

HRCI/HRB Joint Funding Scheme 2022

Instructions to Research Charities

Guidance Notes

| Deadline | Key Dates and Times* |
|---|----------------------|
| Charities Open Call | DD Month 2021 |
| Charities Internal Application Deadline | DD Month 2021 |
| HRB Application deadline | DD March 2022 |

*Dates to be confirmed

Introductory Notes

- Any charity submitting applications to the HRB must have been approved as a co-funding partner under the HRCI/HRB Co-funding Policy. The policy and a short application form are part of the set of documents forwarded to charities at the launch of the call. In the application form, the charity needs to nominate a main contact person within their organisation with whom the HRB will liaise throughout the process.
- Only one application per Principal Investigator (PI) to this scheme will be considered.
- HRCI-registered charity can **submit three applications for consideration** by the jointly convened Panel. However, in the event that a charity or charity partnership is not in a position to co-fund each of the highest scoring applications that it has received, as deemed by the charity Selection Panel, it may submit **one additional application than it can afford to fund** to the HRCI/HRB Joint Funding Committee (e.g. you have 3 applications with a high score but you only have funding for 2). In this scenario should all submitted applications be recommended for funding at joint Panel stage the lowest ranking application as judged by the committee will not be funded.
- Charities with an annual gross income of less than €150,000 can request up to 75% co-funding from HRB, while charities with an annual gross income of €150,000 or above can request 50% co-funding. Charities qualifying for 75% funding will have to provide further information within the application forms. They should note that the HRCI levy on the HRB portion of funding will be payable on 75% of project costs, should they select this option.
- Co-funding of a single project between up to four charities with common interests is allowed. In this scenario the combined charity contribution will be 50% of the project cost regardless of the charities' gross annual income. Charities will agree themselves the division of funding contributed by their organisations. All charities will be partners in the multi-party contract, if successful. A maximum of four charities will be allowed in each co-funding agreement; this may include arrangements where Irish charities co-fund with international charities which are not a member of HRCI. All Irish charity partners must be HRCI members.
- In co-funding applications involving more than one charity, the charities will nominate one contact point for the HRB. This contact point will coordinate any communication with other charities involved in a timely manner.
- A standard **APPLICATION FORM** has been developed for this round of the Joint Funding Scheme. Only applications submitted on this form will be considered by the Joint Panel.
- Applications must be submitted via the HRB's online Grant E-Management System (GEMS). Applications submitted via email to the HRB will be deemed ineligible.

For the purposes of this call each charity must adopt the HRCI/HRB “Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest Policy” and sign the confidentiality and conflict of interest declaration

Application Process 2022

1.1 Call Timelines

The overall call duration is aligned to the academic year. Charities still have flexibility to open and close calls on dates of their choosing while being cognisant of the call timeline. Most dates are meant to guide charities in setting their own timetable; however, those in *purple italics* (dates to be confirmed) have been agreed with HRB and may not be missed if you wish to participate in the call.

| Activity | Date | Duration |
|---|---------------------------------------|-----------------|
| HRB Call Opening | 1 Sept 2021 | |
| Charity workshop | Mid Sept 2021 | |
| Charity Call Open | Varies | ~6 weeks |
| Charity Peer Review | Mid Oct - early Jan 2022 | ~10 weeks |
| <i>Submission of Peer Review Conflict of Interest check to HRB</i> | <i>Mid Oct - Dec 2021</i> | |
| <i>Charities forward abstracts of all applications to HRB for finding panel members</i> | <i>Early Jan 2022</i> | |
| Right-to Reply Phase | Mid-late Jan 2022 | 10 working days |
| Charity Selection Panel | Late Jan- Early Feb 2022 | ~2 weeks |
| HRB GEMS system open for submission of Charity Applications | 1 st week Feb 2022 | ~4 weeks |
| <i>HRB Application Deadline</i> | <i>1st week March 2022</i> | |
| PPI Induction session | March 2022 | |
| Joint Funding Committee Meeting | Early May 2022 | |
| HRB Board Meeting | June 2022 | |
| Applicant Notification | July 2022 | |
| Contracts Issued | Sep/Oct 2022 | |
| Research Project Start Date | November 2022 | |

1.2 Charity call for applications

The 2022 call is formally open from 1 September 2021 (although charities have the option to launch calls in advance of this during July and August). Any charities interested in participating in this round **must contact HRCI to receive all relevant documents**. These include:

- Instructions for Charities (this document)
- Instructions for Applicants
- HRCI/HRB Co-funding Policy
- HRCI/HRB Co-funding Partner Application form
- **Part A1** Charity endorsement (completed online on GEMs, see section 4 below)
- **Part A2** Charity overview
- **Part B1** Application form
- **Part B2** Gantt Chart (for researcher applicants)
- **Part B3** Figures (for researcher applicants)
- **Part C1** Infrastructure Agreement Form
- **Part C2** Collaboration Agreement Form
- **Part C3** Warrant for International Host Institutions
- **Part C4** - Letter(s) of support regarding contract status
- **Part D1** Signature page for principal investigator
- **Part D2** Signature page for host institution
- **Part E** Peer Review form
- **Part F** Right-to-Respond form
- **Part G** Charity Selection Panel Signature form

As per previous years participating charities will run their own call based on their own strategic priorities but using the standard application guidance and forms provided.

1.3 Suggestions for potential Panel Members to the HRB

To facilitate an efficient search for panel members, charities who intend to participate in this round should confirm this via email and include the **title of all applications that they have received to the HRB by 5pm on the 7th February 2022**. The HRB fully acknowledges that this does not represent any commitment from the charity to submit these applications and appreciates that the strategic review in the charity will go on beyond this time point.

Whilst the HRB aims to secure panel members who are generalists, we also need to have a sense of the balance of research expertise necessary to cover the spectrum of applications. All participating HRCI charities will be given an option to propose appropriate panel members to the HRB.

1.4 Submission of Full Applications to the HRB

For the HRCI-HRB Joint Funding scheme 2022, following the Charity internal selection process, applications to the HRB will now be submitted by the Charities via the HRB online grants system, GEMs (Grants E-Management System) <https://grants.hrb.ie>

Detailed guidance on using this system will be provided both at the HRCI/HRB workshop in September and via a GEMS guidance document which will be circulated. All documentation should be submitted via GEMs by the deadline (TBC).

Applications sent to the HRB via email will not be accepted and will be deemed ineligible.

1.4.1 Create GEMS Account

The GEMs system will allow Charities to create an account which will capture Charity details. Where charities are co-funding an award, the coordinating Charity partner will create an account and there will be the opportunity to add details of co-funding charity partners within each application. Each application from Charities to the HRB will be submitted individually.

Charities will be asked to tick a box to agree to each of the following statements prior to commencing the application process via GEMS.

- On behalf of my organisation, I agree that if this project is successfully funded we will pay HRCI a 5% levy on the amount of funding contributed to the project by the HRB (excluding the HRB overhead contribution), payment of which will be required in Q1 of 2023.
- I acknowledge that failure to pay this levy or a significant delay to payment, not agreed to by HRCI, will exclude my organisation from future participation in the JFS.
- Charities with an annual income of less than €150,000 and reserves of less than €150,000, are eligible for 75% project funding from the HRB. On behalf of my organisation, I agree that the decision on whether or not we are eligible for the 75% HRB funding is based on the income and reserves detailed in my organisation's most recent statutory accounts, which we will provide to HRCI, regardless of the sources or purposes for these funds.
- On behalf of my organisation, and based on our income/reserves, I select to fund this project through:
 - o 50% funding from the HRB (HRCI levy on 5% of HRB contribution)
 - o 75% funding from the HRB (HRCI levy on 5% of HRB contribution)
- I acknowledge that as a co-manager of this scheme, HRCI will have full, confidential access to this application and all related documents.

1.4.2 Complete Charity Endorsement and upload documentation for each application

For each application to the HRCI-HRB 2022 Funding Scheme, Charities will complete **Part A1 - Charity Endorsement** on GEMs and upload all documentation including the application form and supporting documentation, as detailed below.

In response to comments from charities (including comments collected via the 2020 HRCI survey of charities participating in the previous round) a new section has been included in Part A1- Charity Endorsement for this round. This section will ask the charity to outline any PPI review process that they utilised in their selection or endorsement of applications to submit.

- Part A1 - Charity Endorsement of Application (completed on GEMs)
- GEMs Uploads:
 - Part A2: Charity Overview
 - Part B1 - Application
 - Part B2 – Gantt Chart
 - Part B3 - Figures
 - Part C - Additional forms (e.g. C1 Infrastructure Agreement, C2 Collaboration Agreement, C3 Warrant for International Host Institutions)
 - Part D - Signature pages D1 principal investigator and D2 host institution
 - Part E - Peer Review forms
 - Part F - Right-to-Respond form
 - Part G - Charity Selection Committee/ Panel Form

Note: Please do not add any logos to the application form, reviewer form, collaborator agreement form or signature page. This is to ensure that file sizes do not exceed 2 MB. At time of publication the HRB is investigating the possibility of an upload function for Charity logos, as this is a technical requirement, we will require further time to confirm if this is a possibility.

Further details of documentation to be submitted to HRCI-HRB

Charity Details: captured when creating GEMs account.

Please provide the Charity name and contact details. For co-funded projects the coordinating charity should complete this GEMs account information, and details of co-funding charities can subsequently be added within each individual application.

Part A1: Charity Endorsement of Application (on GEMs)

A brief justification for the selection of each individual application as it relates to the strategic aims of the charity is requested as detailed in Q1-5 below. This information will be critical to inform the Joint Selection Panel reviewers as to the importance of each individual project, from the point of view of the endorsing charity. Where charities are co-funding an award, charity details and a justification which reflects the strategic priorities of the charity partnership is requested. The coordinating Charity partner will submit details to GEMs on behalf of co-funding charity partners.

Q.1 Charity Background Information

Please provide an overview of the charity or charities to include the charity profile, main objectives and key activities (maximum 400 words). For co-funded projects the maximum is 800 words.

Q.2 Charity Strategic Research Priorities

Please outline the charity or charities strategic research priorities. Any PPI which helped shape the charity research priorities and/or the charity funding call can be outlined here. For co-funded projects please outline the rationale behind the decision to co-fund (maximum 300 words).

Q.3 Application details

Provide Application code, PI, Application title, abstract, duration, budget and name of research institution.

Q.4 Strategic Relevance for Application

Based on the charities own selection process please provide justification as to how this application fits with the strategic aims of the charity or charities and why it has been put forward for consideration by the Joint Selection Panel (maximum 300 words)

Q.5. Public Review of Applications received by Charity

Outline, if used, any Public, Patient or Carer (PPI) involvement in the charity review process used to inform selection or endorsement of applications for submission to this call (maximum 300 words)

Q.6 Yes/No

I confirm that the Charity has been approved by the HRB as a co-funding partner under the HRCI/HRB Joint Funding Scheme. I have read this application and the relevant Guidance notes, and I confirm that this application has undergone peer review and selection in accordance with HRCI/HRB policy and the strategic aims of the charity. I confirm that the charity is in a position to co-fund the award if successful and is willing to enter into a multi-party agreement between the HRB and the Host Institution, if successful

Part A2-G: GEMs uploads:

The following documentation must be uploaded to GEMs for each application.

Please note: where a number of charities are co-funding an award, please use the charity initials of the coordinating charity in the labelling throughout.

Part A2: Charity details

This form will capture information regarding the Charity background and peer review process.

The charity must indicate how many applications they received in total, and how many were shortlisted for submission to the HRB and specify who participated in the discussion and selection of applications.

Charities requesting 75% funding are asked to provide additional details on how the scale of the research funding commitment is appropriate to the scale of their business activities, including if there are any other projects currently ongoing. This preceding information will not be included to the Panel reviewers as part of the application.

Part B1

Application form:

Uploaded electronically via GEMs as a single file labelled with the charity name/initials, year e.g. Faber Association-2022-1 Part B1

Part B2

Gantt Chart:

Outlining the project plan. Uploaded electronically via GEMs as a single **word or pdf file** labelled with the charity name/initials, year e.g. Faber Association-2022-1 Part B2

Part B3

Figures:

To support the proposal. Uploaded electronically via GEMs as **single word or pdf** file labelled with charity name/initials, year e.g. Faber Association-2022-1 Part B3

Part C

Where applicable, Additional forms:

C1 - Collaboration Agreement Forms:

Must be submitted for all collaborators. Uploaded electronically via GEMs Collated as a **single pdf file** labelled with the charity name/initials, year e.g. Faber Association-2022-1 Part C1

C2 - Research Infrastructure Agreement Forms:

Must be submitted for applications using the services of a clinical research facility/centre or similar Unit. Collated and uploaded electronically via GEMs as a **single pdf file** labelled with the charity name/initials, year e.g. Faber Association-2022-1 Part C2

C3 – Warrant for International Host Institutions:

Must be submitted for applications hosted by a host institution outside the Republic of Ireland. Must be uploaded electronically via GEMs as a **single pdf file** and be labelled with the charity name/initials, year e.g. Faber Association-2022-1 Part C5

C4 - Letter(s) of support regarding contract status:

Research Institution Letter of Support must be provided for (1) all Principal Investigators in a contract position and (2) Co-Applicants in a contract position who are seeking their own salary (see Instructions to Applicant notes for further details).

Letter(s) must be uploaded electronically via GEMs as a **single pdf file** and be labelled with the charity name/initials, year e.g. Faber Association-2022-1 Part C3

Part D**Signature pages:**

Collated and submitted as a **single pdf file** and be labelled with the charity name, year e.g. Faber Association-2022-1 Part D

D1 – Principal Investigator Signature:

Must be signed by the PI who completed the application

D2 – Host Institution Signature:

Must be completed by the Dean of Research at the host institution or the equivalent person authorised to endorse research applications.

Part E – Peer Review Form:

This must be completed by the three international peer reviewers selected by the charity. The peer reviewers must indicate on the form that they have read and understood the HRCI/HRB Confidentiality and Conflict of interest Policy. The three peer review forms should be collated and submitted as a **single pdf file** labelled with the charity name/initial, year e.g. Faber Association-2022-1 Part E

Part F – Right to Respond Form:

This should be submitted as a **single pdf file** labelled with the charity name/initials, year e.g. Faber Association-2022-1 Part F

Part G – Charity Selection Form:

Each charity must adhere to the HRCI/HRB Confidentiality and Conflict of interest Policy. This form must be signed and submitted as a **single pdf file** and be labelled with the charity name/initials, year e.g. Faber Association-2022-1 Part G

1.5 Review Process

International peer review:

Each charity carries out a peer review of all of the applications they have received. Peer Reviewers will focus on the following assessment criteria.

- **Scientific Quality and Innovation (50% of marks)**
 - Evidence supports need for proposed project
 - Design and methodology appropriate
- **Expertise and Research Environment (30% of marks)**
 - Applicant team expertise and experience relevant for project
 - Supports, infrastructure, environment
- **Feasibility (20% of marks)**
 - Project staffing and funding
 - Project plan and risk mitigation for project delivery

At least **three international peer reviewers** are required for each application.

For the purpose of this call an international reviewer is an active researcher (not e.g. a charity administrator) based outside of the Republic of Ireland. The potential reviewer **should not:**

- Have co-published with any member of the applicant team in the past 5 years.
- Currently or recently been working in the same organisation/department as any member of the applicant team.
- Be industry employees or have any apparent links with the pharmaceutical industry or commercial organisation.

An exception to the requirement of peer reviewers being based outside of Ireland applies where the Host Institution for the research project is based outside of Ireland. In this case peer reviewers based in Ireland may be used. All other peer review selection criteria must still be met.

Peer reviewer comments must be captured on the standard peer reviewer feedback form provided (part E). The HRCI/HRB policy on Confidentiality and Conflict of interest must be provided to and adopted by the international peer reviewers.

Peer reviewers should explicitly disclose whether they have a conflict of interest or not on the reviewers' form. Those that declare a conflict of interest should not take further part in the review process.

Charities must submit selected peer reviewers with completed Conflict of Interest check to HRB for validation of Conflict of Interest by 16th December 2021. Peer reviewers selected after this date will be checked prior to the Joint Selection Panel stage. Where a Conflict of interest is identified the review will not be shared with the Joint Selection Panel.

Each proposal for consideration by the HRCI/HRB Joint Selection Panel must have a minimum of three peer reviews. Written reviews where the peer reviewer is found to have a CoI will be excluded from consideration, and may result in a proposal being deemed ineligible, should there not be the minimum of three international peer reviews for that proposal.

Please refer to Appendix I for the HRCI/HRB Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest policy which must be provided to all peer reviewers.

Please see Appendix II for additional guidance on identifying potential peer reviewers and Appendix III for email templated which can be used when communicating with peer reviewers.

Applicant Response:

Once reviews have been received all applicants are afforded the opportunity to respond to anonymised reviewer comments. Part F of the application pack is an Applicant Response form which should be provided to the applicants with the peer reviewer comments.

Please see Appendix IV for additional guidance on the Applicant Response process. Applicants must adhere strictly to the guidance provided to ensure a fair competition.

Charity final selection:

Each charity will have its own final selection or endorsement step (e.g. bring to their research committee for approval or hold a charity selection panel meeting) to agree the applications which will be submitted to the HRCI/HRB Joint Selection Panel. Charities will be asked how many applications in total they have received, and how many they have put forward to the HRCI/HRB Joint Selection Panel. The charity committee or panel must adopt the HRCI/HRB Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Agreement in advance of any discussions and must disclose if any conflict arises and how the conflict was dealt with. **Charities are encouraged to include the perspective of the public, patients or carers as relevant into their selection process.**

Note: see the HRCI research governance guide¹ for health research charities, if you require guidance on how to manage this.

When the applications have been selected by the charities, the final full applications are submitted to the HRB via GEMs for consideration by the Joint Selection Panel. **Please note that relevance has been excluded as an assessment criterion for peer reviewers in the HRCI/HRB 2022 round, as it is considered that charities will endorse research proposals that are relevant to the populations that they represent.**

¹ https://bit.ly/HRCI_ResearchGovernanceGuide

HRCI/HRB Joint Selection Panel:

The charities' endorsement or selection of applications and strategic plan will be forwarded alongside the nominated applications to a HRCI/HRB Joint Selection Panel. This Panel will include broad scientific expertise, as well as PPI Panel members and will consider applications from across all the charities. Each application will be reviewed by a lead and secondary scientific panel member and by two PPI panel members.

This Panel will have access to the original applications, charity background information on work and strategic research priorities, international peer reviewer comments, applicant's response to reviewers' comments and the charities' endorsement.

Scientific Panel members will review the strengths and weaknesses of the application on the stated assessment criteria for the call and will provide comments as well as **a score**. PPI panel members will only assess the quality of PPI in the application. They will review each application, provide comments, and assign **a rating** (see Appendix V) according to the appropriate level of PPI for the proposed research.

The PPI rating will be used to adjust the consensus scientific score, by applying a correction to it.

PPI Panel Members are asked to comment on the following:

- The Plain English Summary (Lay Summary)
- Relevance of the Proposed Research Question
- Public and Patient and Carer Involvement in development of and throughout the project
- Research Design - inclusion of research participants (where applicable)
- Dissemination of the Proposed Work

Their grading will inform the consensus Panel score, and therefore the final ranking and recommendation for funding.

Scientific Panel members will focus on the following assessment criteria:

- **Scientific Quality and Innovation (50% of marks)**
 - Important research question
 - Evidence supports need for proposed project
 - Design and methodology appropriate
- **Expertise and Research Environment (30% of marks)**
 - Applicant team expertise and experience relevant for project
 - Supports, infrastructure, environment
- **Feasibility (20% of marks)**
 - Project staffing and funding
 - Project plan and risk mitigation for project delivery

Recommendations made by the Joint Selection Panel regarding the ranking of applications are final. Gender balance of the Lead Applicant will be considered where required to prioritise applications with the same scores in the Panel ranking list. These recommendations are given to the HRB Board for approval of the HRB funding.

Host Institutions of successful applications will be offered multi-party contracts between the HRB, the HRCI charities(s), the approved Host Institution and the clinical institution where applicable setting out the respective roles and responsibilities of the parties and governing the research project. The HRB Terms and Conditions will govern the award in its entirety. Additional special conditions may apply. Should an applicant based at a research institution outside the Republic of Ireland be successful in this funding scheme, their research institution must complete **Part C3: Warrant for International Host Institutions**, to ensure the International Host Institution is **prepared to sign the Terms and Conditions referenced in the document**. This will expedite research contract negotiation and avoid delays to individual research projects. The Dean of Research plus the appropriate person who will review and sign off on contracts for the research institution **must endorse this application prior to application submission**.

Applications from research institutions outside of the Republic of Ireland who fail to submit the signed Warrant (Part C3) within their application and within the application deadline will be considered ineligible.

1.6 Eligibility Criteria

The following is a list of eligibility criteria that will be reviewed by the HRB on receipt of applications.

Should an application not meet all eligibility criteria it will automatically be deemed ineligible.

Principal Investigator (PI) Eligibility

- PI holds or will hold a post that covers duration of award
- PI has the required funding and publication record

Please refer to the Instructions for Applicants for a detailed explanation of Principal Investigator requirements

Duration and Funding Eligibility

- Project duration is between 12 and 36 months
- Total maximum budget requested is €300,000
- Charity is in a position to co-fund all submitted applications or in the case that an additional highly rated application has been submitted the charity is in a position to fund any combination of applications except one.

Documentation

The following documents complete and submitted in the correct format for each application:

- Part A - Charity Overview
- Part B1 - Application
- Part B2 - Gantt Chart
- Part B3 - Figures
- Part C - Additional forms (e.g. Infrastructure Agreement, Collaboration Agreement, Warrant for International Host Institutions)
- Part D - Signature pages for principal investigator and host institution
- Part E - Peer Review form
- Part F - Applicant Response form
- Part G - Charity Selection Panel Form

Peer Review

- Minimum of 3 peer reviews per application
- Peer reviewers based outside of Ireland. An exception to the requirement of peer reviewers being based outside of Ireland applies where the Host Institution for the research project is based outside of Ireland. In this case peer reviewers based in Ireland may be used. All other peer review selection criteria must still be met.
- All peer reviewers signed HRCI/HRB conflict of interest policy, and no conflicts of interest declared or existing.²

Closing Date for Submission of Applications

The closing date for submission of applications is **to be confirmed**.

Note that **all documents** related to the application **including signature pages** must be submitted by the deadline.

Applications must be submitted via the HRB online grants management system GEMs: <https://grants.hrb.ie>.

Applications submitted to the HRB via email will not be accepted and deemed ineligible.

² If you are uncertain whether a selected peer reviewer has a conflict of interest as defined by the HRCI/HRB Conflict of Interest Policy, **please contact** the HRB for clarification at the earliest opportunity and prior to application submission

Appendix I– HRB/HRCI Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest Policy for International Peer Reviewers

Background

The use of independent peer reviewers is an intrinsic part of the HRCI/HRB joint decision-making process when deciding which activities, it will fund. This Policy articulates the HRCI/HRB's expectations with regard to the conduct of External Reviewers and the members of its Review Committees/Panels.

Policy

1. External peer reviewers, review committee/panel members or any other person engaged by a HRCI member charity for the purpose of peer review, are required to respect the confidentiality of the peer review process, which is designed to protect and preserve the integrity of HRCI's advisers and processes. This policy dictates that peer reviewers may not discuss any aspect of the scoring and assessment of external reviews, or the deliberations or recommendations of review committees with applicants, Principal Investigators (in the case of an interim review) or their colleagues, and that they must refuse any requests for information as to how a particular decision was reached. All such requests must be referred to the HRCI member charity.
2. HRCI/HRB expects external peer reviewers, review committee/panel members or any other person engaged by an HRCI member charity for the purpose of peer review, to adhere to the highest standards of integrity during the peer review process.
3. This policy requires that peer reviewers and review committee/panel members must respect the intellectual property of applicants and Principal Investigators and should not appropriate and use as their own or disclose to any third-party confidential information contained in the proposals and reports they review. **Confidential information** means all information whatsoever, irrespective of the means, mode or medium of storage, representation or presentation of same together with all modifications, adaptations and derivations thereof, including but not limited to:
 - (a) investigative studies, research and development activities, reports and findings, clinical trials, consultations, methodologies, proposals, systems, programs, techniques, strategies, improvements, discoveries, processes, innovations, inventions, trade secrets, technical drawings, know-how, formulae, concepts not reduced to material form, designs, plans and models, financial and marketing information and knowledge, business plans and information regarding the affairs of an applicant or PI generally, source and object code, arrangements and agreements with third parties, whether given orally, in writing or otherwise;
 - (b) any derivations of any information or data which embodies, contains or describes the Confidential Information;

- (c) any other data or information designated by either the applicant/PI or HRCI/HRB to be confidential or relating to the current or prospective research, activities or business of that Party;
 - (d) information regarding the existence or progress of any negotiations or agreement relating to the application or project;
4. Peer reviewers, review committee/panel members or any other person engaged by the HRCI member charity for the purpose of peer review should take all actions necessary to keep confidential the Confidential Information supplied to them as part of the peer review process.
 5. The HRB/HRCI requires an external reviewer or a committee/panel member who has a conflict of interest to:
 - Disclose to the HRB the nature of his or her interest in advance of any review. External reviewers are asked to confirm no conflict of interest before they can access an application.
 - Alert HRCI member charity at the earliest opportunity, where a conflict of interest exists or may exist for a committee/panel member. They are also asked to sign a declaration, confirming no conflict of interest, at the panel meeting.
 - Refrain from influencing or seeking to influence a decision in relation to an application where a conflict exists.
 - Take no part in any consideration of the application.
 - Withdraw from the meeting for so long as the application is being discussed.
 1. A disqualifying conflict of interest exists if a reviewer or committee/panel member:
 - Was involved in the preparation of the application
 - Stands to benefit directly should the proposal be accepted or rejected
 - Is in some way related to the applicant, co-applicant, collaborator or sponsors (where applicable) at a personal or professional level
 - Is a former supervisor of the applicant, co-applicant or sponsor (up to 5 years previously)
 - Is a collaborator of the applicant (up to 5 years previously). There may be exceptions in the case of joint publications from large collaborative teams/consortia where neither reviewer nor applicant, co-applicant or sponsor were the senior or corresponding author.
 2. A potential conflict of interest may exist in some cases that are not covered by the disqualifying conflict of interest rules indicated above. In particular reviewers with close links to industry should carefully consider any potential for conflict of interest/perceived commercial interest that may exist.
 3. A person will not be regarded as having a conflict of interest if the interest is so remote or insignificant that it cannot reasonably be regarded as likely to influence a person in considering, discussing or in voting on, any question relating to the application.
 4. If an external reviewer or committee/panel member is in doubt as to whether a beneficial interest exists, he or she should consult with HRCI member charity. Typically, the decision if

something constitutes a conflict of interest is made by HRCI member charity or the HRB Programme Manager. The Chair of a committee/panel will be briefed about any disclosed conflicts of interest of committee/panel members ahead of the meeting.

GDPR

International 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. Individual peer reviewers are selected for their specific expertise in relation to submitted applications, and can be based anywhere in the world. The **General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)** is a European Regulation that came into force on 25 May 2018 across the European Union (EU). Data provided as part of research applications, including but not limited to Curriculum Vitae information, may be shared with person(s) outside of the EU for the specific purpose of obtaining peer reviews of this application.

Peer Reviewers will be asked to **confirm** that they shall (i) **only access application data for the purposes of peer reviewing**, (ii) **not share information** contained in the application with anyone else, and (iii) **will destroy any copy/record of the application** after their review is submitted.

HRB policies in relation to GDPR are available on our website. <https://www.hrb.ie/funding/gdpr-guidance-for-researchers/gdpr-overview/>

Appendix II– Guidance for identification of Peer Reviewers

1. International Peer Review Criteria

The potential reviewer **should**:

- Be an expert in the application topic or have some expertise relevant to the application (for example if it is a multidisciplinary application)
- Have a strong publication record and be either a **senior author** (i.e. last author) or co-published a sufficient number of articles (~6) in the area of interest in the last 2 years. They may also have written books, book chapters, reports or any other health-related publications. In the areas of Health Services Research and Population Health Sciences Research a minimum of 3 publications in the last 2 years is sufficient.
- Be associated with a respectable research institution outside of Ireland. S/he may be an active researcher, a lecturer, research fellow etc in the specialty area of interest.
- Have an institutional email address

The potential reviewer **should not**:

- Have co-published with any member of the applicant team in the past 5 years. PubMed has useful features to investigate this.

-Go to the 'Advanced Search' tab in PubMed.

-Set the Search Builder to 'Author' and 'OR'

-Add each member of the applicant team in the following format 'Surname Initial' e.g. 'Moore A'. Click 'Add to search box' until this is complete for each member of the applicant team. Remove individual brackets and insert brackets around entire team and add 'AND'

-Insert the potential reviewer's name – 'Surname Initial'

-Finally, click search! This action will bring up any publications an applicant team member and the potential reviewer have been involved in. If no results are found, you can be reasonably confident in this person as a potential reviewer. You can copy the code in the search section and save it to your spreadsheet and use this as a template for checking other possible reviewers.

- Currently or recently been working in the same organisation/department as any member of the applicant team.
- Be industry employees or have any apparent links with the pharmaceutical industry or commercial organisation.

2. Steps for each application

1. Make a list of all members in the applicant team (Lead Applicant, Co-Applicants, and Collaborators) and their host institutions.
2. Read through the application to get a sense of what the applicant team proposes to do. The project abstract and project lay summary are especially helpful for this.
3. Look at the keywords suggested by the applicant team. These should provide a snapshot of the area of research.
4. Look at the section 13 of the application form. Check for the **exclusion of the international peer reviewers**.
5. Look at the bibliography/reference section of the proposal. This will allow you to identify other people working in this area of research.
6. Note Universities/hospitals/organisations where the applicant team have studied and worked to avoid asking reviewers from the same place, especially those with whom the applicant was recently connected.
7. Identify and ask at least **8 potential reviewers**.

3. Where to look for reviewers/Check their Suitability

The following websites are very useful in identifying potential reviewers:

- PubMed: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/PubMed/>
- Cochrane Library: <http://www.cochrane.org/>
- Biomed Experts: <http://www.biomedexperts.com/>
- Google

Appendix III– Email templates for Peer Review

Peer reviewer invitation

Reviewer Salutation

Health Research Charities Ireland (HRCI – formerly the Medical Research Charities Group/MRCG) supports charities in Ireland to increase both the quality and quantity of healthcare research. Since 2006, HRCI has collaborated with the Health Research Board Ireland (HRB) in co-funding of research projects of particular strategic relevance to the medical research charities. We are currently engaged in an international peer-review process under this Joint Funding Scheme. Following a detailed survey of the literature, it has come to our attention that you have expertise relevant to the following proposal:

Principle Investigator:

Grant Title:

We would be grateful if you would be willing to review this application. Your review would be instrumental in determining whether the application is short-listed to the second review phase for analysis by a specially convened Joint Selection Panel. Any feedback you provide would also be made available to the applicant team in an anonymised format.

Can you please confirm whether you are willing to review this application? I would appreciate if you could respond to this invite before [due date]. If you are able to review the application, we will send you the application, peer review guidelines and a form for your review. The final review will be required by [Review Due Date – typically approx. 3 weeks].

If you are unable to review on this occasion, we would be grateful if you could suggest a suitable colleague or other expert in the field who may be able to do so. Please forward an email address and other relevant contact details, if available.

The charity would like to thank you in advance for your assistance and we look forward to hearing from you. If you have any queries on this process, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Kind regards

Dispatch Email

Subject: Grant Reference - Peer Review Request

Email:

Dear **Reviewer Name**

Thank you very much for agreeing to review this application for us. Please find attached the following documentation:

- Application
- Peer review form (including guidance)
- Strategy of the charity

Finally, when you access the proposal, we ask you to let us know if any **conflict of interest** issues arise as a result of your reviewing this proposal on our behalf. A disqualifying conflict of interest exists if a peer-reviewer:

- (a) has published with any member of the research team in the past 5 years
- (b) is based in the Republic of Ireland
- (c) was involved in the preparation of the application;
- (d) stands to benefit directly should the proposal be accepted or rejected;
- (e) is in some way related to the applicant or co-applicant at a personal or professional level;
- (f) is a former supervisor of the applicant;
- (g) is a collaborator of the applicant (up to 5 years previously)

A potential conflict of interest may exist in some cases not covered by the disqualifying conflict of interest rules indicated above. In particular reviewers with close links to industry should carefully consider any potential for conflict of interest/perceived commercial interest that may exist.

If this is the case or you have any questions regarding a potential conflict of interest, please contact me for further clarification.

Where a conflict of interest exists, we ask you to inform us as this precludes you from taking part in the review of the application.

I would be grateful if you could submit your review by **DAY DATE YEAR** as suggested in my initial email. If you anticipate any difficulty in meeting this deadline, please contact me at your earliest convenience.

Thank you again for your assistance to the charity in this process.

Kind regards

Reminder Email – 1 week before deadline

SUBJECT: GRANT REFERENCE - Peer Review Reminder

Dear **Reviewer Name**

I am emailing you to follow up on recent correspondence with regard to the review of a grant application for the HRCI/HRB Joint Funding scheme 2022.

If you recall, you kindly agreed to complete the review on our behalf and planned to submit your review via email by **DAY DATE YEAR**.

I hope you have had a chance to look at the proposal in the meantime. In advance of the deadline, we would like to confirm with you that you will still be able to complete the review as agreed.

I appreciate how difficult it can be to find time in a busy schedule to complete a review and we are very grateful to you for your assistance in this process.

Kind regards

Acknowledgement of review received

Dear **Reviewer Name**

This email has been sent to confirm receipt of your peer review of Application: {Application Title} by PI.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this review. We are very grateful to you for your assistance in this process.

Kind regards

Close Review Email

Subject: Grant Reference - Health Research Board – Thank you

Dear **Reviewer Name**

Thank you for considering our recent invitation.

We completely understand that you are not in a position to take on the review on this occasion.

Perhaps we might have the opportunity to work with you in the future.

Kind regards

Appendix IV - Guidance to Applicant Response

Introduction

The right to respond step is a valuable addition to the peer review process as it gives applicants the chance to address any factual inaccuracies and questions raised by the peer reviewers. Any response is submitted in confidence to the final Joint Selection Panel (and the charity selection committee/panel) and is not returned to the peer reviewers*. Examples of issues which might be addressed:

- Where insufficient detail is provided on a particular aspect of the project e.g. patient numbers, methods.
- Address any misunderstandings/misinterpretations made by the reviewer.
- Confirm that the applicant is willing and, in a position, to incorporate suggestions of experts (or not, as appropriate).

Responding to the reviewers' comments is an important part of the peer review process. Joint Selection Panel members consider the response carefully when discussing the issues raised by the reviewers, to see how applicants resolve them. A good response can make a competitive difference at the panel meeting. An applicant can choose not to respond to the reviewer comments although this may leave the panel with unresolved questions.

The response should be a maximum of **2,000 words** (inclusive of any references, figures and footnotes).

A template is provided for this purpose – Part F of the application pack. Text should be in Calibri font, or equivalent, with a minimum font size of 11, single line spacing and a minimum margin size of 2.54 cm.

*In cases where peer review and final selection is carried out by the same group of international reviewers, both parties (reviewers and applicants) must be made aware that they will see each other's comments in the form of anonymised reviews and applicant response.

The steps involved in the Right to Respond Process are outlined below.

Applicant Response Process

1. Advance Notice

Provide a minimum of 1 months' notice to the applicant (and research office) regarding the right to respond timeframe by email:

- Brief description of what is involved.

- Forward notice of the dates (three-week period) in which the response process will take place.
- Note that you will be contacting applicants on an individual basis as soon as a complete set of their reviews is returned and will, in normal circumstances, be sending their reviews very shortly after the initial contact.
- Note that applicants will be given **10 working days** (at some point within the specified three-week period) in which to return their response.
- Ensure applicants acknowledge receipt of this email.

A three-week window is set out to allow for staggered and/or late receipt of reviews (rather than setting the exact 10 working day period so far in advance). By flagging the three-week window when they can expect to receive the reviews more than a month in advance, the applicant is in a position to block out time in their calendar, or flag to you well in advance if there is any problem with the chosen dates.

2. Receipt of reviews – confirmation of dates

Once a complete set of reviews has been received, the applicant should be contacted and informed as to when to expect the reviews.

Example:

‘.....confirm the three-week window when I will be sending you the reviews and would appreciate **confirmation that these dates are suitable for you:**

Receive on: Monday 28 January 2022 at 12.00 a.m.

Return by: Monday 14 February 2022 before 12.00 p.m.

This allows some flexibility within the 2-week timeframe already set out above, and an applicant may for example request that they be sent from Tuesday to Tuesday instead.

The important point is that each applicant has exactly the same length of time to respond (10 working days).

3. Collation of reviews

Upon receipt of reviews, the reviews are edited to remove any inappropriate comments. Reviews are anonymised and collated into a single document which is sent by email to the applicant together with the instructions below.

4. Sending reviews and Response instructions

Anonymised reviews are sent to the applicant along with instructions regarding response and confirmation of due date.

Email Templates

1. Advance Notice

Dear Applicants (& Research Offices)

As outlined in the HRCI/HRB/Charity documentation, all eligible applications received are sent out for international peer review. When all reviews have been received, they will be collated and forwarded to applicants who will then be given the opportunity to submit a response to the reviewer's comments **(maximum of 2,000 words, inclusive of any references)**.

This e-mail is to give you forward notice of the dates in which the response process will take place:

Wednesday 20 January to Tuesday 9 February (for example, three weeks)

I will be contacting applicants on an individual basis as soon as a complete set of their reviews is returned and will, in normal circumstances, be sending their reviews very shortly after the initial contact. All applicants will be given **10 working days** (at some point within the above period) in which to return their response. If you are not at your normal e-mail during this period, I would be grateful if you could provide me with an alternative e-mail that you can be contacted on.

Responding to the reviewers' comments is an important part of the peer review process and it is strongly recommended that applicants respond to all issues raised by peer reviewers. Committee members consider the response carefully when discussing the issues raised by the reviewers, to see how applicants resolve them. A good response can make a competitive difference at the committee meeting.

Please acknowledge receipt of this email, and if you have any queries about the above, please do not hesitate to contact me at this e-mail address.

Regards

2. Confirmation of dates

Dear Professor X

I am writing in relation to my e-mail below - I would now like to confirm the 10-working day window when I will be sending you the reviews and would appreciate confirmation that these dates are suitable for you:

Receive on: Monday 28 January 2022 at 12.00 a.m.

Return by: Monday 14 February 2022 before 12.00 p.m.

As outlined previously, the response should be a maximum of **2,000 words** (inclusive of any references) and must be returned on or before the date and time stated above. Text should be in Calibri font, or equivalent, with a minimum font size of 11, single line spacing and a minimum margin size of 2.54 cm.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me – I look forward to hearing from you shortly.

Regards

3. Reviews and Instructions

Sent: Monday 24 January 2022. Attach Right to Respond form

Dear Professor X

Further to my email earlier this week I am now sending a document containing the comments of the International Peer Reviewers on your application to the HRCI/HRB/Charity 2020 scheme.

As agreed, your response should be submitted **before 12 pm on Friday 4 February**.

Please find attached a template for your response. The response should be a maximum of **2,000 words** (inclusive of any references). Text should be in Calibri font, or equivalent, with a minimum font size of 11, single line spacing and a minimum margin size of 2.54 cm.

Responding to the reviewers' comments is an important part of the peer review process and it is strongly recommended that you respond to all issues raised by peer reviewers. Committee members consider these responses carefully when discussing the issues raised by the reviewers, to see how applicants resolve them. A good response which comprehensively addresses all the issues raised can make a competitive difference at the committee meeting.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Regards

Appendix V- PPI

The consensus PPI rating will be used to apply a correction to the consensus scientific score as per the Table below.

| Rating | Description | Correction applied to the consensus scientific score |
|-------------|---|--|
| Excellent | You are very satisfied with the quality of the public and patient involvement in the application. PPI is evident from the early planning stages and throughout the lifetime of the award (if successful), including in decision-making at management level. Methods of involvement are innovative and maximise benefits. Planned PPI activities seem appropriately resourced in the budget. | 0.5 |
| Good | You are satisfied with the quality of the public and patient involvement in the application; some additional clarifications would have been helpful. PPI may not have started at the earliest stage of research planning OR included in decision-making at management level, but is well embedded in the application (if successful) at stages throughout its lifetime. Methods of involvement are tailored to the research. Planned PPI activities seem appropriately resourced in the budget. | 0.25 |
| Appropriate | You are reasonably satisfied with the quality of the public and patient involvement in the application. Methods of involvement are generic, some additional clarifications would have been helpful and/or PPI could potentially have been included to a greater extent from planning phase. Planned PPI activities seem appropriately resourced in the budget. | 0 |
| Fair | You are satisfied with some of the public and patient involvement provided in the application. PPI could potentially have been included at other stages throughout the lifetime of the award (if successful), methods of involvement are generic and/or planned PPI activities seem to be under resourced in the budget. | -0.25 |
| Poor | You are not satisfied with the public and patient involvement in the application because important information seems to be lacking. PPI does not appear to have been a significant part of the planning for the award (if successful). Planned PPI activities seem to be under resourced in the budget. | -0.5 |