HRCI-HRB Joint Funding Scheme 2026

Guidance Notes for Applicants

Guidance Notes

Key Dates & Times	
Charities Open Calls	July 2025 onwards
Application Opens on GEMS	01 September 2025
Application Closing Date*	26 November 2025 @13:00**

Applications must be completed and submitted through the HRB online Grant E-Management System (GEMS) (https://grants.hrb.ie), and this system will close automatically at the stated deadline and timeline listed above.

** Note, individual charities may have an earlier closing date. Please submit your application before the relevant charity closing date.*

*** Prior to final submission to the HRB and relevant charity, all applications must first be reviewed and approved within GEMS by the authorized approver at the Host Institution as listed in the application form. It is critical therefore that 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.*

Table of Contents

1 Introduction

The HRB is the lead agency in Ireland supporting research linked to health and social care. During the period of the Strategic Business Plan 2021-2025[1], the HRB will continue to work in partnership with others to fund strategically relevant health research projects to to create new knowledge that, over time, will help to address major health challenges in society and have an impact on tomorrow's healthcare.

Health Research Charities Ireland (HRCI) is the national umbrella organisation of over 45 charities engaged in health, medical and social care research, collectively representing over 2 million people in Ireland. They champion their members' interests, to enhance the environment for health research in Ireland. They empower members to realise their shared vision of improving lives through impactful research.

HRCI's members have an important role in health research. In addition to providing funding, they increase the quality and quantity of research in a myriad of ways, including through ensuring its relevance to patients, hosting research conferences, supporting research infrastructure such as patient registries, helping to ensure patient impact from research and communicating research developments to the public.

Since 2006, the work of HRCI and its members has been supported by the Health Research Board (HRB) through co-funding of research projects. The level of funding is currently at €1,000,000 per annum.

This innovative joint funding scheme allows members of HRCI to support research addressing their research strategy, where they might otherwise not be in a position to finance the full cost of that research. To date, 165 projects have been jointly funded by member charities and the HRB in twelve rounds. While no differentiation is made between charities or disease areas, the scheme has been particularly beneficial for rare diseases where research being undertaken internationally may be limited and where charities wishing to contribute to the research agenda need to fund research projects led from outside Ireland.

HRCI and HRB have developed guidelines for competitive peer review to ensure that high quality and innovative research projects receive funding through this scheme. The partnership with the HRB supports the building of research funding capacity in Irish research charities and ensures that all elements of this research funding programme are operated at the highest standards of best international practices.

The HRCI member charities and the HRB are now inviting applications for the 2026 call of the HRCI-HRB Joint Funding Scheme.

[1] https://www.hrb.ie/about/strategy-2025/

2 Aim and Objectives

The HRCI-HRB Joint Funding Scheme aims to fund researchers and research teams to conduct internationally competitive and innovative research in **areas of strategic relevance to each individual charity**.

The objectives are to:

- Fund research that addresses the strategic aims of the individual charities
- Support high quality, internationally relevant research
- Create new knowledge and evidence of benefit to health and social care.

3 Major changes since the last round

- The assessment criteria weightings have been adjusted. In recognition of the importance of the potential impact of HRB funded research, the weighting for impact has increased from 20% to 35%. This aligns with the HRB Investigator Led Project Grants scheme that will open in August 2025. The definition of impact has been broadened to capture short- or longer-term impacts on patients, public and/or the healthcare system.
- In previous rounds, applications were completed in Microsoft Word and submitted to the relevant charity. For the 2026 round, applications must be completed and submitted to the relevant charity and HRB through the HRB online Grant E-Management System (GEMS) (https://grants.hrb.ie). Charities will have complete read access to applications relevant to them.

4 Scope of Call

This scheme provides funding for clearly defined research projects of strategic importance to participating charities.

We expect that applicants reference evidence supporting the case for the project that has been gathered systematically, i.e., as systematic reviews or other evidence synthesis formats. Simple literature overviews are not sufficient. Evidence synthesised systematically should include evidence of (1) a systematic identification of previous work, (2) critical appraisal, (3) synthesis of the evidence and (4) interpretation of findings.

Applications can include trials methodology research or can propose work to develop a healthcare intervention. Such work may include some initial testing of the intervention in order to generate proof of concept data and thus have the basis for developing a feasibility study. This would mean that applicants could then apply to HRB or another funder to support a feasibility study as a next step. In such cases applicants must consult with the appropriate clinical research infrastructure supports (such as the Clinical Research Facilities/Centres or the HRB Trial Methodology Research Network), to ensure that the work done will allow them to develop a feasibility study subsequent to the HRCI-HRB-funded research.

You should note that in this scheme the HRB will **not fund**:

- Applications planning to include PhD researchers.
- Applications which are solely literature reviews, audits, surveys, needs assessments or technology development (although these elements may be part of an integrated research study)
- Studies aimed at evaluating a full scale, definitive intervention to provide evidence on the efficacy, effectiveness, cost and broad impact of the intervention, and stand-alone feasibility studies[2] conducted in preparation for a future definitive intervention. Such studies are supported through the HRB Investigator-Led Clinical Trials programme (ILCT).
- Applications which are solely **or** predominately developing the infrastructure for biobanking, databases or patient registers without a predominant research element
- Applications which are solely **or** predominately health service developments or implementation of an intervention without a predominant research element. The HRB will not fund the cost of providing the service or intervention itself, only the research element
- Research intended to create human embryos solely for the purpose of research or for the purpose of stem cell procurement, including by means of somatic cell nuclear transfer
- Applications from individuals applying for, holding, or employed under funding received from the tobacco industry[3];
- Applications from individuals applying for, holding, or employed under funding received from the alcohol industry and related actors[4]

Where an application is outside the scope of the scheme, the application may be deemed ineligible by the HRB at initial eligibility review or the review panel at the panel meeting.

5 Funding Available, Duration and Start Date

The HRCI-HRB Joint Funding scheme will provide funding for projects up to a maximum of **€300,000** (exclusive of overheads) per grant. Note, individual charities may have a lower maximum limit which will be detailed in their call. The overall funding available for this round is approximately €3.1 million (HRB contribution of €1.75 million and charities contribution of €1.35 million). Quality permitting it is expected that a minimum of 11 awards will be funded. Awards will have a duration of between **12 and 36 months**.

[2] *Sandra M. Eldridge et al. Defining Feasibility and Pilot studies in preparation for Randomised Controlled Trials: Development of a conceptual Framework. PLoS ONE 11(3): e0150205*

[3] Any company, entity, or organisation involved in the development, production, promotion, marketing, or sale of tobacco in any country of the world. The term also includes any companies that are a subsidiary or a holding company or affiliate of the above. This also includes e-cigarette companies and non-tobacco related companies which are fully or partially owned by the tobacco industry.

[4] Including social aspects/public relations organisations (SAPROs) funded by alcohol companies or trade associations in which such companies are members.

The grant will provide support for research-related costs including salary for research staff, running costs, PPI, FAIR data management, equipment and dissemination costs. Overheads of up to 30% of Total Direct Modifiable Costs will be added to the portion of the research funded by the HRB during contracting stage.

Note: The grant will not fund the salary and related costs of tenured academic staff within research institutions (including buy-out from teaching time etc.).

The budget requested and the grant duration **must** reflect the scale and nature of the proposed research, and reviewers will thoroughly assess the level of funds and timeframe requested when reviewing the application.

The earliest start date of the Grant is 01 October 2026.

6 Application Details and Eligibility

6.1 Applicant Team

Applications should be made on behalf of a team made up of researchers and PPI contributors and where appropriate knowledge user(s) and data processors/controllers.

Co-applicants and Collaborators from outside the Republic of Ireland are welcome where their participation clearly adds value to the project.

6.1.1 Lead Applicant

The **Lead Applicant** will serve as the primary point of contact for the HRB during the review process and on the grant, if successful. The Lead Applicant will be responsible for the scientific and technical direction of the research programme. They have primary fiduciary responsibility and accountability for carrying out the research within the funding limits awarded and in accordance with the terms and conditions of the HRB.

The Lead Applicant **must**:

- Hold a post (permanent or a contract that covers the duration of the grant) in the Host Institution as an independent investigator. For clinicians, an adjunct position in a HRB recognised Host Institution is acceptable.

  OR

- Be an individual who will be recognised by the Host Institution upon receipt of a grant as an independent investigator who will have a dedicated office and research space for the duration of grant, for which they will be fully responsible. The Lead Applicant does not necessarily need to be employed by the Host Institution at the time of the application submission.

They **must** show evidence of achievement as an independent researcher in their chosen research field by:

a) Demonstrating a record of research output, with at least three publications of original research in peer reviewed journals. Where appropriate, they should also provide evidence of other outputs (e.g., published book chapters, reports to government, research data and datasets, research materials, databases, audio/video products, national and/or international reports, patents, models and protocols, software production, evidence of influence on health policy and practice, outreach and/or knowledge translation activities, media coverage or other relevant activities) and/or any other relevant outputs that have resulted in a significant impact in their field.

b) Demonstrating record of independence by showing that they have secured at least one peer-reviewed research grant for a research project/s, as either the Lead Applicant or a Co-Applicant. Funding received for travel to seminars/conferences and/or small personal bursaries will not be considered in this regard.

c) That they possess the capability and authority to manage and supervise the research team.

Only one application per Lead Applicant to this scheme can be submitted.

Where a Lead applicant fails to meet the eligibility criteria, the application will be deemed ineligible and will not be accepted for review. The HRB will contact the Lead Applicant in the event that this situation arises.

6.1.2 Co-Applicants

Co-Applicants will be asked to select whether they are a **Researcher, Knowledge User**[5] **or PPI contributor** co-applicant for the purpose of the proposed research. Up to a maximum of **6 Co-Applicants** can be included.

A Co-Applicant has a well-defined, critical, and substantial role in the conduct and steering of the proposed research. Co-Applicants from outside the island of Ireland are welcome where this is appropriately justified in terms of added value for the project. A Co-Applicant may receive funding for items such as running costs and personnel but will not receive support towards their own salary if they are in salaried positions. However, researchers in contract positions/independent investigators, 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 grant.

Each Co-Applicant must confirm their participation and is invited to view the application form online. The terms of any co-application should be determined early, and relevant agreements should be in place by the onset of the project. The HRB advise that consideration should be given to issues such as

[5] A **Knowledge User** is defined as one in a position of authority to influence and/or make decisions about health policy or the delivery of services and can act to ensure that the findings of the research will be translated to influence decision making and change within their (or other) organisations. This is typically managers, policy makers, clinicians, health professionals or others who are in a position to make significant changes to policy or practice. Knowledge User organisations may be government departments, HSE, other agencies, hospitals or hospital groups, community healthcare organisations, local government, voluntary organisations, research charities, patient/consumer groups or other organisations involved in making decisions regarding the management, structuring and/or delivery of practice or policy in the Irish health and social care system.

relative responsibilities, governance arrangements, intellectual property rights, reporting and access to data and samples when working up co-application agreements.

6.1.3 Collaborators

A Collaborator is an individual or an organisation who will have an integral and discrete role in the proposed research and is eligible to request funding from the grant when properly justified. Named collaborators may include investigators or organisations from outside the Republic of Ireland, but an individual or organisation should **only** be named as Collaborator if they are providing specific contributions (either direct or indirect) to the activities. A collaborator may provide training, supply samples or kits, provide access to specific equipment, specialist staff time, staff placements, access to data and/or patients, instruments or protocols, industry know-how, or may act in an advisory capacity. Collaborators can come from a range of backgrounds such as academia, the private sector, a healthcare organisation, the charity sector, or a patient group (**up to a maximum of 10 Collaborators can be listed)**.

Profile details **must** be provided for ALL collaborators. In addition, each collaborator **must** complete a **Collaboration Agreement Form**. A template Collaborator Agreement form will be made available on GEMS for download.

If access to samples, vulnerable population groups, healthy volunteers or patients, data, databases, or a link to an existing national or international study (e.g., an existing cohort or longitudinal study) are an integral part of the proposed project, evidence of commitment and access must be demonstrated by having the Data Controller[6] or key Gatekeeper of a study included as a Collaborator.

The applicant team will be asked to describe any relevant agreements that they have entered into to facilitate their partnership working. The terms of any collaboration should be determined early, and relevant agreements should be in place by the onset of the project. The HRB advise that consideration should be given to issues such as relative responsibilities, governance arrangements, ownership and copyright, access and sharing of data and samples etc. when working up Partnership proposals.

6.1.4 Funded Personnel

Applicants must demonstrate 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. Alignment between personnel requested and the proposed project should be demonstrated. Roles and responsibilities of funded personnel must be differentiated and clear.

[6] A '**data controller**' refers to a person, company, or other body that decides how and why a data subject's personal data are processed. If two or more persons or entities decide how and why personal data are processed, they may be 'joint controllers', and they would both share responsibility for the data processing obligations[6]. Data Controllers from the provider organisation should be named as Co-applicants where justified by their level of involvement.

This scheme is not framed as a training initiative and PhD researchers **must not** make up part of the research team. Where candidates for a Masters degree are proposed to work on projects, 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 or the potential difficulties in clustering various pieces of work packages for a Masters thesis.
- The skills, expertise and experience level required to carry it out.
- Any requirements and/or restriction relating to the Masters researcher's registration with the Host Institution, and this should be accounted for when determining the start date of the grant.

7 Host Institution

This call is open to HRB Host Institutions from Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland and funding outside the island of Ireland **is allowable** where there is no established research capacity in Ireland (e.g. for the case of rare diseases).

A HRB Host Institution is a research-performing organisation approved by the HRB for the purpose of receiving and administering HRB grant funding and is responsible for compliance with all general and specific terms and conditions of grants. The **Host Institution for the grant** is normally that of the **Lead Applicant** but it may be another organisation/institution designated by the research team, where it is clearly justified.

In order to be eligible to apply for funding, a Host Institution **on the island of Ireland** must be an **approved** HRB Host Institution no later than two calendar months before the closing date of a call. A list of currently approved HRB Host Institutions and information on the application process for research performing organisations to be approved as HRB Host Institutions can be found on the HRB website[7].

A Host Institution **outside of the island of Ireland** is not required to be an approved HRB Host Institution but if successful will be required to complete and submit a form detailing their Financial Management and Governance processes as well as providing signed audited financial statements before contracting can be finalised.

The **Host Institution** will be required to confirm for **(1) all Lead Applicants in a contract position and (2) Co-Applicants in a contract position who are seeking their own salary** that (i) they will be recognized by the host institution upon receipt of the HRB HRCI-HRB Joint Funding Scheme 2026 grant as a contract researcher; (ii) they will have an independent office and research space/facilities for which they is fully responsible for at least the duration of the grant, and (iii) they have the capability and authority to mentor and supervise the research team.

8 Application, Review Process and Assessment Criteria

[7] https://www.hrb.ie/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/HRB-Policy-on-Approval-of-Host-Institutions.pdf

8.1 Application

Pre-application Stage

Co-funding charities may run a pre-application stage. See relevant charity call details.

Full Application Stage

Applications must be completed and submitted through the HRB online Grant E-Management System (GEMS) (https://grants.hrb.ie/). It is the responsibility of the Lead Applicant to ensure that applications are completed in full, and all necessary documentation is received by the HRB on, or before, the closing dates indicated.

The applicant must select the relevant co-funding charity in their application form. This will create an invite to the charity with read only access to the application. Charities reserve the right to reject an application at this stage and will notify the Lead Applicant and HRB providing justification in such instances.

The application must have been reviewed and approved by the signatory approver at the research office (or equivalent) in the Host Institution before it is submitted to the HRB. Therefore, applicants should ensure that they give the signatory approver sufficient time before the scheme closing date to review the application and approve it on GEMS. Please note that many host institutions specify internal deadlines for this procedure.

The HRB is committed to an open and competitive process underpinned by international peer review. To ensure the integrity of the assessment process, conflict of interest and confidentiality are applied rigorously in each stage of the process.

8.2 Review Process

Applications will be initially checked for eligibility by HRB staff members. Following the initial eligibility check, each eligible application submitted to this scheme will undergo a two-phase review process.

The HRCI-HRB Joint Funding Scheme 2026 will use a three-stage review process consisting of:

Stage 1 – Peer Review and Applicant Response

Stage 2 – Charity endorsement and shortlisting

Stage 3 - Panel Review

Stage 1

In line with international good practice, applications are peer reviewed, and applicant teams have an opportunity to respond.

International Peer Review

For this scheme, suitable international peer reviewers for each application are identified and invited. Peer reviewers who accept the invitation will be asked to submit reviews via HRBs grant

management system, GEMS. For each application, we aim to receive written feedback from at least three international peer reviewers.

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. Peer reviewers are asked to focus on the stated assessment criteria for the call and will provide comments as well as a score which is visible to the co-funding charity, the HRB and to panel members.

Applicant Response

Where applications score on average 'very good' i.e. 6 or above[8] in peer review, the application will be eligible to go forward to review stage 2 – Charity Endorsement and Shortlisting. Applicant teams will be provided with a time-limited opportunity to respond to peer review comments (see Section 9 Timeframe). Peer review comments won't include any reference to the reviewer's identity.

Peer review comments will be made available to the Lead Applicant on their GEMS personal page. The Lead Applicant will have 10 working days only to submit their response through GEMS, and the response has a **maximum word count of 2000 words only for the peer review response** (including references). No figures can be uploaded. The response will be provided to the charity for final charity endorsement step.

Stage 2 - Charity Endorsement and Shortlisting

Each charity can put forward a maximum of 4 proposals to panel review stage and the maximum number of applications that can be funded by the charity through this scheme is 3. The charity will conduct a final selection or endorsement step and shortlist applications to go forward to panel. This will be based on the relevance of the application in addressing their strategic priorities, the peer review comments and scores, the applicant response to peer review comments, and the funding the charity has available. This may include a charity PPI review process. Charities will advise the HRB which applications have been selected to go forward for panel review. Where an application is rejected by the charity, the charity will notify the applicant and HRB.

Stage 3 – Panel Review

A grant selection panel will be convened by HRB and HRCI consisting of international scientific panel members and national public panel members. Panel members will have access to the application, peer reviews and scores and the applicants' response. HRB and HRCI staff members are present at the meeting to clarify any procedural aspects for the Chair or Panel members and to take notes for

[8] Applications must receive an **average peer review score above 6 to be eligible to be put forward to the joint selection committee**. Where the average peer review score has been skewed by an outlier these applications can be brought forward as well. For an average score to be considered skewed all but one of the scores should be above 6 and an individual outlier is bringing the average down below 6. An outlier score is defined as a score that is two scores or more below the next lowest score, removal of which will bring the average above the threshold of 6. All peer reviews received must be considered.

the feedback process. Representatives of the co-funding charities will also be present in an observer capacity.

Scientific Panel members

Scientific panel members are selected based on the range of applications received and the expertise and skillset needed (e.g., research area and methodological and analytical approaches, knowledge translation/applied health research etc.). Panel members are assigned as lead and secondary reviewers to specific applications.

The scientific panel will review the strengths and weaknesses of the application relating to the assessment criteria detailed below. Successful applicants are expected to score well in all review criteria. While PPI is not a stand-alone assessment criterion, it may influence scores under any criterion as relevant to the application.

Public Panel members

Public reviewers are selected by HRCI and from the HRB database of public reviewers. Public panel members will assess the quality of PPI in the application and will provide comments as well as a rating according to the level of PPI for the proposed research. **Please note that these are not people with lived experience in the topic areas of applications** but members of the general public**.**

Panel Recommendations to HRB Board

At the panel meeting, a scientific score is collectively agreed for each application (range 1-9). The final PPI rating is used to adjust the scientific score, by applying a correction to it (range from +0.5 for 'excellent' PPI rating to -0.5 for 'poor' PPI rating). The applications will then be ranked according to final score as recommendation to the HRB Board.

Gender balance of the Lead Applicant will be considered where required to prioritise proposals with the same scores in the panel ranking list.

The recommendations of the review panel will be presented for approval at the next scheduled HRB Board meeting. Following this, HRB staff will contact the Lead Applicants and Host Institutions to notify them of the outcome. A summary of Panel Member's comments and the panel discussion comments will be issued to the Lead Applicant following the Board approval stage.

8.3 Assessment Criteria

8.3.1 Scientific Assessment Criteria

The following assessment criteria will be used by international scientific **peer-reviewers and panel reviewers**. Successful applications will be expected to **rate highly in all criteria**.

Scientific Quality and Innovation (35%)

- Evidence supports need for proposed project
- Design and methodology appropriate
- Project plan and risk mitigation for project delivery

Potential Impact (35%)

- Potential short- or longer-term impact on patients, public and/or healthcare system
- Planned knowledge dissemination and translation

Research Team and Environment (30%)

- Applicant team expertise and experience relevant for project
- Supports, infrastructure, environment
- Project staffing and funding

Panel members will be advised to take PPI approaches into consideration under any of the assessment criteria if considered relevant.

8.3.2 Public Assessment Criteria

Public reviewers will assess the quality of PPI in the application and will provide comments and an overall rating (from poor – excellent). The rating will result in an addition/subtraction from the scientific score to reach a final score.

Public Reviewers are asked to comment on the following:

- The plain English summary (Lay Summary)
- PPI in development of and throughout the project
- Making it straightforward for research participants

The HRB will share the public review feedback with the PPI Ignite Network team in the Host Institution where applicable.

9 Timeframe

Date	
Varies (from July 2025)	Charity Calls Open
01 September 2025	HRB Call & GEMS Application Open
26 Nov 2025 @13:00	Final Application Deadline
26 February 2026	Peer Review Deadline
27 February – 13 March 2026	**Applicant Response**
03 April 2026	Charity Endorsement & Shortlisting Deadline
April-May 2026	Panel Review
Late May 2026	Panel Review Meeting
Late June 2026	HRB Board Decision
July 2026	Outcome Notification to Applicants, Host Institutions, Charities
July – September 2026	Contracting stage (subject to approval)
01 October 2026	Earliest start date

10 Contacts

For further information on the HRCI-HRB Joint Funding Scheme contact:

Sarah Delaney

Research Support Manager

Health Research Charities Ireland

sarah@hrci.ie

Patricia O'Byrne

Research Strategy and Funding

Health Research Board

Hrci-hrbjfs@hrb.ie

The HRB reserves the right to reject any application that does not meet the terms of this call. The HRB's Policy on Appeals on funding decisions is available at https://www.hrb.ie/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/HRB-Policy-on-Appeals-2.pdf.

Appendix I: HRCI-HRB 2026 Application Form Questions

- All applications **must** be submitted via HRBs grant management system (GEMS). Please register or log in at https://grants.hrb.ie.

Lead Applicant Confirmations

- I have read the Guidance Notes for the HRCI-HRB 2026 call and meet the eligibility criteria to apply.
- I am clear that I need to build sufficient time into the application process for the HI to access, review and approve my final application for submission to the HRB through the GEMS system.
- I confirm the information that will be provided in this application form is correct to the best of my knowledge.
- By submitting this application, I consent to (a) sharing of my data outside of the European Economic Area (EEA) for the purpose of international peer review, and (b) the use of my data for assessment of my application; monitoring of successful grants; and evaluation of HRB's approach to funding and investment in research, in line with HRB policies and as detailed in the HRCI-HRB 2026 Call Guidance Notes.

Host Institution

Add and notify relevant Host Institution:

If your Host Institution on the island of Ireland, it must be an HRB-approved Host Institution (list available at https://www.hrb.ie/funding/funding-opportunities/before-you-apply/). Start to type and then select your Host Institution. The GEMS system is pre-populated with agreed contact points within the Dean of Research/equivalent offices in each Host Institution and you can click to 'notify Dean of Research'.

If the Host Institution is outside the island of Ireland, you will be required to enter the Host Institution details and then email gemshelp@hrb.ie with details of the Dean of Research (or equivalent person authorised to endorse research grant applications) at your Host Institution. We can then update GEMS enable click to 'notify Dean of Research'.

Charity

Add and notify relevant charity:

Select the relevant charity and click button to 'notify charity' that you will be applying. The charity contact will have read only access to the application and may contact you about the application before the application deadline.

1. Project Overview

1.1 Title:

The title should be descriptive, concise and reflect the aim of the project. (50 word limit)

1.2 Abstract:

Clear, succinct outline of the background to the research and hypotheses, aim and objectives, impact expected. (300 word limit)

1.3 Lay Summary:

Plain english summary (i.e. clear, easy to understand, easily accessible to a lay audience) describing what you propose to do, why you think it is important, how you are going to go about conducting, anlysing and drawing conclusions from the research, what impact it will make. This may be used when providing information to the public and posted on the HRB website. (300 word limit)

1.4 Key Words:

Select up to 5 key words that specifically describe your research project from the Medical Subject Headings menu (for more information see https://www.nlm.nih.gov/mesh/meshhome.html).

1.5 Project Duration:

Enter project duration. Between 12 and 36 months.

1.6 Proposed start date:

Enter proposed start date. Earliest start date 01 October 2026.

2. Public and Patient Involvement

2.1 Public and Patient Involvement (PPI):

This section should be a succinct summary of public involvement activities. PPI contributors should be representative of the relevant people and communities impacted by the research topic. Please ensure to provide more detail in other sections as appropriate.

Describe, in plain English, PPI at each stage of the research cycle:

- Identifying and prioritising the research question
- Design
- Conduct
- Analysis
- Oversight
- Dissemination

For each stage, please include the purpose of this involvement and where applicable how PPI has influenced/changed what work has been planned.

Where members of the public or patients are involved, they should be compensated for their time and contributions; this should be reflected in the project budget.

If public/patients have not been involved, explain why not. (600 word limit)

3. Scientific Quality

3.1 Current knowledge, background to the area, relevance and knowledge gap:

Describe the background to the research and detail the size and nature of the issue to be addressed.

We expect that applicants reference evidence supporting the case for the study/project that has been gathered systematically, i.e., as systematic reviews or other evidence synthesis formats. Simple literature overviews are not sufficient. Evidence synthesised systematically should include evidence of (1) a systematic identification of previous work, (2) critical appraisal, (3) synthesis of the evidence and (4) interpretation of findings.

Where available, include a description of any pilot work, professional and consumer consensus studies already undertaken.

Reference any documented need for this area of research, including information on burden on health or the healthcare system. Have any potential users of research outputs been involved in identifying the research question (e.g., patients, healthcare professionals, policymakers) or has it been identified and prioritised through a priority setting partnership such as the James Lind Alliance? Explain why this research is both important and timely.

Describe how your research will add to the knowledge base/advance the state of the art in this area.

Be aware that the peer reviewers reading your application are based outside of Ireland, so it is important to describe the healthcare delivery context in Ireland when discussing issues around need (including specific needs of any under-represented groups), relevance, timeliness, and feasibility. (1200 word limit)

3.2 Overall Aim:

Outline the specific, overarching aim that the proposed research project seeks to achieve. (100 word limit)

3.3 Research Question:

This should be a focused, clear and specific inquiry that guides the research project. (50 word limit)

3.4 Objectives and Deliverables:

Minimum of 3 **research** objectives. (60 word limit for each objective; 150 word limit for deliverables)

Objectives should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound). For each objective, list a subset of deliverables in bullet point format which will be used to monitor progress throughout the lifetime of the grant if funded. Objectives/deliverables should be mapped against estimated completion timelines in a Gantt chart with milestones highlighted.

Project management and reporting constitute one objective, including submission of a Data Management Plan and annual reports as deliverables.

3.5 Research Design and Methodology:

Summarise the proposed research plan, providing descriptions of work to achieve each of the objectives and deliverables and describe how they integrate to form a coherent research application. Show how your research design will allow you to answer your research question.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to engage statistical and other expertise during application preparation to help ensure robust study design, accurate sample size and power calculations, credible data analysis plan and an appropriate budget.

Include detailed information on the following aspects of your study design:

- **Study Design**: Describe the type of study (e.g., observational, experimental, longitudinal) and justify your choice.
- **Methodological Approach**: Outline the methodological approach and techniques to be employed.
- **Data Collection**: Detail the methods, instruments, and procedures for collecting data.
- **Sampling Strategy**: Provide the rationale for your sampling approach, including inclusion/exclusion criteria and how these align with the research objectives and population under study. For human participants, also consider whether under-served or under-represented populations are included and justify their inclusion or exclusion. Please justify any exclusions based on age or sex/gender of participants.
- **Sample Size and Power Calculation**: Justify the proposed sample size and include power calculations where applicable.
- **Measures and Instruments**: Specify the tools and metrics used for both quantitative and qualitative data.
- **Data Analysis and Management**: Describe your analytical strategy, including statistical methods, software, and plans for data management

For proposals containing animal studies

Provide sound scientific justification for their use, explain why there are no realistic alternatives, and demonstrate that the numbers proposed will allows meaningful results to be obtained from the research. Give details of the proposed sex of the animals, and rationale for the numbers of each sex (see https://nc3rs.org.uk/3rs-resources/search?topic%5B0%5D=497.). Experiments should use the smallest possible number of animals required to answer the research question and should ensure that distress and suffering are avoided wherever possible. Applicants are strongly advised to consult with their animal care team in their HI when planning animal studies.

Useful links including to the EU Reference Laboratory for alternatives to animal testing, the PREPARE guidelines (developed to promote animal alternatives, reduce waste and increase the reproducibility of research and testing), the ARRIVE checklist and links to an online tool created to aid researchers including incorporating sex into study design and can be found on the HRB Funding Opportunities webpage at http://www.hrb.ie/funding/funding-opportunities/useful-links.
(4500 word limit)

3.6 Gantt Chart: Upload Gantt Chart (Template available at https://www.hrb.ie/funding/grant-management/reporting/).

3.7 Risk Management Plan:

Identify key project risks e.g. ethics approval delays, recruitment difficulties, inadequate expertise available, supply chain disruption, and describe contingency plans, including how you intend to manage any risks to the delivery of the project. (300 word limit)

3.8 Potential Safety Risks and Ethical Concerns:

Please identify and describe any potential safety risks or harms associated with your proposed research, including risks to participants, research staff, and the wider community. Outline how these risks will be assessed, mitigated, and monitored throughout the study.

In addition, detail any ethical concerns that may arise during the research or follow-up stages, including those related to informed consent, privacy and confidentiality, the inclusion of vulnerable populations, and the use of animals (if applicable). Explain how these concerns will be addressed in compliance with relevant ethical and regulatory requirements and highlight any anticipated challenges in meeting these standards. (400 word limit)

Note: Ethical approval declaration will be required if the project is funded.

3.9 Sex and/or Gender Dimensions:

A key objective of the HRB is to strive for gender balance in Irish health research. We encourage a balanced participation of genders in all research activities.

Please note this section is intended to focus researchers on the research content, and not the gender balance within the research team.

Are there potential sex (biological) considerations for this research?
Are there potential gender (socio-cultural) considerations for this research?

If so, outline how sex and/or gender analysis will be integrated in the design, implementation, evaluation, interpretation, and dissemination of the results of the research application.

If not, you must clearly demonstrate why it is not relevant to the research application; have you done a literature search to confirm this?

Please see HRB Useful links webpage (https://www.hrb.ie/funding/funding-opportunities/useful-links/) for resources on gender and sex considerations in research applications. (400 word limit)

3.10 Data Management and Stewardship:

Describe the general approach to data management and stewardship that will be taken during and after the project in line with the HRB Policy on Management and Sharing of Research Data (available at https://www.hrb.ie/funding/grant-management/grant-policies/), including who will be responsible for data management and data stewardship during the project's lifetime and ensure submission of the initial Data Management Plan (DMP) within 6 months of project start date and final DMP version to the HRB with accompanying Host Institution certifications.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to engage with their Host Institution Data Stewards or other data-related service supports (typically library and ICT and digital service, etc) during application preparation to identify appropriate budget to support data management costs and ensure timely completion and submission of DMPs.

Applicants should consider:

- the FAIR Guiding Principles for scientific data management and stewardship: **F**indability, **A**ccessibility, **I**nteroperability, and **R**eusability[9]

[9] Wilkinson, M. D. et al. The FAIR Guiding Principles for scientific data management and stewardship. Sci. Data 3:160018 doi: 10.1038/sdata.2016.18 (2016).

- HRB DMP requirements as outlined in the HRB DMP Template: (available at https://www.hrb.ie/funding/grant-management/reporting/)

1. **Data Description and Collection or Re-use of existing data:**
    a. What is the type, format and volume of data?
    b. How will the data be collected, created or reused?
2. **Documentation and Data Quality:**
    a. What metadata and documentation will accompany the data?
    b. Will you make sure globally resolvable unique, persistent identifiers are in use (e.g DOI)?
    c. What data quality control measure do you use?
3. **Storage and Backup:**
    a. How will data be stored and backed up during the research?
    b. How will you take care of data security and personal data protection?
4. **Ethical and Legal Requirements, Codes of Conduct:**
    a. If personal data are involved, how will you manage compliance with legislation on personal data and security?
    b. How will you manage legal issues, such as IPR, copyright, and ownership? What legislation is applicable?
    c. Which ethical issues and codes of conduct are there and how are they taken into account?
5. **Data Sharing and Long-term Preservation:**
    a. How and when will you share the data?
    b. How do you select data for preservation and where will data be preserved long term (e.g. data repository, archive)?
    c. What methods or software tools are needed to access data?
    d. How will the application of a unique and persistent identifier (such as a Digital Object Identifier (DOI)) to each data set be ensured?
6. **Data Management Responsibilities and Resources:**
    a. Who (for example role, position, and institution) will be responsible for data management (i.e., the data steward)?
    b. What resources (for example financial and time) will be dedicated to data management and ensuring that data will be FAIR?

A DMP is not required as part of the application submission. (500 word limit).

3.11 Biobanking:

Does your application include an element of biobanking?

If yes,
Describe how biobanking within this project will be in compliance with international best-practice ethical considerations and the General Data Protection Regulation, in particular in relation to consent.

You must submit a completed Infrastructure Agreement form with details of the biobank. Please describe how you will ensure good practice for biobanking components in this project, with particular regard to quality of sample collection, processing, annotation and storage. Please reference relevant guidelines/standards you will use. Where material will be obtained or stored for a future research purpose, or where you will use material previously obtained for another purpose, please refer to the latest Recommendation of the Council of Europe. Some useful links are available on the HRB website (https://www.hrb.ie/funding/funding-opportunities/useful-links/).

3.12 Project description figures:

A file upload option is available to include an attachment to support your Project Description. A **maximum of 5 figures**, which can be a combination of images, graphs, tables, scales, instruments, or surveys, may be uploaded as a single document on HRB GEMS. They must not be embedded within the text of the Project Description. Additional references should not be included here. The maximum size is 2MB. Files should be doc, docx, or pdf.

4. Potential Impact

4.1 Impact Statement:

Describe the anticipated outputs and outcomes of the proposed research. Please provide details on the likely impact of this research on human health and wellbeing indicating the anticipated timescale for any proposed benefits to be realised. This statement should be written in plain English. (400 word limit).

4.2 IP considerations:

Please describe any current Intellectual property (IP) that will be relevant for the study and whether such IP assets are held by the applicants, and/or others outside the research team. Such IP might include software, checklists, scales, protocols, guidelines, questionnaires, or medicinal products for example. Has relevant background IP for your study been identified? If IP is required, is there freedom to operate, such that this research can eventually be translated? What arrangements are in place to manage IP during the study, and ensure it is protected (if appropriate) prior to dissemination? Do you foresee any barriers to use of IP in order for the research outputs to be adopted? (300 word limit).

4.3 Dissemination and Knowledge Translation Plan:

Include a clear dissemination and knowledge translation plan to indicate how the research outputs you anticipate producing during and after your project will be disseminated and shared and made openly accessible, in line with HRB Open Access Policy (available at https://www.hrb.ie/funding/grant-management/grant-policies/). Research outputs include peer-reviewed publications, non-peer reviewed publications and conference proceedings, reports, policy briefings, guidelines, training materials and so on. Protection of Intellectual Property should be considered before data are disseminated .

Applicants are advised to consider the following:

- The HRB has a mandatory Open Access policy; demonstrate how you plan to make your relevant peer-reviewed publications ‘full and immediate’ open access (OA) without embargo and under a CC-BY copyright licence
- Who are the various audiences and communities that need to be targeted if these results are to have any impact? What is your dissemination plan to address this, how will these audiences be reached?

- Describe any plans for technology transfer.
- Describe how the findings of this research will be publicised to the HSE or international health community/organisations in a manner that will optimise impact on health policy and/or practice.
- Please reference aspects of the project/study undertaken to maximise chances of adoption beyond the term of the grant.

(500 word limit)

5. Cited Publications

Please provide references of publications cited in the application. You can enter a maximum of **30 publications**. Please enter references in the same format.

For publications:

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.

For book and printed source citations:

Farrell M, Gerada C and Marsden J (2000) External review of drug services for the Eastern Health Board. London: National Addiction Centre.

For data citations:

Authors, year, article title, journal, publisher, DOI

Author(s), year, dataset title, data repository or archive, version, global persistence identifier

6. Research Team and Environment

6.1 Project Roles

Lead Applicant Role:

Outline the role of the Lead Applicant on a day-to-day basis and time to be dedicated to working on this project as a proportion of a full time equivalent (FTE). (250 word limit).

Co-applicant Role:

For each co-applicant (up to 6 Co-Applicants), add name, and select co-applicant type i.e. researcher, knowledge user, or PPI contributor co-applicant. If co-applicant contributes from more than one perspective, please select the dominant role.

Outline the role of each co-applicant and time to be dedicated to working on this project as a proportion of a full time equivalent (FTE). (250 word limit per co-applicant)

Collaborator Role:

For each collaborator (up to 10 collaborators), add name and organisation and describe the collaborator's role in the project. (100 word limit per collaborator)

A collaborator agreement form signed by the collaborator which includes this description of the role must be uploaded with the application.

Other Research Personnel Role:

For each additional research personnel (who are not part of the applicant team already described), specify the personnel type, outline their role and time to be dedicated to working on this project as a proportion of a full time equivalent (FTE). (250 word limit per additional research personnel)

6.2 Lead Applicant Details

Contact and CV details:

Name, contact information, institution or organisation, current position, qualifications, employment history, profession, and ORCID ID are asked in the 'Manage my Details' section of GEMS. Details are automatically included in the application.

All applicants are strongly encouraged to include an ORCID ID. Linking your ORCID ID to your grant application enables the HRB to automatically and authoritatively credit the awarded grant directly to your ORCID profile.

For more information and to register please see https://orcid.org/.

Employment Status:

Permanent/contract and end date if contract

Breaks from research:

Where desired outline breaks from research e.g. statutory leave, secondments, flexible working arrangements, that may have affected or influenced progression as researcher. (150 word limit)

Relevant publications:

Select your 5 most relevant publications for this application from outputs included in your 'My Research Outputs' in GEMS.

Relevant funding grants:

Select your 5 most relevant funding grants for this application as Principal Investigator or Co-applicant from research grants included in your CV section of 'Manage My Details' in GEMS

Additional experience and expertise relevant to this application:

Additional experience and expertise e.g., communication of previous results and/or ideas, contribution to generation of knowledge, new ideas, hypotheses, and tools. (400 word limit)

6.3 Co-Applicant Details

Add up to 6 co-applicants.

Co-applicant(s) can be added by entering name and email address.

If the co-applicant is already registered on GEMS, the system will find them and will allow the Lead Applicant to select them. Alternatively, a Co-Applicant can be added manually by entering their name and email details. GEMS will send an invitation email to the proposed co-applicant. The co-applicant will be required to log in to GEMS and consent to the application being submitted jointly in their name if they wish to participate. Co-applicants who accept will be given access to read and edit the application.

For each co-applicant,

Co-applicant type:

Select co-applicant type from list i.e. Researcher, Knowledge User, PPI contributor co-applicant. If co-applicant contributes from more than one perspective, please select the dominant role.

Contact and CV details:

Name, contact information, institution or organisation, current position, qualifications, employment history, profession, and ORCID ID are asked in the 'Manage my Details' section of GEMS. Details are automatically included in the application.

All applicants are strongly encouraged to include an ORCID ID. Linking your ORCID ID to your grant application enables the HRB to automatically and authoritatively credit the awarded grant directly to your ORCID profile.

For more information and to register please see https://orcid.org/.

For researcher co-applicant(s)

Breaks from research:

Where desired outline breaks from research e.g. statutory leave, secondments, flexible working arrangements, that may have affected or influenced progression as researcher. (150 word limit)

Relevant publications:

Add your 5 most relevant publications for this application.

Relevant funding grants:

Add the 5 most relevant funding grants, where you were named as Principal Investigator or Co-applicant, for this application.

Additional experience and expertise relevant to this application:

Additional experience and expertise e.g., communication of previous results and/or ideas, contribution to generation of knowledge, new ideas, hypotheses, and tools. (400 word limit)

For knowledge user co-applicant(s)

Influencing decision making:

Highlight the Knowledge User Co-applicant previous and current roles in influencing decision-making processes within their organisation or other relevant organisation(s) and their specific experiences and expertise for the Knowledge User Co-Applicant role in relation to the proposed research. (300 word limit)

Additional experience and expertise relevant to this application:

Include any relevant research experience/expertise, previous experience of working in collaboration or links with researchers to produce research or evidence for health, evidence of Public and Patient Involvement in knowledge user role, and roles/responsibilities as a constructive and effective change agent. (300 word limit)

For PPI contributor co-applicant(s)

Experience and expertise relevant to this application:

Include any experience as a service user or carer, relevant lived experience, prior experience in PPI or any other useful background information.

6.4 Collaborator Details

Add up to 10 collaborators.

Collaborator(s) can be added by entering name and organisation.

For each collaborator,

Experience and expertise relevant to this application:

Please provide brief justification for the inclusion of this collaborator, outlining their relevant expertise and experience in relation to the proposed project.

Collaborator agreement form:

The collaborator will **not** be invited to register and consent to participation in GEMS, rather the lead applicant and collaborator must sign a HRB Collaboration Agreement Form (available for download in GEMS). A form must be uploaded for each Collaborator included in the application. This is for HRB internal use only.

6.5 Management/Governance and Support

Oversight, advisory and governance structures:

Outline the processes that will be put in place to ensure that the project is well managed e.g. project management plans, meetings schedules, steering committee, financial management, data safety and monitoring committee. (300 word limit).

Host Institution Infrastructure and Support:

Describe the infrastructure, facilities, specialist expertise and other support available at the Host Institution and/or at other sites where the research will be conducted. Please include details of critical supports in areas such as statistics, research methods, biobanking expertise or regulatory expertise where this is being provided above and beyond the activities/expertise of members of the research team. (400 word limit).

Research Infrastructures:

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 unit (e.g. Centre for Support and Training in Analysis and Research, HRB – Trials Methodology Research Network) or biobank are required to provide additional information detailing the scope and nature of the engagement (this include national facilities and/or international facilities and units/networks where justified) at research design or implementation stages.

For each, add name and website (or address) of the facility/centre/network.

Please provide details of the scope and nature of the agreement including:

- Information on the nature and stage/s of the input/advice/collaboration/service.
- Rationale for the choice of facility/centre/network.
- How the proposed involvement enables the planned research to be undertaken to the required quality or timescale.

Applications involving patients which do not detail such input, advice and/or support (and where this expertise is not clearly evident within the applicant team) **must provide a detailed justification** as to why they have chosen not to access such support. (200 word limit)

Infrastructure Agreement Form:

The lead applicant and infrastructure representative must sign a HRB Infrastructure Agreement Form available for download in GEMS. A form must be uploaded for each Infrastructure included in the application. This is for HRB internal use only.

7. Project Budget & Justification

You are strongly advised to seek guidance from the research office/finance office in the Host Institution before completing this section of the form. The HRB will not provide additional funding in the case of either under-estimates or over expenditure.

A budget cost for each category (outlined below), for each year, with a **full detailed breakdown of costings and justification for all funding** is required.

Note, overhead contribution will be added to the HRB portion of funding by HRB staff during contract negotiations for successful applications. It is not requested as part of the application budget. In accordance with the HRB Policy on Overhead Usage[10], the HRB will contribute to the indirect costs of the research through an overhead payment of 30% of Total Direct Modified Costs (TDMC excludes postgraduate fees, equipment, and capital building costs) for **laboratory, clinically or field-based research,** and 25% of Total Direct Modified Costs for **desk-based research**.

The following items are included in the Overhead Contribution: recruitment costs, bench fees, office space, software, contribution to gases, bacteriological media preparation fees, waste fees, bioinformatics access. Therefore, these should not be included in the budget as direct costs.

Personnel costs:

Must be listed for each salaried personnel under each of the following sub-headings (a-e):

a) Salary

Gross Annual Salary (including 5% employee pension contribution) negotiated and agreed with Host Institution. Applicants should use the IUA website scales for the most up-to-date recommended salary scales for academic researchers http://www.iua.ie/research-innovation/researcher-salary-scales/.

Please note employee pension contribution of 5% has already been incorporated into the IUA gross salary figure.

Applicants should include annual pay increments for staff and related costs (pension contribution and employer's PRSI contribution) in the budget. In line with the proposed new pay agreement for State employees please apply a salary contingency of 3% from 1st October 2026 onwards. Please note this contingency should be applied cumulatively year on year.

Note: The HRB does not provide funding for the salary or benefits of academic staff within research institutions that are already in receipt of salary or benefits. The HRB does not provide salary or buy out time for collaborators

b) Employer's PRSI

Employers' PRSI contributions are calculated at a % of gross salary. Please confirm the correct PRSI % rate with your institutional finance office.

c) Employer Pension Contribution

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).

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

[10] https://www.hrb.ie/funding/grant-management/grant-policies/

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.

d) Postgraduate Stipend

A stipend for academic based postgraduate researchers in line with current government guidelines as a flat rate, which is currently €25,000 per annum for up to two years for MSc degrees. The stipend is tax exempt and in no circumstances can the stipend be used to support postgraduate fees.

Please note that:

- In the Republic of Ireland, the HRB does not support stipends different than the current national rate (€25,000).
- Outside the Republic of Ireland, the HRB will support the current relevant national rate (or the institutional rate if national rate not available). The HRB does not support stipends for MD degrees.

e) Postgraduate Fees

The HRB support a maximum contribution to postgraduate fees of €5,500 annually for individuals registered for a higher degree supported by either a stipend or a salary for up to two years for MSc degrees.

Where the rate of the final year is reduced in line with the Institutional policy, the HRB reserves the right to recover the unspent fees.

Please note postgraduate fees are paid at EU level only. The HRB does not support fees for MD degrees.

PPI Costs:

Costs associated with public and patient involvement in research. Some examples are:

- Compensating PPI contributors for their time (for example for time spent reviewing material/ participation in advisory groups). This can be as:
    - a cost for their expertise, e.g. as hourly rate, under PPI costs or
    - as salaries under personnel which should be labelled PPI contributors under salaries.
- Travel expenses for PPI contributors.
- Costs associated with PPI contributors attending conferences, workshops, or training.
- PPI facilitator costs.
- Compensation of public or patient organisations for their time.
- Room hires for PPI events/meetings.

- Hospitality for PPI events/meetings.
- Companionship or childcare costs for PPI contributors while attending events, meetings, etc.
- Training in PPI in research.

PPI contributors supported by salaries as research staff or co-applicants, where applicable in a scheme, should be listed and justified under the personnel heading.

All costs must be in line with the Host institutions policies, practices and HRB Terms and Conditions.

Running Costs:

For all costs required to carry out the research including materials and consumables, survey costs, some travel costs including travel for participants, transcription costs, data access costs etc.

Maintenance costs of animals are allowed for animal models only.

Access to necessary special facilities or services which are not available in the host academic or clinical institutions. i.e., consultancy fees, methodological support, Clinical Research Facilities support, MRI facilities etc. will be considered under running costs as long as they are detailed in an accompanying 'Infrastructure Agreement Form'.

The following costs are ineligible and will not be funded: training courses/workshops with the exception of training in public and patient involvement in research, inflationary increases, cost of electronic journals.

Note: Please see a list of costs that fall within the overhead contribution below and which should not be listed under running costs.

Equipment Costs:

Funding for suitably justified equipment can be included in this section. We do not expect equipment costs in excess of €10,000. Personal/Stand-alone computers will not be funded as these are considered a standard piece of office equipment, i.e., Overhead. Dedicated laptops or similar equipment that is required specifically for the project because of the nature of the research, will be considered where appropriately justified, and should not exceed €1,200. Depending on the nature of the project, high spec computers may be eligible and clear justification and rationale for the costs requested must be provided. All costs must be inclusive of VAT, where applicable.

Open Access Costs:

Costs associated with peer-reviewed scientific publications. HRB grant holders are required to ensure that open access to all peer-reviewed scientific publications relating to the output of their project are in line with the HRB Policy on Open Access (available at: https://www.hrb.ie/funding/responsible-research-assessment/open-access-policy/).

The HRB support OA publications by

- Providing HRB Open Research (www.hrbopenresearch.org) which is a rapid, open peer-reviewed and open access publishing platform for all research outputs, with all publication charges covered centrally by the HRB at no expense to the grantee.

And/or

- Providing a contribution towards Open Access publication costs of €2,200 per publication. Typically, the HRB will contribute up to three open access publications for a grant with a duration of 3-4 years.

Dissemination Costs:

Attendance at conference and other events: Contribution to costs associated with attending seminars, workshops, conference and/or any other means of communication, which have a direct benefit to the research funded, as detailed in the dissemination plan of the application. These activities should be specified to the greatest extent possible, and attendance justified at application stage. The HRB will provide a contribution to costs to attend these types of events for the PI and staff members, and the costs are calculated on a lump sum basis of €1,500 per person and year (Grant holder and/or research personnel employed in the Grant) for a period of one year less than the overall term of a Grant. In this scheme costs for three years can be requested, up to €4500 per person, which could be budgeted as e.g. €1500 per year 2, 3 and 4 or e.g. €500 per year 1, €1000 per year 2, €1500 per year 3 and €1500 per year 4 or other combination. Where well justified, these costs maybe also be eligible for co-applicants.

Knowledge Translation: The HRB will support costs associated with knowledge translation (KT) activities aimed to improve the exchange of research findings and/or its translation into policy and practice. The HRB adopts the overall concept of integrated Knowledge Translation (iKT), which includes all activities that aim to promote, enhance and accelerate impact of research in real-world settings. It starts well before the traditional end-of-grant KT that occurs when the research is concluded. There is no upper limit for these costs, but they must be aligned and proportionate to the proposed activities.

Research Data Management and Sharing Costs:

Costs related to data-related and data management activities in line with best practice of data management and stewardship and the FAIR principles incurred during the lifetime of the project.

Examples of eligible costs,

- **People:** staff time per hour for data collection, data anonymisation, data management/stewardship support etc.
- **Storage and computation:** cloud storage, domain hosting charge
- **Data access:** costs for preparing data for sharing
- **Deposition and reuse:** costs for depositing research data and metadata in an open data repository, defining semantic models, making data linkable, choosing the licence, defining metadata for dataset, deploying/publishing.

The list above is not exhaustive and aims to provide examples only of eligible costs.

Note The HRB is currently not covering the cost of long-term preservation of data.

Supporting Documentation

The following documents must be uploaded to complete the application:

Mandatory documents:

- Objectives and Deliverables Gantt Chart

If applicable:

- Collaboration Agreement Form(s) – required for all collaborators
- Infrastructure Agreement Form(s) – required for biobanking and access to Clinical Research Facilities
- Project Description Support file – A maximum of 5 figures which can be a combination of images, graphs, tables, scales, instruments, or surveys

Host Institution Endorsement

The Host Institution must endorse the application by completing the following checklist:

- The Host Institution confirms that the Lead Applicant holds an employment contract or that they will be recognised as a contract researcher upon receipt of the HRB ILP grant for the entire duration of this proposal
- The Host Institution confirms that the Lead Applicant will have a dedicated office and research space/facilities for which they are fully responsible for at least the duration of the grant
- The Host Institution confirms that the Lead Applicant has the capability and authority to mentor and supervise the research team

Submission of Applications

The final deadline for submission of complete applications is 26 November 2025 at 13:00 (some charities may have earlier deadline, please check relevant charity call).

1. After successful validation, the Lead Applicant may submit the application for endorsement by the designated signatory at the Host Institution (research office or equivalent).
2. If a Host Institution signatory rejects the application the Lead Applicant will be notified, along with any feedback the signatory has supplied.
3. The application can then be re-submitted; it will be returned to the signatory and will continue through the approval process as before.

4. Approval by the Host Institution signatory within GEMS submits the application to the HRB and the co-funding charity for consideration for funding.
5. A grant application number is automatically assigned.

Please note that the HRB will not follow up any supporting documentation related to the application, such as Collaborator Agreement Form, Gantt charts etc. It is the responsibility of the Lead Applicant to upload all supporting documentation prior to submission. If the documentation is not received by the HRB on time, in the correct format or is not properly signed or submitted, the application will be deemed ineligible without further review.

The HRB reserves the right to reject any application that does not meet the terms of this call. **The HRB's Policy on Appeals on funding decisions is available at** https://www.hrb.ie/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/HRB-Policy-on-Appeals-2.pdf**.**

Appendix II: HRB Funding Policies and Procedures & Useful Links

Access and support from research infrastructures

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., Centre for Applied Medical Imaging, CAMI, Centre for Support and Training in Analysis and Research (CSTAR), HRB-Trials Methodology Research Network (HRB-TMRN), Cancer Groups, National clinical trials office (NCTO), CTNs or a biobank) are required to provide additional information detailing the scope and nature of the engagement (this includes national and international facilities, Units, and networks where justified).

An **Infrastructure Agreement form** will be requested as part of the application addressing the nature/scope of the service or collaboration, the rationale behind the choice of facility/centre/network and any costs associated with the project (including those provided as in-kind contributions). Applications proposing research with patients which do not detail advice and/or support from a CRF/CRC/CTU will be asked to justify why they have not done so.

Public and Patient Involvement (PPI) in Research

The HRB promotes the active involvement of members of the public and patients in the research that we fund[11]. Public and patient involvement in research means that the public and patients are involved in planning and doing research from start to finish and help tell the public about the results of research. PPI, as defined here, is distinct from and additional to activities which raise awareness, share knowledge, and create a dialogue with the public, and it is also distinct from recruitment of patients/members of the public as participants in research.

PPI represents an active partnership between members of the public and patients and researchers in the research process. This can include, for example, involvement in the selection of research topics, assisting in the design, advising throughout or at specific decision points of the research project or in carrying out the research.

PPI contributors should be actively involved and part of decision making. Involving members of the public in research can improve quality and relevance of research. It can:

- Provide a different perspective – even if you are an expert in your field, your knowledge and experience will be different to the experience of someone who is using the service or living with a health condition.
- Help to ensure that the research uses outcomes that are important to the public.
- Identify a wider set of research topics than if health or social care professionals had worked alone.

[11] https://www.hrb.ie/funding/funding-schemes/public-and-patient-involvement-in-research/

- Make the language and content of information such as questionnaires and information leaflets clear and accessible.
- Help to ensure that the methods proposed for the study are acceptable and sensitive to the situations of potential research participants.
- Help you increase participation in your research by making it more acceptable to potential participants.

In addition to improving relevance and quality of research, it ensures that research is influenced by broader principles of citizenship, accountability, and transparency. PPI is an ethos as well as a practice. It should be context-specific and should aim to ensure that all voices are heard. Where members of the public or patients are involved, they must be compensated for their time and contributions.

In the application, you are asked to describe any public involvement in your research throughout the various stages of identifying and prioritising the research question, the research design, conduct, analysis, and dissemination. We recognise that the nature and extent of active public involvement is likely to vary depending on the context of each study or grant. PPI contributors should be named as Co-applicants where justified by their level of involvement.

For guidance and support on PPI in your research please consult with the PPI Ignite Network Ireland or your Host Institution. The PPI Ignite Network Ireland has offices located in the following seven Host Institutions: DCU, NUIG, RCSI, TCD, UCC, UCD, UL.

Open Access Publications

The HRB is committed to achieving Open Access (OA) to research outputs, aligned with best international standards.

Since 2014, the HRB has mandated OA for its publicly funded peer-reviewed research publications. In 2018 it established the HRB Open Research publishing platform[12]. The HRB has supported national OA initiatives under the National Open Research Forum[13] and as a member of Science Europe[14]. In January 2025 the HRB OA Policy was revised to require 'full and immediate OA', aligned with the existing 10 principles of Plan S[15]. The key changes include:

- The abolition of OA publication embargoes
- Authors or their institutions must retain copyright to their publications
- All articles must be published under a Creative Commons Attribution licence (CC BY), unless a more restrictive licence is exceptionally approved. This new requirement ensures that HRB-funded research can be freely reused for new discoveries.

[12] https://www.hrbopenresearch.org

[13] https://www.norf.ie

[14] https://scienceeurope.org/our-priorities/open-science/

[15] https://www.coalition-s.org/addendum-to-the-coalition-s-guidance-on-the-implementation-of-plan-s/principles-and-implementation/

- Disincentivising publication in hybrid journals by agreeing not to pay publication costs except where transition agreements to full OA journals have been agreed. We have reviewed OA contribution rates for Article Processing Charges (APCs) and benchmarked against other funders and prevailing rates.

FAIR Data Management and Stewardship

Data management/stewardship plans (DMP) are nowadays widely accepted as part of good research practice. The HRB is committed to Open Research and is driving the making of research data **FAIR** (**F**indable, **A**ccessible, **I**nteroperable and **R**e-usable) in order to benefit science by increasing the re-use of data and by promoting transparency and accountability.

FAIR data principles[16] provide a guideline for those wishing to enhance the re-usability of their data holdings: these principles put specific emphasis on enhancing the ability of machines to automatically find and use the data, in addition to supporting its re-use by individuals. For researchers, the move to FAIR and open data, where applicable, means researchers should consider data management issues and find suitable data repositories at the research planning stage. Applicants will have to provide information about their plans for data management and data sharing at application stage.

In line with the HRB's policy on management and sharing of research data[17], all successful applicants are required to submit a completed data management plan (DMP) to the HRB on or before three months after the grant start date, and a final updated version of the DMP with the last annual report.

The DMP will need to be submitted alongside a certification of completion from the designated representative(s) within the Host Institution.

Applicants will have to provide an outline of their plans for data management and data sharing in the application inclusive of the costs associated to the plan.

The timing for completion and submission of the DMPs must be also included among the objectives and deliverables of the programme.

General Data Protection Regulation

The **General Data Protection Regulation** (GDPR) came into force on 25 May 2018. As a result, the applicant team will be asked through the HRB online grant management system GEMS to **confirm you understand** that personal data provided as part of this application, including but not limited to CV information, may be shared with person(s) based outside of the European Economic Area (EEA) for the specific purpose of obtaining peer reviews of this application. 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.

[16] https://www.nature.com/articles/sdata201618

[17] https://www.hrb.ie/fileadmin/user_upload/HRB_Policy_on_sharing_of_research_data.pdf

Furthermore, by confirming participation, you will be asked to confirm you understand that HRB uses the information you provide (regarding all applicant team members) to consider your application, contact you about your application, and if you are successful, to manage your grant throughout its lifetime in accordance with HRB general T&C for research awards. This will include contacting you with regard to monitoring of progress through written reporting and other means e.g., interim review. We will publish some basic information on successful awards including PI, Host Institution, amount awarded and lay summary on our website and may highlight individual awards or researchers in more detail (with specific consent). We will also use the information you have provided to generate general statistics around our current funding portfolio, and to evaluate our funding mechanisms and investment. After your grant has ended, we will continue to keep your information on file (in accordance with HRB policies) to allow us to evaluate the outcomes, outputs and impacts of HRB investment in your research.

Please note that we will also use information associated with *unsuccessful* applications for a number of the purposes outlined above such as generating general statistics around our current funding portfolio, and to evaluate our funding mechanisms and investment e.g., demographics of applicants, research areas of applicants. Similarly, we will use the information provided about people employed on awards to help evaluate our career support and capacity building initiatives.

The Health Research Regulations

Following the implementation of GDPR, a regulation for health research known as the Health Research Regulations 2018 (S.I. 314) has been implemented, with further amendments made in 2019 (S.I. 188) and 2021 (S.I. 18)[18]. These regulations outline the mandatory suitable and specific measures for the processing of personal data for the purposes of health research. They further set out that explicit consent is a mandatory safeguard that must be obtained from individuals when using their personal data for health research. Where it is not feasible to obtain explicit consent, an application for a consent declaration can be made to the Health Research Consent Declaration Committee[19].

Ethical Approval and Approvals for Use of Animals

Ethical approval is required for all research work funded by the HRB that involves human participants, human material (including tissue) or animals (pre-clinical models only). Applicants are responsible for ensuring that all necessary approvals are in place prior to the start of the research.

Applicants should allow sufficient time to obtain ethical and/or competent authority approval and/or animal licenses as if successful, the applicant will be required to complete and submit Approvals Declaration form to the HRB before the initiation of the grant. It is suggested that these are sought in parallel to the submission of the application to the HRB.

[18] http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2021/si/18/made/en/pdf

[19] https://hrcdc.ie/

HRB Observer Initiative

The HRB is committed to being an independent, credible voice for research and evidence. To further increase transparency of our selection processes, the HRB invites staff members from HI Research Offices to observe selected HRB panel meetings, with safeguards to maintain the confidentiality of applications. We invite observers to selection panel meetings and interview-based panels, during which panel reviewers will discuss competing applications and rank these for funding. Where a panel shortlists pre-applications the meeting may also be open to observers. Our hope is that observers will widely pass on their first-hand experience of the HRB process to others inside and outside their organisation.

Research on Research

The HRB is developing its approach to research on research (RoR) with the aim of enhancing the evidence base for HRB research funding practices. We may also collaborate with researchers on request regarding specific RoR questions. Should your application become of interest to such a study, the HRB will seek your consent for the use of your information.

HRB Gender Policy

In line with international best practice, the **HRB Gender Policy**[20] recognises the responsibility of the HRB to support everyone to realise their full potential in order to ensure equality of opportunity and to maximise the quantity and the quality of research. To ensure fairness and equality to all applicants, each funding application received will be assessed as outlined in the call guidance documentation for that particular funding round. To ensure gender balance in decision-making, the HRB aims to reach the international best practice target of 40% of the under-represented gender in all HRB panels where possible. Gender will also be considered when appointing the position of Panel Chair.

Conflict of Interest

Conflict of interest rules *are applied rigorously*. Where a conflict of interest exists, the reviewer is requested to inform the HRB immediately so that an alternative reviewer may be appointed. International peer reviewers will not provide comments or scores on any application on which they have a conflict of interest.

Reviewers must adhere to high standards of integrity during the peer review process. They must respect the intellectual property of applicants and may not appropriate and use as their own, or disclose to any third party, ideas, concepts, or data contained in the applications they review.

Appeals Procedure

[20] https://www.hrb.ie/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/HRB-Policy-on-Gender-in-Research-Funding-2.pdf

The HRB's Policy on Appeals on funding decisions is available at https://www.hrb.ie/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/HRB-Policy-on-Appeals-2.pdf.

Privacy Policy

To understand why we collect the information we collect and what we do with that information, please see our Privacy Policy[21].

Useful Links

Useful online resources and websites can be found on the HRB Funding Opportunities webpage at: http://www.hrb.ie/funding/funding-opportunities/useful-links

[21] https://www.hrb.ie/privacy-notice/