



## Investigator Led Projects 2019

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### General

##### **How do I apply for the Investigator Led Projects?**

All applications must be made using the HRB online Grant E-Management System GEMS. Applicants must **select one** of the following three remits, based on which is most appropriate to application:

1. Patient-Oriented Research
2. Population Health Research
3. Health Services Research

Applicants are strongly advised to carefully read the guidance and details of the research areas covered under each remit (please refer to **Appendix II page 37** of the Guidance Notes). It is the responsibility of the Lead Applicant to select the most appropriate remit for the application. If in doubt, they should contact the relevant project officer.

Once the Lead Applicant (LA) selects the remit on GEMS, s/he will be asked to go through a check list of mandatory Yes/No questions. In order to start the application the LA must satisfy the conditions of this check list.

##### **Submission process using GEMS**

Prior to final submission to the HRB, all applications must first be reviewed and approved within GEMS by the signatory approver at the research office (or equivalent) at the Host Institution (see Appendix IV of Guidance Notes). It is critical therefore that Lead Applicants leave sufficient time in the process for the Research Office (or equivalent) in their nominated Host Institution to review, seek clarifications and approve applications prior to the final submission date. This may involve being aware of and complying with any internal Host Institution deadlines for review and approval, distinct from the HRB deadline.

##### **What is the closing date for submission of applications?**

All applications must be submitted to the HRB by using HRB GEMS by **Thursday, 11 October 2018 at 13.00**.

## **Applicant/Eligibility**

### **Can a Lead Applicant submit more than one application?**

No, only one application per Lead Applicant will be considered in this round.

### **I have been granted a Investigator-Led Project 2017 award, am I eligible to apply?**

Yes, current or previous holders of Health Research Awards/Investigator-Led Projects are eligible to apply to this round.

### **Does a Lead Applicant need to have last author publications?**

Not necessarily, however, Lead Applicants must have at least three or more peer-reviewed original research publications.

### **Does a Lead Applicant have to have previous peer reviewed funding?**

Yes, the Lead Applicant must demonstrate research independence through securing at least **one** peer-reviewed research grant for a research project/s as the lead applicant or co-applicant; Funding received for travel to seminars/conferences and/or small personal bursaries will not be considered in this regard.

### **Can a Lead Applicant in a tenured academic post request a salary?**

No, the salary and related costs of academic staff within research institutions (including buy out from teaching time etc.) will not be funded. If Lead Applicants who are in an academic post request salary the application will be deemed ineligible.

### **Can a contract researcher be a Lead Applicant and apply for their own salary?**

Yes, a contract researcher acting as Lead Applicant can apply for their salary. A Host Institution Letter of Support is required for all contract researchers acting as Lead Applicants.

### **If an applicant has a joint contract with the HSE and an academic institution can they still apply?**

Yes, applicants with a joint contract with the HSE and an academic institution are eligible to apply.

### **Can I be Lead Applicant on one application and Co-Applicant on another?**

Yes, it is worth bearing in mind however that should both applications reach review Panel stage the amount of time you are spending on both will be scrutinised so this should be realistic.

## **Co-Applicants and Collaborators**

### **Can a Co-Applicant receive payment for their role in the project?**

Co-Applicants who are contract researchers may receive a salary. A Host Institution Letter of Support is required for co-applicants who are contract researchers and are applying for their own salary. Please note the HRB does not fund the salary and related costs of academic staff within research institutions (including buy out from teaching time etc.)

A Co-Applicant may also receive funding for items such as running costs and personnel.

**Can a post doctorate researcher be a Co-Applicant?**

Yes, a post doctorate researcher may be a Co-Applicant.

**Does a Co-Applicant's contract have to cover the duration of the award?**

There are no requirements for the duration of a Co-Applicant's contract. However, where a Co-Applicant is applying for salary their contract must cover the duration of the award or the Host Institution must be willing to issue/extend a contract should the award be successful; this should be contained in the Co-Applicants letter of support.

**How many Co-Applicants can I have?**

The maximum number of co-applicants allowed is 5.

**Do Co-Applicants need to have support letters?**

Co-Applicant letters of support are only required where Co-Applicants are contract researchers applying for their own salary.

**Can a Co-applicant/Collaborator be from outside Ireland?**

Yes, Co-applicants and collaborators from outside the Republic of Ireland are welcome where their participation clearly adds value to the project. This is not intended to displace researchers based in Ireland, but to recognise that the Lead Applicant should assemble the best team to tackle the research question.

**Will the HRB pay for visits from or to Co-applicants/Collaborators?**

Yes, visits to or from Co-Applicants/Collaborators where justified may be included under running costs.

**Is a Collaborator agreement form needed?**

A Collaborator agreement form must be signed by each Collaborator and uploaded with your application.

**Can a Collaborator be from private enterprise?**

Yes, a collaborator may be from private enterprise. Applications from a private enterprise are encouraged where they add value to the project for example in terms of access to expertise, technologies or reagents. The HRB does not have the capacity to broker these arrangements. The terms of the collaboration should be determined early and relevant agreements must be in place by the onset of the project. Consideration should be given to issues such as relative responsibilities, governance arrangements, intellectual property rights, reporting and access to data and samples.

### **Can a Collaborator receive payment for their role in the project?**

Yes, collaborators are eligible to receive funding from the award when properly detailed and justified in the application.

### **Scope**

#### **I'm not sure if my application fits with the scope of the call.**

Guidance and details of the research areas can be found in Appendix II. If after reading this you are still unsure please contact the HRB for further guidance.

Applicants must **select one** of the following three remits, based on which is most appropriate to review the application:

1. Patient-Oriented Research
2. Population Health Research
3. Health Services Research

It is the responsibility of the Lead Applicant to select the most appropriate remit to classify the application. If in doubt, they should contact the relevant project officer (see contacts for further information). The HRB reserves the right to reassign an application between the three areas above if that chosen by the Lead Applicant is deemed inappropriate. Where HRB staff members make a decision to reassign an application as part of the detailed eligibility check, the Lead Applicant will be informed.

### **Funding**

#### **How much can I apply for?**

ILP awards provide funding up to a maximum award value of **€370,000** (inclusive of overheads) for projects of 24-48 months duration.

#### **How do I determine what gross salary to pay?**

Applicants should use the **latest** IUA website scales for the most up-to-date recommended salary scales for academic researchers (<http://www.iua.ie/research-innovation/researcher-salary-scales/>). Note: these scales were last revised in January 2018. Pay scales used and the level and point on the scale must be stated and justified. For appointment of Research Fellows or Senior Research Fellows evidence of position must be provided at point of award. Applicants can allow for annual salary scale point increases. For employees who are not academic researchers the relevant pay scales should be used for their profession.

#### **Does the HRB pay pension contributions?**

Pension provision up to a maximum of 20% of gross salary will be paid to the host institution to enable compliance with the Employment Control Framework (an additional 5% employee contribution is part of the salary). The level of employer contribution should be in accordance with the model adopted by the host institution.

If applicable, state the amount of employer contribution based on the pro rata salary and note the % of pro rata salary used to calculate this for reference.

Exceptions apply 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.

**Are overheads included within the €370,000 threshold?**

Yes, overheads are included within these limits.

**Are pension costs included within the €370,000 threshold?**

Yes, pension costs are included within these limits.

**How is the overhead contribution calculated?**

The overhead payment is 30% for laboratory or clinically based research and 25% for desk based research of Total Direct Modified Costs excluding student fees, equipment and capital building costs.

**What costs are included in the overhead contribution?**

The following costs are included in the overhead contribution: recruitment costs, bench fees, office space, software, contribution to gases, bacteriological media preparation fees, waste fees, bioinformatics access. A copy of the HRB overheads policy can be found at the following link:

[Health Research Board: Use of Research Overheads](#)

**I would like to hire a salaried researcher to carry out this project and they would like to register for a PhD will the HRB pay their fees?**

Only personnel in receipt of a stipend as set by the Host Institution are eligible to receive a student fee contribution.

**How does the HRB contribute to fees?**

HRB will pay a contribution to fees based on the fee level for the first year of entry, and each year payable. No increments are allowed for fees.

**Can I hire a consultant to carry out part of the project?**

Yes, this cost should be included under running costs.

### **Can Co-Applicants who are based in another institute receive part of the budget/overheads**

The HRB will pay the award directly to the Host Institution. The Host Institution may provide running costs/overheads to a Co-Applicant's institute and the arrangements for this should be agreed between the two institutes.

## **Personnel**

### **Can I hire a PhD student to carry out the project?**

Yes, however please note applicants must demonstrate clearly that the level, expertise and experience of proposed research personnel matches the ambition and scale of the project and that they possess the necessary breadth and skills in all methodological areas required to deliver the proposed programme of work. Where junior personnel registered for a higher degree are proposed to work on projects, Lead Applicants must carefully consider the complexity, scale, objectives and dependencies of the project and the skills, expertise and experience level required to carry it out, especially if involving one or more PhD student(s). In such instances, PIs are also strongly encouraged to think about the suitability of such projects for PhD students, in terms of delivering a clearly identifiable original research project or potential difficulties in clustering various pieces of work packages of PhD thesis. Reviewers will thoroughly assess the level of baseline experience matched with the supervisory and up-skilling arrangements proposed in scoring the proposal.

### **Should a PhD student be registered on a structured programme?**

The HRB strongly encourages four-year support for PhD candidates in line with other HRB funded doctoral training programmes such as SPHeRE, ICAT and Collaborative Doctoral Awards (CDA). If the project is within the Population Health Sciences or Health Services Research (PHHSR) areas and the LA is requesting a PhD candidate, the HRB strongly recommends that the LA provide some training through the **SPHeRE PhD programme**, which is Ireland's national research training programme for PHHSR. It is not necessary to have a candidate identified at this early stage, however, please note that identified/nominated candidates will need to apply officially to the SPHeRE programme (usually around March) and have to be interviewed by the SPHeRE Directors in collaborations with the LA (usually at the end of May). No additional fees (in addition to the student fees) accrue to the SPHeRE programme for the inclusion of a self-funded Scholar. Please also note that the purchase of some or all SPHeRE training modules (six in total) in year 1 may be another option to provide a more structured training to the PhD candidate through SPHeRE. Please contact the Programme Manager Elaine Healy ([elainehealy@rcsi.ie](mailto:elainehealy@rcsi.ie)) for details of the SPHeRE programme.

### **Can I hire more than one person to carry out this project?**

Yes, please note the type and number of research personnel hired should be the most appropriate to successfully carry out the proposed project.

## **Supporting Documents**

### **What documents should be uploaded with my application form?**

You must upload the following documents:

- Host Institution Letters of Support, if applicable (see next question)
- Collaborator agreement forms, if applicable (required for all collaborators)
- Infrastructure Agreement Form, if applicable
- Gantt chart
- Project Description Figures: A maximum of 5 figures which can be a combination of images, graphs, tables, scales, instruments or surveys (optional)
- Copy of Research Ethics Committee Approval (if available)
- Copy of Animal Licence (if available).

### **Who needs to provide Host Institution Letters of Support?**

Host Institution Letters of Support need to be provided for (1) all Lead Applicants in a contract position and (2) Co-Applicants in a contract position who are seeking their own salary

### **Do Co-Applicants have to sign-off the application?**

Each Co-Applicant is invited to view the application form online and approve content prior to submission. Online approval will supersede previous Co-Applicant Forms.

### **Do I need to upload a signature page with my application?**

No. Online approval will supersede previous Signature pages. As part of the new online application process you will be asked to select the **Dean of Research or equivalent person** authorised to endorse research grant applications for your Host Institution. Their approval is necessary to allow the application to be submitted to the HRB. **Please note that as part of the online system the Host Institutions will approve and submit each application on behalf of the applicant.**

When the application is submitted for approval online, emails are sent to the selected signatory informing them that their approval is requested. If a signatory rejects the application the Lead Applicant will be notified, along with any feedback the signatory has supplied. The application can then be amended and re-submitted; it will be returned to the signatory who made the rejection and continues through the approval process as before.

When signatories approve the application it will be sent automatically to the HRB to be considered for funding, a grant application number will be assigned to the application and a confirmation email will be sent to the Lead Applicant.

### **Do I need to provide an infrastructure agreement form (IAF)?**

Applications availing of the advice, research design, data management services and/or other forms of support from a Clinical Research Facility/Centre (CRF/CRC), other infrastructure (e.g. HRB-TMRN, Centre for Applied Medical Imaging, CAMI, Centre for Support and Training in Analysis and Research (CSTAR) or a **biobank** are required to provide additional information detailing the scope and nature of the engagement. Please note, if your **only** research infrastructure for this research

project is a biobank, and you have already provided details of this in Section 7.15 and completed an IAF, you do not need to fill this information in again in Section 9.2.

## **Submission**

### **How will I know that my application has been successfully submitted?**

Once the HI endorses your application it will be sent automatically to the HRB to be considered for funding, a grant application number will be assigned to the application and you will receive a confirmation email.

### **I have submitted my application but have just realised I have amendments to make; can I amend the application?**

No, once you have submitted your application, you cannot edit or unsubmit it.