

SFI may collect, use and disclose personal data provided in the application and/or otherwise obtained under, or in connection with, the application for processing the submission, for the performance of its statutory powers and functions, and for the general activities of SFI. Further details regarding SFI's collection, use and disclosure of personal data, and the rights of individuals with respect to any personal data held by SFI, are available in the **SFI Privacy Statement**.[36]

During peer-review procedures, information may be sent to external experts in countries outside of the European Economic Area, including countries that are not recognised by the European Commission as having adequate data protection laws. By submitting an application to SFI, the Research Body and members of the Research Team are agreeing that they consent to the processing and transfer of personal information in this way.

During the application process or at any time thereafter, SFI may contact the Research Body, the Principal Investigator, or any member of the Research Team with regard to funding opportunities, activities or events organised by SFI or other relevant bodies, or for the purposes of monitoring and evaluation (including, but not limited to, the collection of scientific data or data relating to the application process). SFI may choose to authorise a third party to contact the Research Body, the Principal Investigator or any member of the Research Team on its behalf.

Conflict of Interest – SFI recognises that applicants may have a prior relationship with an industry partner engaged in an application for funding to SFI (e.g., industry consultancy role, founder of an academic spin-out company), which may be perceived as a conflict of interest. Where a potential conflict of interest exists, SFI requires that it is disclosed by the applicant to SFI and their Research Body and that any such situations are managed by the Research Body in accordance with the principles and mandates laid out in the **National Intellectual Property Guidelines**.[9] Potential conflicts of interest with respect to Industry Partners named in the application should be directly declared within the applicant CV. Furthermore, the Host Research Body Letter of Support (see Section 5.4.14) should contain a description of the institutional policy regarding management of such conflicts.

Open access – In line with the principles espoused by Plan S,[37] and those of the National Framework on the Transition to an Open Research Environment,[38] SFI is committed to ensuring that all publicly funded research articles are openly available. Where a research publication arises in whole or in part from SFI-funded research (i.e., where one or other of the researchers concerned receives SFI funds in support of their endeavours), **SFI's Open Access policy** should be adhered to.[39] SFI monitors compliance with this policy through scientific and financial reporting, financial audits and its Annual Stocktake of Research Outputs.

Data Management – Data governance and stewardship are key components of good research practice. Science Foundation Ireland is part of an initiative for the voluntary international alignment of research data management policies.[40] Applicants may find it helpful to consult with this and Science Europe's framework for discipline-specific research data management when preparing a data management plan as part of their application for funding to SFI.[41] Applicants should review individual programme funding call requirements regarding data management plans and timelines as to when they are required to be submitted.

Current SFI policies and positions will be reviewed on a regular basis; applicants are advised to consult the policy information in advance of submission of a proposal.

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[36] http://www.sfi.ie/privacy/
[37] https://www.coalition-s.org/principles-and-implementation/
[38] http://norf-ireland.net/
[39] https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/open-research/
[40] https://www.scienceeurope.org/our-resources/practical-guide-to-the-international-alignment-of-research-data-management/
[41] https://www.scienceeurope.org/our-resources/guidance-document-presenting-a-framework-for-discipline-specific-research-data-management/

8   Award Management

8.1 Reporting Requirements

The State makes a significant investment via SFI into scientific research and, as such, it is the responsibility of SFI to monitor the progress and outcomes of all the funding it administers. All SFI award holders are required to report on emerging outputs and impacts for the duration of their awards and for up to five years beyond. The progress reporting requirements for awards made under the SFI Research Professorship Programme are inclusive of **Annual Reports**, completion of the annual stocktake of SFI **Research Outputs** and the completion of a **Researcher Snapshot**.

The annual report is used to monitor progress of the individual awards against the overall objectives of the SFI Research Professorship Programme. Each of the SFI Research Professorship Programme call objectives, with expected outputs, is discussed in turn below:

- **Objective:** *To provide a mechanism for recruiting world-leading researchers to Ireland's research institutions*
  Expected Outcomes: The recipient of an SFI Research Professorship award will be world leading, as indicated by having a record of producing excellent scientific research with demonstrable or potential economic and societal impact. Additionally, SFI expects that those funded through the Research Professorship programme will attract and recruit the next generation of excellent researchers to their teams and provide the support and guidance to enable them to build exceptional careers in academia or industry.

- **Objective:** *To encourage institutions to appoint women to senior academic positions in Ireland*
  Expected Outcomes: SFI recognises the need to provide opportunities for women in leadership roles within Ireland. The SFI Research Professorship Programme call will implement actions designed to encourage Research Bodies to appropriately consider the recruitment of Research Professors who are women. Excellence can only be attained where gender balance is embedded in leadership and decision-making. Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) aims to improve the gender balance of leadership positions in awards funded by SFI by ensuring that at least 35% of award holders are of the under-represented genders by 2025 (Source: SFI Strategy 2025: Shaping Our Future).

- **Objective:** *To allow excellent researchers to hold a joint appointment between institutions in Ireland and an institution abroad*
  Expected Outcomes: The key purpose of the SFI Research Professorship programme is to attract world-leading research talent to Ireland. In addition, SFI is committed to supporting meaningful and beneficial collaborations between institutions in Ireland and abroad. Awardees who intend to take up international joint appointments are required to commit at least 40% of their time to their Irish Host Research Body where they are expected to demonstrate influence and leadership. SFI Research Professors on joint appointments will be asked to report on the division of their time between institutions and on the management of their research team in Ireland. SFI will require updates on the added benefits afforded to the award through the joint appointment, such as international collaborations and training, staff exchanges, and the expansion of Ireland's research capacity into new areas.

- **Objective:** *To increase the number of current ERC awardees working in Ireland and to provide a strong platform for future ERC successes*
  Expected Outcomes: SFI acknowledges the excellence of researchers funded by the ERC and has a key target to increase the number of ERC grants made to researchers based in Ireland. The SFI Research Professorship Programme is designed to attract ERC applicants from abroad, with particular focus on individuals operating in areas of strategic importance to Ireland and those with a high

likelihood of having both economic and societal impact. All ERC-funded awardees will be asked to report on the benefits of ERC funding to their SFI Research Professorship award.

It is SFI's expectation that winners of SFI Research Professorship Programme awards who are not active ERC awardees at the time of application, will go on to apply during the lifetime of their SFI award. Where applications to the ERC are made, SFI should be notified as part of the next annual report, providing an overview of the submission in the report and informing SFI of the outcome once known. SFI Research Professors will be expected to have support from their host Research Body in Ireland in facilitating their (successful) bidding for funding from the ERC and other EU schemes.

- **Objective:** *To increase the number of leadership roles held by Ireland-based PIs in major European initiatives, in particular those supported under the Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe Framework Programmes*
  Expected Outcomes: SFI expects that researchers based in Ireland will obtain research funding from as wide a range of sources as possible. SFI's expectation is that the high calibre of Research Professorship Programme awardees will allow them to compete successfully for funding in Horizon 2020 and the upcoming Horizon Europe Framework Programme, not least through ERC schemes. In their annual report, awardees are asked to report on the funding opportunities that they have pursued and won, and also to report on the position held by the PI on successful awards. This will allow SFI to track this progress on an annual basis.

- **Objective:** *To add critical expertise and excellence to SFI Research Centres and other centres of scale*
  Expected Outcomes: SFI strongly encourages Research Professors to establish themselves as key leaders within their host institutions and to engage with relevant SFI Research Centres by becoming a Research Centre collaborator, investigator, or by winning a Research Centre Spokes award.

- **Objective:** *To increase Ireland's success in winning top-tier international prizes*
  Expected Outcomes: SFI has a clear target for SFI-funded researchers to win top-tier international prizes. SFI's expectation is that awards made under the SFI Research Professorship Programme will contribute significantly towards attaining this target and hence awardees will be asked to report on all prestigious prizes or awards received during the reporting period.

- **Objective:** *To build reputation that helps to attract new partnerships with industry*
  Expected Outcomes: A key objective of the Research Professorship Programme call is to foster and support collaborations with industry and, as such, SFI's expectation is that Research Professorship Programme awardees will develop and/or further grow such relationships. Data gathered in support of such activities will enable SFI to measure increases in joint funding instruments with key agencies and companies, and to demonstrate increases in collaborations with Ireland's strategic partners. Awardees are asked to report on all industry engagements relevant to this award.

- **Objective:** *To further enhance the quality of academic outputs from Ireland's research institutions, such that they are recognised as being amongst the best in the world*
  Expected Outcomes: To date, SFI funding has produced high-quality, high-impact publications that have resulted in Ireland rising to be highly rated in international bibliometric rankings of repute. SFI's expectation is that the grants made through the Research Professorship Programme will help to ensure that such high rankings are maintained and, ideally, improved. Awardees are asked to report on all refereed journal and conference publications and international presentations directly supported by the grant. This support must be acknowledged in all publications.

- **Objective:** *To increase the proportion of invention disclosures, patents, licences and spinouts recorded by Enterprise Ireland that are directly linked to SFI-funded research*
  Expected Outcomes: It is expected that research carried out by SFI Research Professors will result in excellent scientific research that has potential economic and societal impact. Awardees will be asked to report on all commercialisation outputs arising from this award, including the number of invention disclosures, patents, licences and spinouts.

The SFI Grants and Awards Management System, SESAME, is the primary conduit for annual reporting. Research Professorship Programme awardees will be requested to submit their annual report by the 31st of January every year to report on activity during the previous calendar year (January – December). The Standard Report template, which is available on SESAME, must be used. An additional final report must be submitted (also using the Standard Report template) within three months of the expiration date of the award. In addition to the annual report, awardees are also obliged to keep their SESAME Researcher Profile updated as the SFI annual census data is drawn directly from the data entered into the Profile; this must also be updated and completed by 31st January every year. Reporting procedures are detailed on the SFI website,[42] and further assistance on using SESAME to prepare reports is available.[12]

> **The reporting requirements for awards made under the SFI Research Professorship Programme must be adhered to. Individuals who hold the primary responsibility for reporting and who fail to comply with reporting requirements, run the risk of having their grant payments suspended and their eligibility to apply for funding in forthcoming SFI calls affected.**

8.2 Progress Site Reviews

Each recipient of an SFI Research Professorship award will be subject to progress review in the form of a site visit conducted by SFI with a panel of international peer reviewers during the first five-year cycle of the award; most likely, the review will take place in the fourth year of the award. The panel is asked to assess the progress and direction of the research, the quality of the team and partnerships, the management of the budget and the potential impact of the research programme. The commitment of the Research Body as outlined in the letter of support, in particular the teaching and non-research commitments of the PI, will be assessed. The outcome of the progress review will be instrumental in assisting SFI to decide whether an invitation to submit a Continuity Proposal for a second five-year cycle of support will be made. As stated in the SFI General Terms and Conditions,[17] the Foundation reserves the right to terminate an award if, in the opinion of the Foundation, progress is not deemed to be satisfactory. Alternatively, a decision may be made to allow the first cycle of funding to be completed without an invitation to submit a Continuity Proposal.

9 Further Information

Frequently asked questions (FAQs) are available on the SFI website.[43] For all additional queries please contact: researchprof@sfi.ie

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[42] http://www.sfi.ie/funding/award-management/reporting-procedures/
[43] https://www.sfi.ie/funding/funding-calls/sfi-research-professorship/FAQs-2020-rolling-call.pdf

Appendix A: Applicant CV Template (max. 6 pages)

Please note that your full research funding track record and supervisory details should be uploaded via SESAME and should **not** be included in this CV. Please **do not** include any type of journal or publication metrics (e.g., impact factor or h-index),[44] or refer to the total number of papers you have authored or co-authored. Deviating from these instructions may result in the redaction of these details or render your application ineligible for review.

SECTION 1 – Applicant Details (max. 3 pages)

NAME AND CONTACT DETAILS

CAREER PROFILE (Education and Employment)
Please outline your education and employment history, provide details of any periods of leave from research (for example, due to parental leave, long-term absence through illness or working in industry) or periods of part-time work.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN RESEARCH EXCELLENCE & IMPACt
*Describe the **significance and/or impact** of up to 3 key achievements per category below. For each example, provide an outline of the stated achievement, what **specific** role you played, why you think it is important, any benefit to the field and, where relevant, the resulting impact.*

    A. Key Achievements in the Generation of Knowledge
    [Please describe how you have contributed to the generation of new ideas and hypotheses, and the significance and/or impact of the latter including, but not limited to, preprints, open data sets, software, publications, innovation and commercialisation activities (e.g., verified invention disclosures, patents, licences, novel assays and reagents), policy publications, and evidence synthesis pieces. Highlight if these are openly available and include a DOI if available. Please delete this guidance once completed.]

    B. Key Achievements in the Development of Individuals
    [Please describe your role in the success of a team or team members. You may wish to refer to how you have supported individuals in progressing their careers or how you have been integral to a team's success (including supporting equality, diversity and inclusion in your team and mentoring). You may also wish to refer to contributions you have made to the success of consortia, collaborations, academic activities (e.g., teaching and workshops). Please delete this guidance once completed.]

    C. Key Achievements Supporting Broader Society and the Economy
    [Please describe your key achievements in supporting society and knowledge exchange, such as engagements with the private sector, the public sector and/or the broader public (e.g., spin-out activities, policy changes including, but not limited to, inclusion and/or collaboration of the public in research processes, community education and public engagement, efforts to advise policy makers, positive stakeholder feedback, or the provision of information to the press). Please delete this guidance once completed.]

    D. Key Achievements Supporting the Research Community
    [Please describe your key achievements supporting the wider research community, such as editing, reviewing, and evaluation of researchers and applications for funding. Your response can also include activities such as organising events that benefited the research community, improving research culture (including, but not limited to, ethics, research integrity, equality, diversity and inclusion). Please delete this guidance once completed.]

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[44] Examples include, but are not limited to, H-index, i10-index, G-index, H(2)-index, HG-index, Q2-index, AR-index, M-quotient, M-index, W-index, Hw-index, E-index, A-index, R-index, W-index, J-index

SECTION 2 – Publication Details (max. 3 pages)

*Please **do not** exceed the maximum number of publications requested. Deviating from these instructions may result in the redaction of these details or render your application ineligible for review. Please briefly describe the importance/impact of your publication and whether these publications are openly available.*[45]

A. SELECTED SENIOR-AUTHOR PUBLICATIONS

*Detail up to 10 peer-reviewed, senior-author (that is, first, joint-first or last author) primary-research publications, which will confirm, **where relevant**, that you meet the eligibility requirements for publications for this programme. Preprints may only be included where a Digital Object Identifier (DOI) is quoted. **Note that publications where the applicant claims joint-first authorship will only be accepted as senior-author publications where the article clearly verifies this**.*

1.

B. OTHER PUBLICATIONS

You should list up to 10 other publications (where you are a senior author or otherwise) that you wish to be considered in the assessment of this application. You should ensure that your primary research outputs are prioritised; however, reviews, essays and any other secondary-research articles relevant to this application may also be listed.

1.

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[45] Numbers of citations are appropriate in this instance.

Appendix B: Research Professorship Programme Full Proposal Checklist

SECTION	DESCRIPTION	REQUIREMENTS
Proposal Summary and Research Alignment	Title	**Up to 30 words**
	Select 'Priority Area'/'other' option as appropriate	**Select area**
	Justification of alignment with selected Priority Area and/or of significant industrial relevance and strong economic impact	**Max. 250 words**
	Research categorisation areas (Primary and Secondary)	**Select area(s)**
	Justification of alignment with SFI legal remit	**Max. 250 words**
Lead Applicant Details and Supervisory Experience	Location of applicant at time of submission	**Please complete**
	Joint appointment	**Yes/No**
	Time Commitment to Irish Host Research Body	**Min, 40%; max. 100%**
	Applicant percentage time commitment	**Please complete**
	Applicant CV (use template provided in Appendix A; PDF upload)	**Max. 6 pages**
	Supervisory details (MSc, PhD and other staff)	**Please complete**
Expired, Current or Pending Support of Applicants	Details of current, pending and expired funding	**Please complete**
	Indicate scientific overlap with other grants	**Max. 1000 words**
	Detail experience with managing large grants and teams	**Max. 1000 words**
Collaborator(s) Details	Name/contact details etc. of each official collaborator	**Please complete**
	CV for each official collaborator (PDF upload)	**Max. 2 pages**
Main Body of Full Proposal	Keywords	**Max. 15**
	Scientific abstract	**Max. 200 words**
	Lay abstract	**Max. 100 words**
Ethical Issues	Use of animals	**Yes/No**
	Use of human participants, human biological material or (potentially) identifiable data	**Yes/No**
	Ethical Issues questions (where answer to either of last two sections was "Yes")	**Please complete**
Sex and/or Gender Dimension	Sex and/or gender dimension in the research programme	**Yes/No**
	Integration of sex/gender considerations into the proposal	**Max. 1000 words**
Budget & Budget Justification	Details of all relevant costs	**Complete table**
	Outline the justification for the requested costs	**Max. 3 pages**
Programme Documents	Excellence in leadership	**Max. 2 pages**
	Leadership plan	**Max. 3 pages**
	Research programme description	**Max. 15 pages**
	Research programme references	**Max. 5 pages**
	Impact statement	**Max. 3 pages**
Infrastructure	Infrastructure, facilities, services and space provided by the Research Body	**Max. 1 page**
Letters of Support	Host Research Body of the applicant	**Max. 2 pages**
	Official collaborators, including industry	**Max. 2 pages each**
	Other letters (e.g., from Research Centre Director)	**Max. 2 pages each**
Excluded Reviewers	Up to 3 individuals may be excluded	**Add details**

Viewing the PDF of your application prior to submission allows you to verify content.

There is no system validation on multiple-upload file fields as the number of documents required may vary for each application.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that all documentation is included and that page lengths are not exceeded.