



Health Research Board

HRB Research Training Fellowships for Healthcare Professionals (HPF) 2010

Guidance Notes

Key dates

Call open to applicants:	1 October 2009
Deadline for submission of applications:	1 December 2009 (12.00 noon)
Deadline for submission of supporting documentation:	8 December 2009 (3.00pm)



Health Research Board

HRB Research Training Fellowships for Healthcare Professionals (HPF) 2010

Guidance Notes

Table of contents

1. Introduction
2. Background to the scheme
3. Objectives
4. Scope
5. Eligibility Criteria for Applicants
6. Funding
7. Application process
8. Guidance on the application form
9. Assessment process and assessment criteria
10. Timetable
11. Submission
12. HRB Contact

Appendixes

Appendix I - Definitions and details of the research areas within the scope of this scheme

Appendix II - Professional Registration in Ireland – Contact details



HRB Research Training Fellowships for Healthcare Professionals 2010

GUIDANCE NOTES

1. Introduction

The HRB has the lead role in bridging the gap between new health research discoveries and the effective translation and implementation of these discoveries into policy and practice in order to achieve specific health service goals. We work with others to build capacity for health research; create opportunities for researchers; drive the translation of research discoveries into delivering improved healthcare; and provide solid evidence to support health research policy. This, in turn, will achieve better outcomes for patients and realise efficiencies in the health service.

The HRB is now focusing resources in areas which offer the most potential for translation into impacts and benefits for health. As a result, HRB funding will be awarded to projects, programmes and fellowships which address patient-oriented research, health services research and population health sciences research.

In line with the new strategic goals identified within the new HRB strategy, the HRB is now announcing a second call for the Research Training Fellowships for Healthcare Professionals 2010. The scheme was first launched in 2008/2009 and 15 fellows are currently undertaking research in their respective fields.

2. Background to the scheme

The public health service is one of the largest employers in Ireland, employing almost 110,000 staff. As part of its capacity development programme, the HRB plays a key role in building and supporting a skilled health care workforce capable of advancing high quality research with the aim of improving health within a knowledge-based, patient-centred health service.

It is vital that clinical practice is based on sound knowledge and a robust evidence base and that healthcare professionals are educated and trained to deliver patient-centred care as members of inter-disciplinary teams. Health and social care professionals with appropriate research training are required not only to conduct research relevant to the needs of the health services, but to train the future workforce and to act as mentors and role models for future researchers.

Through investment in outstanding individuals and in high quality projects with an emphasis on clinical research and service, it is anticipated that this scheme will result in improved clinical knowledge, improved critical thinking and research skills, foster professional development and lead to the development of innovations in health and social care.

3. Objectives

The objective of the research training fellowships is to provide three years full-time funding to health and social care professionals who wish to undertake training in research in a recognised research institution on the island of Ireland, leading to a PhD (or in exceptional cases and where suitably justified a Masters degree by research).

The fellowship scheme is aimed at individuals of outstanding potential working within the HSE or within a voluntary/not-for-profit organisation in Ireland involved in health and social care provision. While it is primarily targeted at those engaged in clinical practice, applicants from higher education institutes may apply where they can demonstrate appropriate practice-based experience and where the focus of their application is relevant to the objectives of this scheme. Health care professionals working in private practice but providing services to clients under the GMS scheme will also be considered.

4. Scope

Applications are invited from any of the health and social care professionals working in the following three health research areas:

- 1. Patient-oriented Research**
- 2. Health Services Research**
- 3. Population Health Sciences Research**

Applications that focus solely or predominantly on basic biomedical research are not eligible.

More details on the research areas and definitions are in Appendix I.

Furthermore, for the objective of this scheme, research proposals should have as their objective the uncovering and/or identifying of findings which can impact on practice. Practice includes assessment of patients/clients, decision making and planning, practitioner-led interventions and evaluation of this process. Data should generally be generated in close proximity to patients/clients or their families and findings should have the realistic potential to be applied in practice and have relevance to health and social gain. They should not merely have a possible application to practice but should be directly applicable (notwithstanding that immediate utilisation of findings may not be possible for structural, educational, resource or other reasons).

Note: HRB Fellowships are personal research training fellowships and are not intended as a means to fund a project.

5. Eligibility for applicants

For the purposes of this scheme, health and social care professionals are defined as medical practitioners, dentists, nurses, midwives, pharmacists and those professional groups recognised under the *Health and Social Care Professionals Act (2005)*:

- Physiotherapists
- Occupational Therapists
- Speech and Language Therapists
- Dieticians
- Orthoptists
- Podiatrists/Chiropodists
- Psychologists practicing in the health and social care services
- Radiographers
- Medical Scientists
- Clinical Biochemists
- Social Care Workers
- Social Workers

The following eligibility criteria for the applicants apply:

- Applicants must hold a primary or masters degree in a relevant discipline
- Applicants must be an EU citizen or, if from outside the EU, have permanent Irish resident status or a valid work permit
- Applicants must provide proof of professional registration from the appropriate authorised body in Ireland (or equivalent in Northern Ireland) (see Appendix II for useful websites and contacts on professional registration in Ireland and validation of foreign qualifications)
- Applicants should be employed in practice, or a post related to practice, in the health services or an academic Department on the island of Ireland, within a year prior to the closing date for application to the fellowship
- Applicants must propose to register or have already registered for their higher degree in a recognised research institution, preferably on the island of Ireland. In certain circumstances where the supervisory expertise necessary for the project is only available outside of Ireland, registration in an institution outside of Ireland will be considered but a host research institution in Ireland must be nominated as part of the application for administration of the award

- Applicants must demonstrate support/approval from the Head of Department in the institution where research study will be carried out
- Applicants must provide evidence of appropriate mentoring and supervision including an academic supervisor from the relevant health professional background and a practice-based supervisor. If not enough expertise in your discipline is available in the applicant's Department, please consider interdisciplinary approaches for supervision and mentoring.

Additional eligibility for applicants:

- *Medical Practitioners* must be on a Medical Council approved training programme or have a minimum of two years' post-registration practice experience.
- *Dentists* must have completed the Higher Specialist Training to be eligible to apply to this scheme. Only applications seeking funding for a PhD will be accepted from these two professional groups.
- *All other groups* must have a minimum of two years' relevant post-registration practice experience and should be employed in practice, or a post related to practice on the island of Ireland within a year prior to the closing date for application to the Fellowship.

Note: Where an applicant fails to meet eligibility criteria or the scientific and strategic merit of the application is outside the scope of the scheme, the application will be deemed ineligible and will not be accepted for review.

6. Funding

The fellowship will provide funding for a minimum of two and a maximum of three years. The fellowship will cover:

- Salary (gross) maximum amount is €53,692, including employer's pension contribution. The Irish University Association salary scale only should be used as reference to choose the point in the scale.
- Running costs up to a maximum of €7,000 per annum. An additional €2,000 can be requested for specific items that are properly argued and justified.
- Dissemination costs up to a maximum of €2,700 over the lifetime of the award.
- Post-graduate fees contribution at 2008/2009 rates (at EU rates only).
- Training and development allowance up to a maximum of €1,800 over the lifetime of the award.
- Research Experience Abroad allowances up to a maximum of €6,500.

Applications should be made by the prospective fellow with the support of the academic and clinical sponsors and the Head of Department of the host institution. Payment of the fellowship award will be made through the host institution and the contract of employment will be issued by the host institution in Ireland.

7. Application Process

Awards will be made based on open competition underpinned by international peer-review. Applications must be submitted through the eGrants System by **Tuesday, 1 December 2009 at 12.00 noon**. After this deadline applicants will not be able to submit their applications.

Applications received by the deadline will go through an administrative eligibility check. Applicants will be informed of the outcome of the eligibility phase once concluded.

8. Guidelines on the application form

You can access the eGrants application form at:

<http://egrantsproduction.imaxan.ie/>

The application form consists of two parts: Part A and Part B.

Part A - Information is entered by the applicant directly on the HRB online eGrants system to include contact details for the Applicant, Academic Sponsor and Clinical Sponsor; Host Institution; Lay Summary; Keywords; Commencement date; Project Budget and justification of costs; Current Funding Applications; Research Ethics Approval and Use of Animals.

Project Budget and justifications

Salary Gross: Please enter the Gross Annual Salary for Year 1, 2 and 3. The applicant may request up to **€53,692**. The salary scale to be used is the Irish University Association scale only and not any other institutional scale (<http://www.iaa.ie/iaa-activities/documents/2008-9ResearchSalaryScalesDefinitions.xls>). Annual salary point increases are not allowed.

The salary requested must be justified based on the career stage, research experience and current salary of the applicant. Please note that the gross salary also includes a 5% employee pension contribution.

Employer's PRSI: Employer's PRSI contribution is calculated at 10.75% of gross salary.

Employer Pension Contribution: As of 1 September 2009, the HRB will cease paying a pension contribution for all awards except where Circular letter 6/2007 applies. Circular Letter 6/2007 states that the pensions contribution of all Public Health Service employees who, on or after 1 June 2007, are granted secondments or periods of special leave with pay to enable them take up appointments with other organisations, including other Public Health Sector organisations, will be increased to 25% of gross pensionable pay. The rate of 25% of gross pensionable pay referred to in this context is the pension contributions to be paid by the body to which the employee is seconded – it does not include any pension contributions which employees make themselves. Where no such arrangements are in place, the HRB will not be liable for costs.

Student fees: Fees for students registered for a higher degree at 2008/2009 EU rate only.

Running costs: All costs required to carry out the research including materials and consumables, animals, survey costs, travel for participants, transcription costs etc. up to a maximum of €7,000 per annum. An additional €2,000 may be requested for specific items that are fully justified. Stand alone computers will not be funded.

Training and Development Allowance (Training Costs): Training to learn a specific skill/technique or to acquire complementary skills up to a maximum of €1,800 over the lifetime of the award.

Dissemination costs: Costs associated with publication of results, seminar/conference attendance and any other means of communicating/reporting research outcomes up to a maximum of €2,700 over the lifetime of the award.

Research Experience Abroad (Travel Grant): A contribution of up to €6,500 over the lifetime of the fellowship to enable the fellow to gain research experience abroad.

Budget justifications – Provide a detailed justification for the costs requested.

Part B – An application form in Word format in three sections:

Applicant

Research proposal

Sponsorship, Training and Development

THE APPLICANT

Please provide information related to your nationality/residency; current appointment; employment history; academic/professional qualifications; details if currently registered for a higher degree; membership of a professional body and Professional Registration Number; research experience; publications; current funding applications and career plan.

Note: Proof of Eligibility to Practice.

It is essential that the registration number entered must be issued by the relevant registration body on the Island of Ireland. If registered abroad you are required to submit (in hardcopy) proof of your eligibility to practice in Ireland i.e. a Letter of Validation issued by the Department of Health and Children or a letter confirming your eligibility to practice from the relevant professional body in Ireland. This must be submitted as part of the supporting documentation for this application by Tuesday, 8 December 2009 at 3pm. Please see Appendix II at the end of these Guidance Notes for

contact details of the Department of Health and Children and professional organisations/associations.

RESEARCH PROPOSAL

In the research proposal section the applicant will have to complete the following sub-sections:

Project title (maximum 200 characters)

Project Abstract

The project abstract should be a clear synopsis of your proposal including the specific aims and objectives, design and methodology of the research. (300 words maximum)

Please note that the lay summary must be completed in Part A (eGrants) of the application form.

Research Area

As part of the eligibility criteria for this scheme your proposal must address a question or a topic that is pertinent to ***one*** of three research areas

1. Patient Oriented Research
2. Population Health Sciences Research
3. Health Service Research

(as defined in Appendix I of these Guidance Notes) and to clearly explain how the proposal fits within the scope of the scheme. (750 words maximum)

Project Description (3,600 words maximum but may include tables and images)

- Background and current knowledge in the area of the proposed research
- Clear aims, objectives and hypothesis
- Methodological approach (including the methodologies to be used, methods of data collection and analysis, justification of steps to ensure rigour)
- Description of the project and plan of research to be undertaken
- How access to and use of datasets will be managed (if relevant)
- Ethical Considerations
- Involvement of stakeholders and service users

Methodological approaches -

Describe in detail the design of your study and the methodology you propose to use. This section should include information on the type of study proposed i.e., whether quantitative or qualitative, the sample size and a justification for the sample size proposed, any statistical advice or support, the sampling methods and the exclusion/inclusion criteria. If datasets are involved in this proposal, how would access to and use of data be managed?

Are difficulties in your approach anticipated and, if so, what alternative methods could be considered?

Note: The Health Research Board Centre for Support and Training in Analysis and Research (CSTAR) is available for assistance and advice on the methodologies. CSTAR can be found at the following link www.cstar.ie

Ethical considerations

There may be ethical issues involved in conducting your research. In this section you are given an opportunity to discuss your approach to any issues that might arise and describe how you plan to handle these issues. This will demonstrate to the reviewers that you are aware of the issues involved and have given them due consideration.

Involvement of stakeholders and service users

Please address how will patients, carers, service users, the public, health related charities/groups, public bodies etc be involved in the proposed research

Gantt chart

You must provide a Gantt chart outlining project management information including the estimated timelines for the various elements of the research project, roles and responsibilities of the Principal

Investigator team etc. Gantt chart must be uploaded in the section B of the Application Form on eGrants.

Key references to the research proposal (30 references maximum)

List the references that are key to your proposal in a consistent format, for example:

1. Gallagher PA, Shoemaker JA, Wei X, Brockhoff-Schwegel CA, Creed JT.
Extraction and detection of arsenicals in seaweed via accelerated solvent extraction with ion chromatographic separation and ICP-MS detection.
Fresenius J Anal Chem. 2001 Jan 1;369(1):71-80.
PMID: 11210234

Dissemination Plan

Provide a clear dissemination plan to indicate how information will be disseminated during and after your research. (300 words maximum)

Cochrane Systematic Reviews

The Cochrane Collaboration is a not-for-profit and independent organisation dedicated to making up-to-date, accurate information about the effects of healthcare interventions readily available worldwide. The Cochrane Library is designed to provide information and evidence to support decisions taken in health care and to inform those receiving care. It produces and disseminates systematic reviews of healthcare interventions in over fifty topic areas and makes them available as The Cochrane Library. In 2002, Ireland became the first country to provide free national access to the Cochrane Library, an initiative co-funded by the Health Research Board (HRB) and the Research and Development Office (RDO) in Northern Ireland.

Applicants are advised to search the Cochrane Library for systematic reviews on a topic(s) that might be relevant to their research proposal. You are asked to complete this section in order to assure those reviewing your application that the research question addressed in this proposal has not already been carried out and answered and if it has, how does the proposed research proposal relates to the evidence described and the recommendations put forward in the Cochrane systematic review(s). You can access the Cochrane Library (www.thecochranelibrary.com)

If your research area has been the subject of a Cochrane systematic review you are asked to enter the address for each relevant review by copy/pasting the link that appears in the browser of the Cochrane Library e.g. <http://www.mrw.interscience.wiley.com/cochrane/clsystrev/articles/CD003804/frame.html> and to describe how your research proposal relates to the evidence and recommendations put forward in the Cochrane systematic review(s). (250 words maximum)

Sponsorship for Clinical Trial Applications: If this application is for a clinical study that falls within the scope of the EU Clinical Trials Directive the applicant must provide a letter, signed by the person who is going to act as sponsor for this clinical trial study, as part of the supporting documentation for this proposal.

Note: *The HRB cannot take on the role of sponsor for this type of application.*

Collaborations

Provide details of any collaboration(s) to be developed during the course of the fellowship.

Infrastructure/facilities

The infrastructure, facilities and support available must be adequate. Describe the infrastructure, facilities and supports available at the Host Institution/site(s) where the research will be conducted.

SPONSORSHIP, TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

As an applicant you should identify the most appropriate expertise for sponsorship considering your field, topic and potential methodology. Please note that this sponsor may come from outside your current discipline, local academic department, or indeed Ireland. The HRB allows interdisciplinary or interdepartmental approaches to sponsorship: either the Academic Sponsor or the Clinical Sponsor must be qualified in the same professional discipline as the applicant. Sponsorship from

outside Ireland should be properly justified and the supervising and mentoring arrangements clearly described.

Academic Sponsor Profile: Provide details regarding the current research programme; publications; sponsorship experience; website of the Department; role of Clinical Sponsor in the training and mentoring of the applicant; recommendation.

Full contact details of your Academic Sponsor are entered on Part A on the eGrant system.

Clinical Sponsor Profile

Provide details regarding the current research programme; publications; sponsorship experience; website of the Department; role of Clinical Sponsor in the training and mentoring of the applicant; recommendation.

Full contact details of your Clinical Sponsor are entered on Part A on the eGrant system

Other Support/Mentoring

Provide information on any other support or mentoring available (in addition to your Sponsors), where relevant. The mentor will provide you with additional support throughout your fellowship in both your research endeavours and overall career development. Your chosen mentor may or may not be based in your host institution. The mentor should, however, have a clear understanding of your research area and your particular strengths and weaknesses. No additional funding is provided for mentorship.

Training and Development Plan

Please give details of any training and development you wish to undertake to support your professional and personal development as a researcher. The training may include any specialist skill that may be required to undertake the proposed research proposal; you may also include other transferable skills (management skills; communication skills, etc); conference/workshop attendance; teaching/supervision experience; and publications. You must agree this plan with your sponsors and your mentor, where relevant (300 words maximum).

Costs for training must be included in the project budget section entered via the HRB online eGrants system.

Nomination of International Peer Reviewers

Two international experts may be nominated to peer-review your application. These individual may or may not be contacted by the HRB. Irish experts should not be nominated as peer reviewers in order to avoid potential conflict of interest issues. Please include a current email address for contact purposes.

Signature Pages, Supporting Documentation and Submission:

Signature pages and all relevant supporting documentation must be signed, dated and sent in hardcopy to **Margaret Devitt, Health Research Board, 73 Lower Baggot Street, Dublin 2** no later than **Tuesday, 8 December at 3.00 pm**. All signatures must be originals. Electronic or faxed signatures are not acceptable.

Please note that the HRB will not follow up any supporting documentation related to the application, such as signature pages, etc. It is the responsibility of the applicant to send the documentation within the stated deadline. If the documentation is not received by the HRB on time or if not completed or not properly signed or addressed to the wrong funding agency, the application will be deemed ineligible.

9. Assessment process and assessment criteria

The HRB peer review process involves two steps:

1. Written assessment, initial grading of proposals by external peer reviewers and short listing of higher ranking proposals.
2. Interview and final ranking of proposals by a Research Committee. Recommendations are forwarded to the Board of the HRB and the Board makes the final funding decisions.

To ensure the integrity of the assessment process, conflict of interest and confidentiality are applied rigorously in each stage of the process.

Step 1

International peer reviewers play a vital role for the HRB in setting standards and in benchmarking our scientific community to enable them to operate in a global context.

For each eligible application the HRB aims to receive written feedback from at least three international peer reviewers. Possible peer reviewers are contacted with details of the funding scheme, the title of the project, the name of the applicant (and academic sponsor, where relevant), conflict of interest rules, guidance on the peer review process and the deadlines for receipt of completed feedback reports.

Peer reviewer reports are returned to the HRB. The collective scores for each proposal are collated and averaged by the HRB. Proposals are ranked by their average scores and those that are not fundable or which score below a specific cut-off do not go forward for interview by a Research Committee. The cut-off point for proposals is ultimately determined by the level of available research funds for each particular scheme. Short-listed applicants are invited to attend an interview with the Research Committee. Approximately a month's notice is given to the short-listed applicants.

Step 2 - Research Committees

The next stage of assessment involves convening a multi-disciplinary Research Committee comprising of 6-8 members and an independent Chair. Committee members are selected based on the range of applications received and the expertise needed (e.g. methodologies, statistics, clinical trials).

Short-listed candidates that have been invited to attend a 30 minute interview with the Research Committee may be asked to give a short presentation of their research proposal followed by questioning by the Committee members. Committee members are assigned as lead and secondary interviewers to specific proposals.

At the end of each committee meeting, a final score is collectively agreed for each proposal and all proposals are ranked according to score. HRB staff members are present at this meeting to clarify any procedural aspects for the Chair or Committee members and to take notes for the feedback process.

The recommendations of the Research Committee are presented for approval at the next scheduled HRB Board meeting. When the Board of the HRB has approved the process and recommendations HRB staff can contact the applicants to notify them of the outcome.

It is estimated that from the deadline of the call to the HRB decision after the assessment will take approximately five to six months in total.

Feedback to Applicants

Feedback is provided to all applicants. The reviews comments do not include reference to scores or to the identity of peer reviewers.

Assessment Criteria

The three over-arching assessment criteria which will be used by external referees and committee members are:

1. **Applicant - standing and potential of the individual** (35 marks)
 - Qualifications of the applicant, including training, experience and independence (relative to career stage and discipline of the applicant).
 - Evidence of previous outputs.
 - The aptitude of the applicant.
 - Experience of the applicant in the proposed area of research and with the proposed methodology or, if not, the training plan clearly outlines how the applicant will achieve the objectives proposed.
 - Potential to successfully and appropriately disseminate research findings.
 - The training impact and the benefit of the fellowship to the applicant.

- Evidence of commitment to a career in research.

2. **Scientific quality of the research proposal** (35 marks)

- Clarity of the research question.
- Completeness of the literature review and relevance to study design/research plan.
- Clarity of rationale for the research approach and methodology.
- Appropriateness of the research design.
- Appropriateness of the research methods.
- Feasibility of the research approach (including recruitment of subjects, project timeline, preliminary data where appropriate, etc.).
- The suitability of the research as a PhD project.
- Anticipation of difficulties that may be encountered in the research and plans for management.
- The potential of advancing and increasing the knowledge relevant to the chosen research field.

3. **Sponsorship arrangements and research environment** (30 marks)

- The research quality of the academic and clinical sponsors.
- Appropriateness of the research experience of the sponsors to this research proposal.
- Availability and accessibility of the applicant to facilities and infrastructure required to conduct the research in the Host Institution.
- Suitability of the environment to conduct the proposed research.
- Suitability of the environment for the training of the applicant.

10. Proposed Timetable



12. Submission

- The deadline for submission of applications is **Tuesday, 1 of December 2009 at 12.00 noon**. Applications submitted after this deadline will not be accepted.
- The deadline for submission of the signature pages and supporting documentation is **Tuesday, 8 December 2009 by 3.00 pm**.

Signature pages must be signed, dated and sent in hardcopy to **Margaret Devitt, Health Research Board, 73 Lower Baggot Street, Dublin 2**.

The completed application should contain the following:

1. Application form consisting of Part A and B and attachments must be submitted through the electronic system.
2. Signature pages signed by the applicant, Academic and Clinical sponsors, Head of the Department, Research Officer from the Host Institution and sent in hard copy to the HRB.
3. A copy of the letter of validation sent in hard copy to the HRB, where applicable.
4. A letter of confirmation signed by the Clinical Trials Sponsor, where applicable.

Note for the applicants:

If hard copy signature page (electronic signatures are not accepted and fax are not accepted) and all supporting documentations are received after the above deadline or not properly signed or completed or addressed to the wrong funding agency, the application will be deemed ineligible.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to send the full documentation within the stated deadline as the HRB will not follow up on any missing documentation.

13. HRB Contact

If you have any queries regarding this fellowship scheme please contact:

Margaret Devitt

Project Officer

Research Management Unit

Health Research Board

73 Lower Baggot Street

Dublin 2

e mdevitt@hrb.ie

t 353 1 2345185

The HRB reserves the right to reject any application that does not meet the terms of this call. The decision of the Board in respect of any grant application is final and cannot be appealed or reviewed.

Appendix I

Definitions and details on the research areas within the scope of this scheme

The lists below each heading are not exhaustive but should serve as a useful guide to applicants.

Patient Oriented Research

Applications focussing on this area should have the patient at the centre of the research goals and generate clinically relevant results. Eligible applications include clinical research projects and those in the applied biomedical space. Applications which are solely or predominantly considered basic biomedical research will not be accepted. By basic biomedical research we mean '*research conducted to increase the knowledge base and understanding of the physical, chemical and functional mechanisms of life processes and disease but not directed to solving any particular biomedical problem in humans or animals*'.

In deciding which applications are eligible for submission to this research area, the following definition will be applied by HRB staff and the committee Chair:

Research conducted with human subjects, or on material of human origin such as blood products or tissues, specimens and cognitive phenomena. Research studies involving in vivo or other appropriate pre-clinical models are eligible, as are computational or bio-informatics studies with an emphasis on yielding clinically relevant results.

Applications will typically focus on one or more of the following;

- Mechanisms of human disease
- Therapeutic interventions
- Clinical trials
- Use of new technologies for the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of disease
- Emotional, social, behavioural and developmental mechanisms of health and disease

Population Health Sciences Research

Research with the goal of improving the health of the population, or of defined sub-populations, through a better understanding of the ways in which social, cultural, environmental, occupational and economic factors determine health status or through the identification of effective interventions for improving health status and reducing health inequalities.

Proposals submitted under this heading include research focusing on the complex interactions which determine health and their application to improve the health of individuals, communities and global populations. This area includes research into the broad determinants of health and the pathways by which factors affect health in specific population groups. It also includes research on prevention strategies and how best to disseminate effective health messages to different communities. Furthermore, it includes research focusing on understanding basic life processes such as birth, development in infancy, childhood and adolescence, young and middle adulthood and older ages and the influences of psychological, social, economic and cultural factors on these processes.

Applications focusing on issues such as the following are welcome:

- Macro-level socio-economic determinants of health (the influence of social and economic policies on health)
- Individual-level socio-economic determinants of health (the relationships between access to the resources of society such as housing, income, employment, food security and health)
- Individual behavioural/lifestyle factors such as smoking, nutrition, alcohol and substance abuse, physical activity and sexual behaviour and their impact on health
- Occupational and environmental determinants
- Birth, child and adult development and ageing
- Health of specific population groups (e.g. children and youth, people with disabilities, older adults, migrant populations)

- Gender issues and health
- Health protection, promotion, health education and intervention programmes
- Genetic epidemiology
- Prevention and control of diseases
- Monitoring and surveillance of population health

Health Services Research

Research with the goal of improving the efficiency and effectiveness of health professionals and the health care system through changes to practice and policy. Health services research is a multidisciplinary field of scientific investigation that studies how social factors, financing systems, organisational structures and processes, health technologies, and personal behaviours affect access to health care, the quality and cost of healthcare and ultimately health and well-being.

Proposals submitted under this heading include research focusing on the planning, management, organisation, financing, purchasing and provision of health and social care services. Research proposals should address aspects of the quality of services, access and equity in provision, relevance and appropriateness to the needs of individuals and communities, effectiveness and efficiency, workforce capacity and capability issues and how services are experienced. Applications focusing on the three main dimensions of quality – patient safety, patient experience and effectiveness of care – are particularly welcome.

Applications focusing on issues such as the following are welcome:

- Access to services
- Strategic management of waiting times
- Health service planning
- Health service delivery and organization
- Integration of care
- Evaluation of health services interventions
- Delivery and organization of hospital and primary health care
- Community-based care (long-term care, home care)
- Chronic disease prevention and management
- Citizen engagement
- Health professional influences on health care
- Public and private health care sectors
- HR and financing of health services
- Health policy and systems management
- Health ethics and law
- Health informatics
- Pharmacoepidemiology
- Quality of life and quality of care
- Health systems and policy

Appendix II

Professional Registration in Ireland - contacts details

The lists below are not exhaustive but should serve as a useful guide to applicants

The Medical Council of Ireland (www.irishmedicalcouncil.ie)

The Dental Council of Ireland (www.dentalcouncil.ie)

An Bord Altranais (www.nursingboard.ie)

The Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (www.pharmaceuticalsociety.ie)

The Irish Society of Chartered Physiotherapists (www.iscp.ie)

The Irish Nutrition and Dietetics Institute (www.indi.ie)

The Psychological Society of Ireland (www.psihq.ie)

The Irish Institute of Radiography and Radiation Therapy (www.iirrt.ie)

The Academy of Medical Laboratory Science (www.amlis.ie)

National Social Work Qualifications Board (www.nswqb.ie)

The Association of Occupational Therapists of Ireland (www.aoti.ie)

Department of Health and Children (www.dohc.ie)

Health Services Executive (www.hse.ie)

For information on the recognition and validation of professional qualifications received outside of Ireland and the relevant competent authorities:

Department of Health and Children Website

<http://www.dohc.ie/public/foreignqualifications/foreign-validation.html>

Validation Unit

Department of Health and Children

Hawkins House, Dublin 2

validation_unit@health.gov.ie

National Validation Project

Professional Education

Health and Social Care Professionals

Health Services Executive, Merlin Park, Galway

091 775094