

Emerging Investigator Awards (EIA) 2024

Frequently asked questions (FAQs)

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1 General

1.1 How do I apply for the Emerging Investigator Awards for Health?

All applications must be made using the HRB online Grant E-Management System GEMS <https://grants.hrb.ie>.

1.2 Have there been any changes to the last round of the EIA scheme?

Please reference Section 3 “*Summary of Revisions for EIA 2024*” in the EIA 2024 Guidance Notes.

2 Eligibility of Lead Applicant

2.1 Can a Lead Applicant submit more than one application?

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

2.2 I am a researcher working in Northern Ireland. Can I apply?

No. Lead Applicants must have the support of a HRB approved Host Institution (HI) which will manage the award and where the research will be predominantly conducted if the application is successful. This scheme is not open to HIs located in Northern Ireland.

2.3 I am currently working in a different sector, but I would like to move into health research. Can I apply?

Yes. Applicants working in disciplines outside of health research who wish to move into health research and who meet the applicant suitability and eligibility criteria are eligible to apply. See Section 6 of the EIA 2024 Guidance Notes for further details.

2.4 I am a postdoctoral researcher on a three-year contract. Can I apply?

Yes. Postdoctoral researchers, including Research Fellows, are not restricted in terms of the duration of the contract on which they are employed. Only academics (e.g. lecturers and other Higher Institution or research organisation staff) are restricted to the limitation of fixed term contracts of no longer than 2 years post call close date (9 November 2023).

2.5 I am a health-related researcher with less than four years postdoctoral experience, can I apply?

No, you must demonstrate at least four years of active research experience (excluding breaks from research (e.g. statutory leave) and/or flexible work arrangements). The four years of active research experience does not need to be consecutive and, as such, can be a combination of FTEs and durations, all of which must add up to a minimum of 48 months at 1.0 FTE. You must have defended your PhD thesis in 2019 or before. If you defended your thesis in 2019 you must have taken up a research position post PhD by December 2019 and have no breaks from research (career

breaks/statutory leave etc) from that time. The minimum of 48 month active research experience post-PhD (or equivalent) must be acquired by the closing date, 9 November 2023.

2.6 I am a health and care professional delivering patient or social care, can I apply?

No, the EIA scheme now targets academic health researchers only. The Emerging Clinician Scientist Awards (ECSA) scheme mirrors the EIA and targets researcher who are also involved in the delivery of health or social care and who are ready to transition towards research independence. Professionals in practice should apply to the ECSA scheme. Further details of the ECSA scheme can be found here: [Emerging Clinician Scientist Awards \(ECSA\) 2024](#).

2.7 I am a research assistant with a PhD; and I am on a contract of over two years in duration. Am I eligible to apply?

Yes. Research Assistants on fixed term contracts are research based and, as such, are not subject to the two-year maximum contract rule applied to individuals with fixed terms academic position (e.g. lecturers) in academic or other research performing organisations.

2.8 If the Lead Applicant has a fixed-term Academic contract of a duration of more than two years, can they apply?

No. Lead Applicants must not hold a fixed-term position (academic or other) with a contracted end date equal to or later than two years from the deadline of this call (9 November 2023). **This restriction does not apply to postdoctoral researchers.**

2.9 Is there any upper limit of years active research experience post-PhD?

No, there is no upper limit of active post PhD research in this EIA round. However, please note that individuals who have already established an independent group by acting as primary supervisor of other researchers (e.g. PhD candidates, postdoctoral researchers, research assistants) and/or are leading a research programme are not considered 'Emerging Investigators'.

2.10 Does a Lead Applicant need to have last author publications?

There is no minimum number of publications or other research outputs required for eligibility. However, Lead Applicants must be able to demonstrate their contribution to scientific knowledge and the potential to become an independent investigator by describing up to five research outputs that are most relevant to this application. It is expected that Lead Applicants would have several peer-reviewed publications and other research outputs.

2.11 If the Lead Applicant is currently supervising other researchers, are they eligible to apply?

Lead Applicants are **ineligible** to apply if they are supervising early or mid-career researchers (**Postdoctoral researchers, PhD candidates**) **who are supported through an award secured by the Lead applicant as PI.**

Additionally, where a Lead Applicant has acted or is acting as the past, or present, primary supervisor or sponsor of an early career scholarship or fellowship (e.g. PhD candidate, postdoctoral researcher) awarded to another individual, they are ineligible to apply.

Supervision of researchers outside of the two criteria outlined above will not render a Lead Applicant ineligible. Where an applicant has acted as supervisor for example to a summer scholar/student or secured a relatively small award in their own name which has supported, for example, research assistants for a limited period of time this would not render them ineligible as this does not constitute them having built their own research team as PI.

2.12 I have received a peer-reviewed research grant, am I eligible to apply?

A Lead Applicant is **ineligible** if they have received an award in Ireland or abroad targeting the career stage of transitioning towards research independence or other peer review research grants **which support research staff**.

Fellowships, scholarships and/or peer reviewed research grants secured by the Lead Applicant as PI, **which do not support research staff**, will not render the Lead Applicant ineligible.

2.13 If I am eligible at the time of application submission but my situation changes before the final outcome will my application be withdrawn?

No. Eligibility applies to the EIA pre-application stage submission date only. If you are eligible at the submission date then your application is eligible for the whole process. Should your situation change after 09 November 2023 but before the end of the EIA 2024 review process you should let the HRB know, however, your application will not be withdrawn.

3 Mentors, Co-Applicants, and Collaborators

Please note that full information on the Mentors and Co-Applicants are required at pre-application stage. Collaborator information is not required at pre-application stage, however you are advised to start identifying key collaborators early in the process.

3.1 Can my current supervisor be one of my mentors?

The Scientific Mentor should not be the current supervisor of the Lead Applicant and should not be based in the same institution as the Lead Applicant. This is to facilitate an appropriate balance between the supporting and guiding role of the Scientific Mentor, and the independence to be achieved by the Lead Applicant in terms of the mentorship arrangements.

It is also advised that your Host Institution Mentor is not your current supervisor.

3.2 Can either of the Mentors also be a Co-Applicant?

No, neither mentor can be designated as a Co-Applicant on the project.

3.3 Is the Scientific Mentor required to approve my application before I can submit it?

Yes, in addition to approving their own participation on the application and completing the Mentor section, the Scientific Mentor also needs to approve the application prior to submission. However, the Host Institution mentor does not have to approve the application prior to submission.

3.4 Can a Co-Applicant receive payment for their role on the project?

A Researcher Co-Applicant cannot receive salary through the award if they are in a salaried role. Researcher Co-Applicants not in a salaried role may draw salary from the award where this is highly justified in terms of the requirements from the programme of research. Knowledge user and PPI contributor Co-Applicants can request their own salary, depending on their role and percentage of time dedicated to the research for the duration of the award.

3.5 Can a Co-Applicant receive funding through the award?

Where justified, a Co-Applicant may receive funding for items such as running costs and personnel.

3.6 How many Co-Applicants can I have?

The maximum number of Co-Applicants is five.

3.7 What is the difference between Co-Applicants and Collaborators?

A Co-Applicant has a well-defined, critical, and substantial role in the conduct and steering of the proposed research. Each Co-Applicant must confirm their participation and is invited to view the application form online. An official Collaborator is an individual or an organisation who will have an integral and discrete role in delivering the research activities. Named collaborators provide specific contributions (either direct or indirect) to the project activities.

The Lead Applicant is best placed to determine whether a contributor should be a named Co-Applicant or a Collaborator on the award. Please reference Section 6.4 and Section 6.5 of the EIA 2024 Guidance Notes for more information on Co-Applicants and Collaborators.

3.8 Can a Co-Applicant/Collaborator be from outside Ireland?

Yes, Co-Applicants and/or Collaborators from outside Ireland are welcome where the nature of the research makes this necessary.

3.9 Do the Co-Applicants have to approve my application before I can submit it?

No, Co-Applicants need to approve their participation on the application and complete their own section in the form.

3.10 Will the HRB pay for visits to and from Co-Applicants/Collaborators?

Yes, visits to and from Co-Applicants/Collaborators where justified may be included in the application budget under running costs.

3.11 Is a Collaborator agreement form needed?

Collaborator information (or form) is not required at Pre-application stage. However, at full application stage you are required to submit a signed collaboration agreement form for each collaborator included in the proposal. These forms must be uploaded and submitted with the full application.

3.12 Can a Collaborator be from private enterprise?

Yes, a collaborator may be from private enterprise. Collaborators from private enterprise are encouraged where they add value to the project for example in terms of access to expertise, technologies and/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 prior to the beginning of the research programme. Consideration should be given to issues such as relative responsibilities, governance arrangements, intellectual property rights, reporting and access to data and samples.

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

Yes, collaborators are eligible to receive funding from the supporting the research project when properly detailed and justified in the application. However, the HRB will not support the salary of collaborators.

4 Scope

Please carefully read Section 4 and Appendix II of the EIA 2024 Guidance Notes.

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

Guidance and details of the research areas covered can be found in Appendix II. If, after reading this, you are still unsure if your proposal is in scope for the scheme, please contact the HRB for further guidance.

4.2 What is 'actionable knowledge'?

Actionable knowledge is research evidence which will inform healthcare practice and/or policy. The HRB aims to enhance the capability of researchers to conduct research across the continuum from knowledge creation to knowledge translation and implementation into policy and practice.

4.3 Can an assessment of an intervention be proposed as part of the EIA project?

No – initial testing of an intervention can be included as a small part of a project but cannot be the main bulk of the proposed research. Trialling of interventions has a dedicated HRB funding stream (Definitive Interventions and Feasibility awards (DIFA)) and, as such, other HRB awards do not support clinical trials or assessment of interventions.

5 Funding and duration

Please note no budget details are required at Pre-application stage. Further detail on the budget will be provided at full application stage.

5.1 Do I have to request salary through the award?

Salary must be requested to ensure the applicant has protected time to conduct the research if successful.

Salary-related costs can be requested as follows:

1. On a full-time basis (1.0 FTE).

Or

2. On a part time basis with at least 0.5 FTE protected time for research, funded by the HRB, if their preference is to work in a part-time capacity due to personal circumstances. [BN1]

5.2 How much can I apply for?

Research related costs are capped at a maximum value of €300K. Research related costs do not include the salary and salary related costs of the Lead Applicant. The overhead contribution to the HI will be calculated by the HRB at award stage.

5.3 Can research staff or PhD students be hired under EIA funding?

Yes, research staff can be requested in line with the resourcing requirements of the project.

This scheme is not framed as a training initiative for PhD candidates and so Lead Applicants must carefully consider the complexity, scale, objectives, and dependencies of the project, the suitability of such project in terms of delivering a clearly identifiable original research project, the potential difficulties in clustering various pieces of work packages for a PhD thesis, the risks and challenges of having PhD candidate(s) in the team considering potential changes in the Lead Applicant position/contract and/or other changes (e.g. Host institution) during the award, and any requirements and/or restrictions relating to their registration with the Host Institution.

Where a Lead Applicant is proposing to include a PhD candidate, they should clearly put in place appropriate supervisory arrangements for the PhD candidate, should have a mitigation strategy set out in the Host Institution Letter of Support, to ensure proper the responsibilities for the training, development of the PhD candidate and successful completion of the PhD thesis are fulfilled, budget for four years funding for the PhD candidate and PhD candidates should be enrolled in a structured PhD programme, at the Institution where they will be registered or through the SPHeRE PhD programme¹, which is Ireland's national research training programme for Population Health, Policy, and Health Services Research.

Please note that PhD fees are capped at a maximum of €5,500.

Please see Section 6.6 of the EIA 2024 Guidance Notes for further information on including PhD candidates in your application.

¹ <https://www.sphereprogramme.ie/> For further information please contact Katherine Walsh katherinewalsh@rcsi.ie

5.4 How much is reasonable to request for research dissemination?

Dissemination and knowledge exchange activities are capped at a **maximum of €15K** unless clearly justified by outreach or similar activities.

5.5 Should I include the overhead contribution in the budget?

No, the HRB will calculate the overhead contribution to the HI and include it in the budget at pre-contracting stage, prior to issuing a contract.

5.6 What is the duration of EIA awards?

EIA awards are 48 calendar months in duration for both full-time and part-time arrangements.

6 Supporting Documentation

6.1 Is there any additional documentation which should be uploaded with my Pre-application form?

Yes. At Pre-application stage a HI letter of support confirming the Lead applicant is not recognised by the HI as an independent researcher is required. This letter should be on headed paper and signed by the Dean of Research or an equivalent appropriate designate. The HI designate approving the application for submission to the HRB is an appropriate signatory of the Letter of Support at Pre-application stage.

7 Submission

7.1 What is the GEMS submission process?

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. 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 and time. This may involve being aware of and complying with any internal Host Institution deadlines for review and approval, distinct from the HRB deadline.

7.2 What is the closing date for submission of Pre-applications?

All Pre-applications must be submitted to the HRB using HRB GEMS by **Thursday, 09 November 2023 at 13:00**.

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

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

7.4 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 un-submit it.



8 Pre-application Review

8.1 Would a career break or a period of statutory leave put me at a disadvantage in terms of the review?

No. The Lead Applicant and Research Team are assessed on their research outputs in terms of their time spent in active research. Therefore, adjustments will be made when assessing the outputs of applicants who have had periods of research inactivity due to, for example, statutory leave.

8.2 When will I know if I was shortlisted to submit a Full application?

A Review Panel will meet to discuss all eligible applications in mid-January 2024. We plan to notify applicants of the outcome the following week. If shortlisted, your full application form will be available to populate, within your GEMS account, at that time.

8.3 Will I receive feedback from the panel?

Yes, all applicants will receive brief feedback on the Pre-application panel discussion.

