

HRB Impact Award 2027

Guidance Notes

September 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

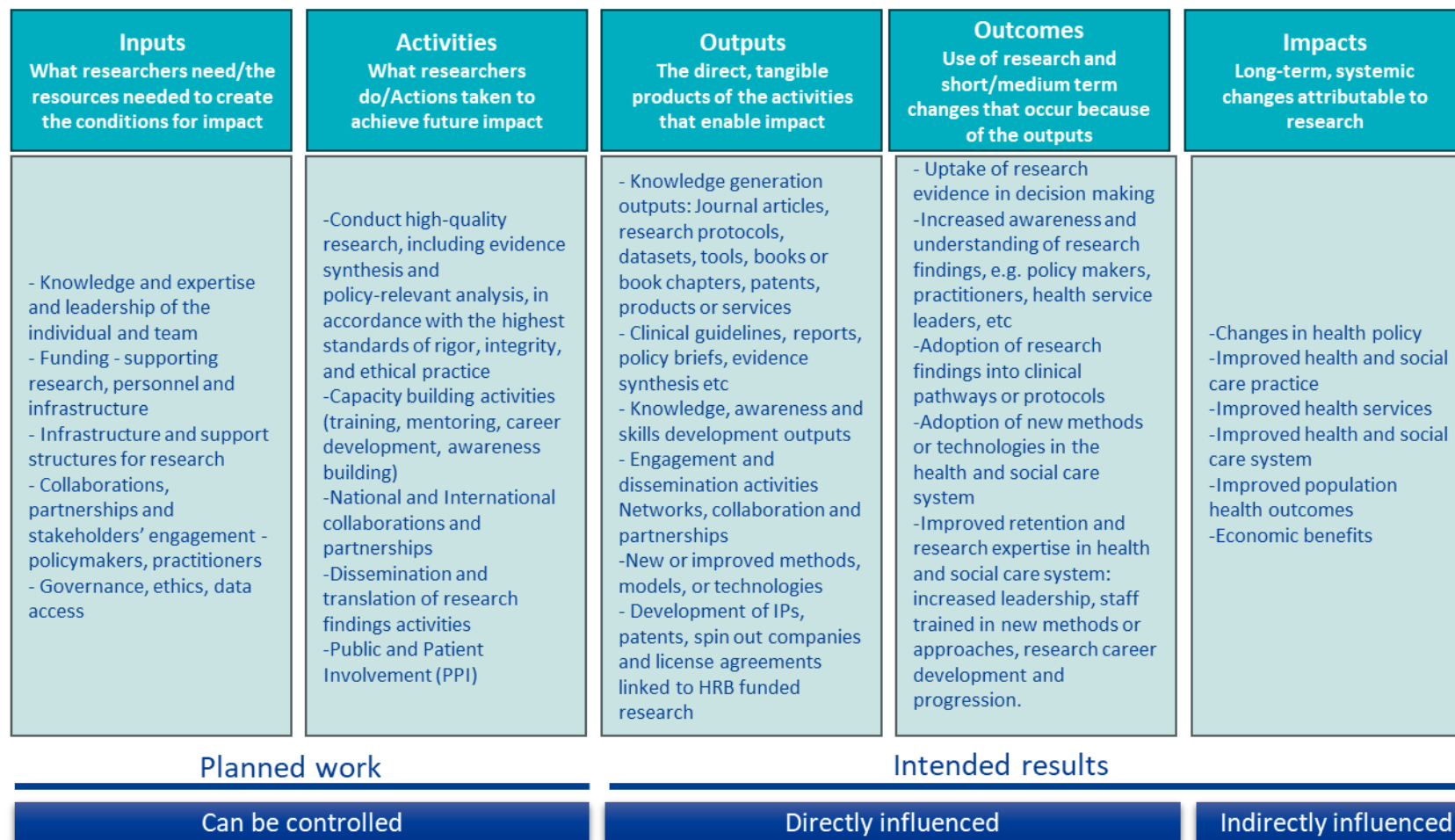
Project Officer

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.

Appendix II: Detailed guidance on the nomination form

Only registered users of the GEMS system can submit nominations. In order to submit an online nomination to the HRB, applicants are required to register at the following address:

<https://grants.hrb.ie>

*Please refer to the **GEMS Technical Guidance Note**³, available on the left-hand column of your GEMS profile homepage, for further information.*

The **nominator** must create the nomination. Nominators can register on GEMS, and they will receive an email to confirm their registration and log in details. The nominator can then add information on their contact and CV details in the 'Manage My Details' section of their GEMS profile.

Nominators previously registered on GEMS can login to GEMS and update any information regarding their contact and CV details in 'Manage my details'.

Once logged in to GEMS nominators are taken directly to the home page which is the starting point for creating a new nomination. The nominator will be asked to complete a check list of mandatory questions. In order to access the nomination form, the nominator must satisfy the conditions of this check list. The checklist for the HRB Impact Award is as follows:

Nominator eligibility	
I have read the guidance notes for the Impact Award 2027 call and reviewed the main changes applied to the Impact Award 2027 .	☒
I am clear about the role of the authorised signatory in the nominated host institution, and I am aware that I need to build sufficient time into the nomination process for the HI to access, review and approve my final proposal for submission to the HRB through the GEMS system.	☒

Consent	
By submitting this nomination, I consent to (a) sharing of my data outside of the European Economic Area (EEA) for the purpose of international review , and (b) the use of my data for assessment of my nomination; monitoring of successful awards; and evaluation of HRB's approach to funding and investment in research, in line with HRB policies and as detailed in the Impact Award 2027 call guidance notes.	☒

The nominator will be then able to start the nomination. Further details for completing each of the main sections of the nomination form are provided below:

Host institution

For the purposes of contracting, payment, and management of the award, HRB funds can only be awarded to HRB approved host institutions in the Republic of Ireland. The host institution for the award is that of the **nominee**. A list of host institutions approved by the HRB at the time of this call going live is included as a PDF on GEMS. In GEMS you will be asked to identify a Host Institution (from [this list](#)) and type it in full (do not use acronyms such as UCD, TCD, DCU). Once you have

³ <https://research.ie/assets/uploads/2020/05/CCGT-Grant-Application-System-Technical-Guidance-Notes.pdf>

entered the first 3-4 characters of the host institution, you will be assisted with auto-select options. It is important that the host institution name is entered accurately and in full as an incorrect entry may result in delays in attaining host institution approvals.

If you wish to propose a host institution which is not on the HRB list, you are advised to contact the HRB at gemshelp@hrb.ie.

Note: In order to be eligible **for nomination**, an Institution must have been approved as a HRB host institution prior to the opening date of this call on 5 October 2026. Only pre-approved host institutions will appear in this list.

Signatory notification (within host institution)

Once the **host institution** is selected at the initial stages of nomination creation, this will allow the nominator to notify the authorised signatory (Dean of Research or equivalent person authorised to endorse research grant applications for the host institution) in that host institution, of the nominator's intention to submit a nomination to the Impact 2027 round. The signatory's details are pre-populated in the system, so the applicant just needs to click 'NOTIFY' within GEMS. We recommend that **you notify the host institution signatory** of your intention to nominate as soon as possible in the nomination process. The signatory will receive an email from GEMS with the name and email details of the nominator and if they have any queries or clarifications, they can engage directly to resolve them with the nominator. The host institution signatory must confirm their willingness to participate as host institution for the nomination through GEMS and once they do this a PDF of the nomination will be available for them to review with a view to them ultimately approving the final version for submission to the HRB.

1 The nominator

Nominator details including title, name, position, department, organisation are required. These details are managed under the "Manage my Details" section of the nominator's GEMS account.

Please ensure that all field are completed as they are mandatory for submission. Providing an ORCID iD is optional and is not required to submit your nomination.

2 The nominee

The nominator is asked to provide nominee information including their title, name, area of research, present position, department, host institution, email address. Providing an ORCID iD is optional and is not required to submit your nomination.

2.1 HRB funding related to the nomination

In line with the eligibility criteria outlined in the guidance notes, the nominator is required to list the HRB grants where the nominee acted as the principal investigator. This may have been at any time

during their career, but it must be directly linked to the research that resulted in the impact on policy, practice, services or the health and social care system. The limit is **200 words**.

2.2 Relationship of nominee to nominator

The nominator is asked provide details as to their professional relationship to the nominee. The limit is **100 words**.

2.3 Reason for nomination

The nominator should describe why, in their opinion, the nominee would be a suitable recipient for the HRB Impact Award. This should address the distinctive nature of what the nominee did, and their pathway from research to impact. The limit is **300 words**.

2.4 Letter of acceptance from the nominee

As part of the application the nominee must provide a letter of acceptance. The purpose of this letter is for the nominee to confirm the acceptance of the nomination and to make the case of why they are an ideal candidate for this prestigious HRB award based on its key objectives.

The letter must not exceed **one page**.

Note: To ensure coherence and avoid discrepancies between documents, the nominator and nominee should coordinate so that both the nomination statement and the acceptance letter clearly refer to the **same body of work and impact**. This alignment will help reviewers easily identify key details and accurately assess the nomination.

3 Nomination details

The nominator should clearly describe the following:

3.1 Research impact

Please address the following:

- **Importance:** Describe the importance of the health problem/challenge addressed, the research question, and the outcome of the research that led to the impact.
- **Reach:** Who the beneficiaries from the research and research-related activities are (e.g. patients, health and social care professionals, policy makers, public groups, etc.) and how many individuals or groups were affected.
- **Significance:** Describe the value of the impact and how meaningful or valuable it is to each beneficiary.
- **Contribution:** Describe how the HRB-funded research contributed to the impact. Describe both direct and/or indirect benefits, resulting in the impact.
- **Evidence of impact:** Provide relevant and verifiable references of the impact described. Please include data, metrics, examples of implementation or adoption, reach and scale, that demonstrate the impact described.

The limit is **800 words**.

3.2 Pathway to impact

Please address the following:

- The translation and implementation steps, milestones, and mechanisms that enabled the research to achieve real-world change.
- The nominee's strategy and targeted actions to ensure the research delivered real-world benefit. This may include working with knowledge users, Public and Patient Involvement (PPI), stakeholder involvement and/or other outreach activities. Describe how these approaches/activities enhanced and broadened the impact of the nominee's work.
- The nominee's active and specific contribution to achieving impact: what the nominee personally did, or contributed - if they were involved in teams, networks (e.g., CTNs) or partnerships their role should be clearly explained - and how their leadership, expertise, or actions directly enabled, facilitated, or accelerated impact beyond academic outputs.

An example of the Impact Award logic model is included in **Appendix I**, which may provide a framework through which to structure your evidence of pathways to impact activated and impact generated.

The limit is **800 words**.

3.3 Additional nominee information

Please describe how the nominee, through their leadership and other key attributes, has contributed to the wider research community and society and outline their key achievements to date.

Please provide some proven examples to support this description. These examples may include the following:

- Capacity building, training, and development of others.
- Knowledge translation and outreach.
- Networking.
- Open Science (open data, data sharing and open access, workshops/seminars).
- Memberships of committees, tasks forces, scientific boards, editorial boards, national or international groups etc.
- Honours/awards, national and international profiling, plenary lectures.

Please note that this list is not exhaustive and other examples of the nominee's leadership, contributions and achievements are welcomed.

The limit is **400 words**.

3.4 Testimonials

Three testimonials from individuals who can attest, through professional or personal experience, to the impact of the nominee's research. Each testimony must be limited to a maximum of two pages and should clearly highlight:

1. The professional or personal experience of the impact of the nominee's research on policy, practice, services or the health and social care system **and**
2. The benefits that have resulted, directly or indirectly, in enhanced health and wellbeing, improved quality of life and/or better health outcomes and experiences for patients, communities, organisations or the public.

4 Mandatory documents

The following documents must be uploaded to complete the nomination:

- **A letter of acceptance** from the nominee accepting the nomination.
- **Three testimonials** supporting the nomination, from individuals with direct experience related to the impact of the nominee's research.

5 Submission of nominations

The deadline for submission of complete nominations is 19 November 2026 at 13:00.

1. After successful validation, the nominator may submit the nomination. It will then be routed to the designated signatory at the host institution for their approval.
2. If the signatory rejects the nomination the nominator will be notified, along with any feedback the signatory has supplied.
3. The nomination can then be re-submitted; it will be returned to the signatory and will continue through the approval process as before.
4. On completion of the final approval by the host institution signatory, a grant application number is assigned to the nomination.
5. The nomination is automatically submitted to the HRB through GEMS for consideration.

Please note that the HRB will not follow up any supporting documentation related to the nomination. It is the responsibility of the nominator 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 nomination will be deemed ineligible without further review.

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

Appendix II: HRB funding policies and procedures

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.

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.

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.

Appeals procedure

The HRB's Policy on Appeals on funding decisions is available at: <https://www.hrb.ie/funding/grant-management/grant-policies/>.

Privacy policy

To understand why we collect the information we collect and what we do with that information, please see our Privacy Policy⁴.

HRB Gender policy

In line with international best practice, the **HRB Gender Policy**⁵ 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.

⁴ <https://www.hrb.ie/privacy-notice/>

⁵ <https://www.hrb.ie/funding/grant-management/grant-policies/>