Supplemental funding request for Centres for Research Training (CRT): US-Ireland student mobility programme

Version: September 2022

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 2014.

Scope and Objectives of the Supplemental funding request for CRT US-Ireland student mobility programme

The US-Ireland student mobility programme is designed to enable Irish based PhD students to collaborate on research projects in academic laboratories in the Unites States of America for a period of 4 weeks to 12 weeks. The programme, in its first phase, specifically links PhD students from the SFI funded Centres for Research Training (CRT) with academic laboratories at the National Science Foundation (NSF) Research Traineeship Program (NRT). This supplemental funding opportunity supports CRT-based PhD students to develop and strengthen valuable research skills, transversal and cross-sectoral skills, and discipline-specific skills, and benefit from mentorship and experiential learning at an NRT.

The NRT programme is developed with the principal goal of encouraging the development of innovative models for interdisciplinary / convergent STEM graduate training. Moreover, a broader expected impact of the program is “increased partnerships and collaborations (both domestic and international) between academia and others.” Further details on active NRTs is accessible here.¹

¹ Projects funded by NSF’s Research Traineeship Program: https://www.nsf.gov/awardsearch/advancedSearchResult?PIId=&PIFirstName=&PLLastName=&PIOrganization=&PISate=&PZip=&PICountry=&ProgOrganization=&ProgEleCode=1997&BooleanElement=All&ProgRefCode=&BooleanRef=All&Program=&ProgOfficer=&Keyword=&AwardNumberOperator=&AwardAmount=&AwardInstrument=&ActiveAwards=true&OriginalAwardDateOperator=&StartDateOperator=&ExpDateOperator=
Objectives

A student mobility scheme between the CRTs and NRTs is designed to help drive innovative research cooperation and would be aligned with the following objectives:

- Support postgraduate students in their development of professional networks, widen career exposure and create the possibility of attracting talent.
- Facilitate training in appropriate research skills and/or use of equipment and techniques that may not be readily available in Ireland.
- Encourage knowledge exchange and strengthened collaboration between CRTs and NRTs in their highly-specialised areas of expertise.
- Learnings and shared experiences between innovative postgraduate training programmes within rich research environments.

Application overview

Applications will only be accepted for applicants from the CRT programme, and will only support research visits for a period of 4 to 12 weeks at an NRT. Applicants are encouraged to review the list of active NRTs1 in identifying the most appropriate partner.

How to apply:

CRTs are invited to submit a maximum of four applications per centre via email to crt@sfi.ie. The application form provided in Appendix B must be completed and accompanied by three attachments only:

- Letter of Invitation from host NRT [maximum 1 page].
- Letter of Confirmation from Irish host institution [maximum 1 page].
- Motivation letter from CRT-based PhD student [maximum 2 pages].

Eligible applicants:

The nominated CRT candidates are expected to demonstrate the following:

a. Applicants must have identified a host NRT who will provide access to their laboratory space, dedicated time, and their research group (details outlined in a letter of invitation)

b. A letter of confirmation from the Irish host institution indicating that each applicant

   i. is an active CRT student,
   ii. has the support to participate from their supervisory team,
   iii. has completed first year of their PhD studies at the time of application,
   iv. has the required health and travel insurance in place prior to travel.

c. Applicants must demonstrate the synergies between their research activities and the host NRT/research group and outline the expected outputs of their visit (motivation letter).

d. CRTs should aim for a gender-balanced approach and endeavour to nominate a diverse and talented group of candidates.
General guidelines

- All text in attachments (submitted to crt@sfi.ie) should be written in single-space using at least 12 point Times New Roman font, or similar, with at least 2.54 cm (1 in) right and left margins.
- The number of words/pages in any given section must not exceed the specifications.
- Appendices, or other unsolicited documentation, (e.g. team member CV, letters of support from individuals other the official collaborators, quotations) are not permitted.
- The currency to be used is the euro (€).

Applications not adhering to the specified guidelines (e.g. page limit specifications), or with incomplete content, will be deemed ineligible and will not be accepted for review.

Funding

The funding available, on a competitive basis, for successful candidates is up to €6,000 per individual for a period of 4 to 12 weeks. All incurred costs must be justified and in line with the allowable costs outlined below.

Eligible costs per student include the following costs only:

- Accommodation and subsistence costs for the applicant to carry out collaborative research in the host laboratory for a period of 4 to 12 weeks. Subsistence rates supplied by SFI (Appendix A) must be used.
- Travel costs, covering the cost of one return trip to the host laboratory as well as associated domestic transport. Please note that applicants are required to procure the cheapest available economy flights. Public transport links from the international airport to the international lab are considered eligible travel costs.
- Costs associated with application for a US visa will be covered.

Ineligible costs include other costs associated with consumables and materials, equipment including laptops, participation in conferences or workshops or study tours, car-hire, travel and health insurance.

State Aid and SFI Grant Funding

As per SFI’s grant conditions (inclusive of SFI’s General Terms & Conditions, Letters of Offer and SFI Policy documents), all SFI funding granted is subject to, and must be compliant with, State aid legislation based on Article 107(1) of the Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU).

Namely, research activities undertaken as part of a grant awarded under the Supplemental funding request for Centres for Research Training (CRT): US-Ireland student mobility programme, and agreed to subject to SFI’s grant conditions, must be “non-economic” in nature and be designed to ensure that any funding received does not, directly or indirectly, give rise to the granting of State aid.

2 https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/sfi-general-terms-and-conditions/
3 https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/
4 Commission Notice on the notion of State aid as referred to in Article 107(1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union TABLE OF CONTENTS (europa.eu)
Where recipients of grant funding engage with an ‘undertaking’ or industry party, under the Supplemental funding request for Centres for Research Training (CRT): US-Ireland student mobility programme they are required to demonstrate compliance with the conditions of “effective collaboration” as per the Framework for State aid for research, development and innovation (2014/C 198/01). For further guidelines please see https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/state-aid/

Review Process

Applications submitted for supplemental funding for the US-Ireland mobility scheme will be subject to internal SFI review only. Applications can only be submitted by the respective CRT management (applications submitted by individual candidates will not be reviewed).

CRTs are expected to instigate a procedure to select candidates for the supplemental funding, and may nominate a maximum of four candidates per centre.

Submitted applications will be reviewed on the following:
- Quality of the applicant
- Quality of the proposed research activities
- Justification of the benefit of the collaboration
- Evidence of synergies in research and committed support from the host NRT

Relevant information about the supplemental funding requests which are under consideration for funding, along with the corresponding reviews, may be shared with representatives from NSF as appropriate.

Supplemental funding requests should be submitted by the following deadline: 17 January 2023

SFI’s Policies and Positions

In addition to complying with SFI’s grant conditions, which are inclusive of those outlined in the Letter of Offer and SFI’s Grant General Terms & Conditions, applicants are expected to be familiar and consult with SFI policies/positions https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/ and with all relevant national policies when preparing their application to any SFI programme and in conducting their programme of research. All team members should be appraised of relevant policies, which may be revised from time to time.

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5 The concept of an “undertaking” under EU competition law rules is an entity that is engaged in an “economic activity” regardless of its legal status or the way that it is financed. An activity is economic in nature when it involves offering goods or services on a market
Appendix A: Subsistence Rates (Inclusive of Accommodation)

Subsistence Rates based on Horizon Europe – Work Programme 2021/2022 Marie Skłodowska Curie Actions Country Correction Coefficients (CCC) (inclusive of accommodation)

**US - Correction coefficient is 102.3**

For example using PhD stipend rate of €18,500:

Cost of Living Index = 102.3 ÷ 100 = 1.023  
Yearly Rate for US = 18500 x 1.023 = 18,925.5

**Monthly Rate to be used for mobility programme = €1,577**
Supplemental funding request for Centres for Research Training (CRT): US-Ireland student mobility programme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For Official Use Only</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TITLE OF PROPOSAL (up to 30 words)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>NAME OF NRT</td>
<td>NAME OF APPLICANT’S CRT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FULL NAME OF HOST</td>
<td>FULL NAME OF APPLICANT (PhD Student)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROPOSED DURATION (4 to 12 weeks)</td>
<td>APPLICANT HOME INSTITUTION</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL REQUESTED BUDGET (Euro)</td>
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<td>REQUESTED STARTING DATE</td>
<td>REQUESTED END DATE</td>
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Signatures below confirm acceptance and agreement with the SFI grants and awards Terms and Conditions, and that the institution ensures the applicant meets eligibility requirements, and that the project is in full agreement with all legal and regulatory matters governing research in Ireland, and no aspect of this project is already being funded from another source and all details provided are correct.
## SECTION 1: CONTACT DETAILS

### Applicant (PhD student)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Applicant Name</th>
<th>Name of CRT</th>
<th>Host Institution</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Telephone</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Current stage in PhD</th>
</tr>
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### NRT Host

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Name of NRT</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Telephone</th>
<th>Email</th>
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SECTION 2. Timeline
Please indicate the expected length and timeline of the mobility programme:
Duration of programme should be 4 to 12 weeks, and take place within 2023:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duration and timeline</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proposed duration (4 to 12 weeks)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Start date</td>
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<tr>
<td>End date</td>
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</tbody>
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SECTION 3. Budget
The budget available, on a competitive basis, is up to €6,000 direct costs for a period of 4 to 12 weeks. Please complete the budget template and include a budget justification.

Proposed budget (in euro):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cost items</th>
<th>€</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Travel (including domestic travel and visa fees, if relevant)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Subsistence (inclusive of accommodation)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

BUDGET JUSTIFICATION (max. ½ page)

SECTION 4. ADDITIONAL PROPOSAL CONTENT
The following documents must also be included as attachments:

- Letter of Invitation from host NRT [maximum 1 page].
- Letter of Confirmation from Irish host institution [maximum 1 page].
- Motivation letter from CRT-based PhD student [maximum 2 pages].