

HRB Impact Award 2027

Guidance Notes

August 2026



Key dates & times	
Nominations open	5 October 2026
Nomination closing date	19 November 2026 @13:00

Nominations 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.

It is strongly recommended to read the Guidance Notes prior to completing the nomination form.

**Prior to final submission to the HRB, nominations for the HRB Impact Award must first be reviewed and approved within GEMS by the authorised approver at the host institution as listed in the nomination 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 nominations prior to the final submission date. This may involve being aware of and complying with any internal host institution deadlines for review and approval which are distinct from the HRB deadline.*

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1 Introduction

The Health Research Board (HRB) **Strategy 2026–2030: *Bringing Research to Life*** sets out a vision for better health, informed policy and improved care for everyone across the island of Ireland. At its core is a commitment to strengthening the health system through a vibrant, ethical, and equitable research ecosystem that delivers real societal benefit.

In line with this strategic vision and direction, the HRB is now inviting nominations for the HRB Impact Award 2027 (IMPACT). The Impact Award recognises and celebrates the wider impact and achievements of HRB funded researchers beyond academia and showcases their (and their teams') practices so they can serve as a role model for the wider HRB community.

This is the fifth round of this prestigious initiative with [four previous Impact awardees recognised to date](#).¹

The HRB Impact Award includes one monetary prize of €50,000 which will be granted to the recipient's chosen HRB-approved host institution to promote or further develop the work being honoured.

All nominees, their teams and families, as well as the nominators will be invited to the Impact Award 2027 Celebration Event, where the winner of the Impact Award 2027 will be announced.

The event is expected to be held on 3 March 2027; however, this date remains subject to change. Should the date be amended, the HRB will notify nominators in due course.

2 Scope

For the purpose of this award, **research impact** is defined as:

Positive and real-world change that occurs when research activities have an effect, benefit or positive influence on policy, society or the economy.

The HRB is seeking nominations that demonstrate how HRB-funded research has influenced policy, practice, health services or the health and social care system, with evidence of resulting improved quality of life and better health outcomes and experiences for patients, communities, organisations and/or the public.

Research impact typically comprises two key elements: **reach and significance**.

- **Reach** refers to how widespread the impact is. It is about the extent, spread, breadth, and diversity of the beneficiaries affected by the impact.
- **Significance** refers to the importance or value of the impact to each beneficiary. It is about the depth of the benefit and describes why the impact matters.

Both elements are important for research impact and while the best impact involves both, either small-reach/high-significance or large-reach/moderate-significance impacts can still be meaningful.

¹ Press releases related to previous Impact awards: <https://www.hrb.ie/?s=impact+award+>

3 Aim and objectives

The overarching aim of the award is to recognise previously or currently HRB-funded Principal Investigators who have made a highly significant contribution to policy, society or the economy beyond academic impact.

The objectives of the award are:

- To recognise and celebrate the wider impact and achievements of HRB funded researchers beyond academia
- To showcase their (and their teams') practices so they can serve as a role model for the wider HRB community to maximise the impact of their research.

4 Key changes from previous round

- Greater clarity on the scope, including definition of 'reach' and 'significance'
- Enhanced guidance regarding the number and content of the testimonials required in the application
- An additional eligibility criterion where nominees can be nominated only once per round
- Updated guidance for completing the nomination section of the application form, which is now divided in two sections aligned with the assessment criteria
- Inclusion of a logic model providing a framework to structure the nominator's evidence of pathways to impact and impact generated.

5 Nomination process: nominators and nominees

5.1 Nominators

The application process is nomination-based. Nominators for the award **cannot nominate themselves**. Instead, a nomination must be submitted to the HRB via the approved signatory in a HRB-approved host institution. There is no limit to the number of nominations that can be made by any one host institution, but an individual can be nominated only once per round and duplicate nominations for the same individual across institutions are not permitted. Each nomination must include details of a named nominator as they will serve as the primary point of contact for the HRB during the nomination and review process.

As part of the nomination process, the nominator must submit three testimonials from individuals who can attest, through professional or personal experience, to the impact of the nominee's research. Impact can be on policy, practice, services or the health and social care system, with direct or indirect benefits resulting in enhanced health and wellbeing, improved quality of life and/or better health outcomes and experiences for patients, communities, organisations or the public more generally.

Nominations should describe proven examples of how specific aspects of the nominated individual's funded research resulted in significant impact rather than outlining a range of impacts over the nominee's career. The way in which a specific piece of research was translated into specific impacts needs to be explained in detail. Benefits/impact must have already been achieved.

5.2 Nominee eligibility

- Nominees must be an investigator
 - Who held or holds a HRB grant(s) as principal investigator
 - Who is based in an academic or healthcare or related setting
 - Whose research activities have had a significant and demonstrable impact in line with the scope outlined above
 - Who has a contractual relationship with a HRB-recognised host institution for the purposes of administration of the Impact Award, if successful
- Please note that this award to date has recognised investigators who had reached senior principal investigator status due to the time needed for impacts to manifest.
- The HRB funding may have been awarded at any time during the nominee's career but must be directly linked to the area of research that has resulted in the impact on people's health, patient care, health policy, or practice that is the basis for their nomination.
- Individuals who were nominated unsuccessfully in previous rounds may be nominated again.
- Nominees can be nominated only once per round and duplicate nominations for the same individual across institutions are not permitted.
- Nominees must be working/have worked on the island of Ireland when pursuing the research related to the nomination.
- Nominees must agree to their nomination being submitted to the HRB and that, if successful, they will be responsible for the management of the award via a designated host institution, by providing an acceptance letter as part of this application.

Notes:

- HRB staff or Board members are not eligible.
- Where a nomination fails to meet the eligibility criteria, it will be deemed ineligible and will not be progressed to review. The HRB will contact the nominator in this instance.

6 Host institution

A HRB host institution is a research-performing organisation that is 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 awards. HRB host institution status is a requirement to submit an application under all HRB award schemes. In order to be eligible to submit an application for this award, an institution must be an approved HRB host institution prior to the opening date of the call on **5 October 2026**. A list of currently approved HRB host institutions and information on the

application process for research performing organisations to be approved as HRB host institution can be found on the HRB website².

7 Application, review process and review criteria

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

7.1 Grant E-Management System (GEMS)

Applications must be completed and submitted through the HRB online Grant E-Management System (GEMS) (<https://grants.hrb.ie/>).

Each nomination must be 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, nominators should ensure that they give the signatory approver sufficient time before the scheme closing date to review the nominations and approve it on GEMS. Please note that many host institutions specify internal deadlines for this process.

7.2 Review process

Applications will be initially checked for eligibility by HRB staff. Where an application is deemed to be ineligible, the Chair of the international grant selection panel will be consulted to confirm the recommendation.

Following the initial eligibility check, each eligible nomination submitted to this scheme will undergo a one stage review process.

7.3 Panel review

An international grant selection panel, comprised of an independent Chair and up to four members, will be convened to review the strengths and weaknesses of the nominations received according to the assessment criteria detailed below.

The recommendations of the panel will be presented for approval to the HRB Executive Team. Subject to approval, HRB staff will contact all nominators (and host institutions) to notify them of the outcome and associated feedback.

7.4 Assessment criteria

The following assessment criteria will be used to assess nominations by the international panel reviewers. Successful nominees will be expected to rate highly in both criteria.

The assessment will consider the breadth of the impact (its reach) and the depth of the change it produced (its significance). Importantly, the assessment will also assess the efforts undertaken by the

² <https://www.hrb.ie/funding/grant-management/grant-policies/>

individual to ensure their research was shared, translated, communicated, and scaled so that it made a meaningful and measurable difference (avenue to impact).

Nominations will be assessed against these two criteria:

- 1. The nature, quality and level of the impact** that resulted in whole, or in part, from specific research and research-related activities of the nominated candidate (60%).
- 2. The pathway to impact**, i.e., the approach, the activities and the practices of the nominated candidate that ensured that their work realised the intended benefits and impacts and how this can inspire others to maximise the impact of their research (40%).

Note: In the event that there are two or more nominations with the same final score, the sub-score awarded for the 'The nature, quality and level of the impact' criterion will be the determining ranking factor to select the award.

8 Timeframe

Call opening	5 October 2026
Call closing	19 November 2026 @13:00
Panel review	December 2026-mid January 2027
Panel review meeting	Mid-End-January 2027
HRB approval of the funding recommendations	Late January/Early February 2027
Impact Award 2027 celebration	3 March 2027 (subject to change)
Budget and contracting	February-April 2027
Earliest start date	May 2027

9 Contacts

For further information on HRB Impact Award 2027 contact:

Marta Pisarska, PhD

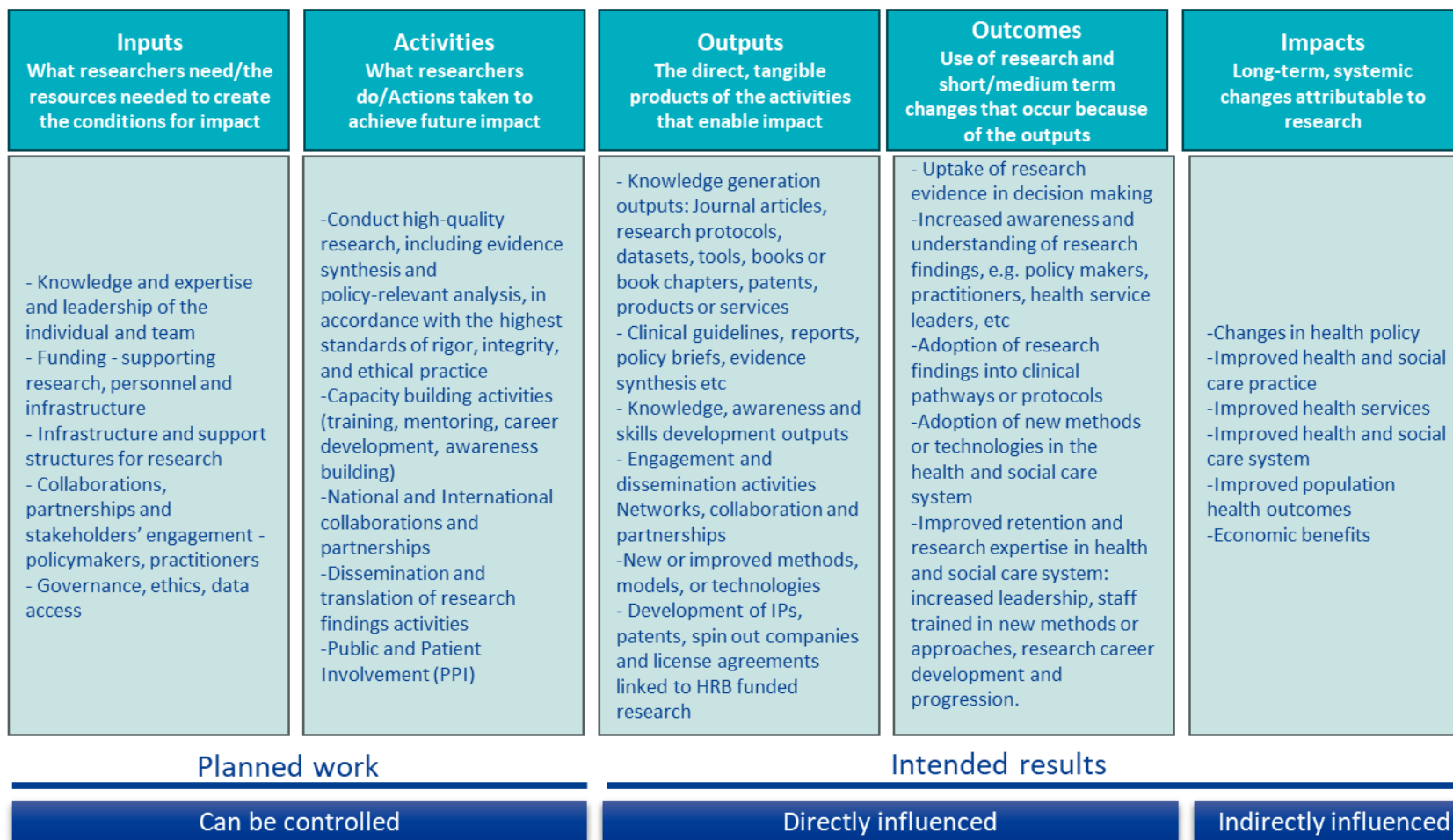
Project Officer

Research Strategy and Funding

impact@hrb.ie

The HRB reserves the right to reject any nomination that does not meet the terms of this call.

Appendix I: HRB Impact Award logic model



The impact journey describes how research can lead to impacts beyond academia and specifically in the context of the HRB Impact Award on policy, practice, health services or the health and social care system. It tracks research longitudinally, distinguishing between five stages on the pathway to impact.

- **Input:** What researchers need/the resources needed to create the conditions for impact.
- **Activities:** What researchers do/actions taken to achieve future impact.
- **Outputs:** The direct, tangible products of the activities that enable impact
- **Outcomes:** Use of research and changes that occur because of the outputs. These are typically short and medium term.
- **Impacts:** Long-term, systemic changes attributable to research, resulting from outputs and outcomes.

The logic model represented below shows the steps involved in translating the research into real-world changes, with examples under each contextualised for the Impact Award. Moving towards the right of the model along the journey to impacts researchers have less control.