

RESEARCH PROJECT GRANTS FAQs 2013

{Updated- 30th August 2013-New FAQs in Red }

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

1. Experienced Researchers/Staff

(a) Are experienced (i.e. over 4 years) researchers/academics who have moved to Ireland less than four years ago eligible for the Advanced RPG call

(b) What is meant by 'academic post' – can this mean postdoc

(c) Are research centre (on contract) staff considered as academics for the purpose of eligibility for the Starter RPG?

(e) Do the eligibility criteria for a P.I. apply to the Co-P.I.

(f) Is it possible for a Principal Investigator to list an Associate Investigator who is based in a university outside of the Republic? **Is there a limit to the number of Associate Investigators (AIs)?**

(g) For Strand 2, may the PI build a team of associates as co-applicants (as opposed to Co-PI's)? If so, may the PI apply for staff buy-outs for the co-applicants as well as for her/himself? Can co-applicants from different HEIs?

(h) Can you confirm if hiring Research Associates or Post Docs would compromise our total ECF?

(i) Can two collaborating institutions join together in submitting an application?

(j) On Strand 3 (interdisciplinary) must both applicants be within the time limits specified, i.e. be early stage researchers?

(k) Can an existing postgraduate be employed as 0.5FTE research assistant?

(L) Is it permissible for a research assistant to be based outside of Ireland for the duration of the project, if this is justified by the project activities?

(m) Is it permissible for a Council funded Postdoctoral Fellow in their final year (who will take up an academic appointment in the relevant discipline immediately afterwards) to apply? If not can they be a Co-PI on an application?

(n) A researcher is at current institution for one year but at a previous institution for 14 years. Are they eligible for Strand 3?

(o) Is it permissible to request a postdoctoral fellow for the full three years of Strand 2 grant?

(p) A PI has been a full time academic for between two and nine years, but was a part-time member of academic staff which would take them over the nine year limit. The PI only completed a PhD in recent years. So could be considered 'early –career', are they eligible for Strand 3?

(q) Researcher has only been in University Z for one year but have been in University X and Y for two years previously; Eligible?

(r) Can a senior colleague with more than 9 years of service be nominated as an associate investigator on RPG2013-3?

(a) – (f) Applicants should consult the eligibility criteria as set out in the Terms and Conditions. Ultimately it is a matter for the applicant and host institution to validate the experience of the researcher/academic. It is also a matter for Institutions if they deem postdocs to be part of academic staff. The important factor as set out in the Terms & Conditions is "either permanent or on temporary contracts of sufficient duration to cover the period of the proposed project". The same eligibility criteria apply to the Co-P.I. It is permissible to list associate investigators outside of the Republic. No limit to the number of Associate Investigators.

Strand 2 does not have Co-PIs, however Strand 3 does and the same conditions of buyout apply as for the lead PI. Co-applicants can come from different HEIs in Ireland

ECF ceiling is a matter for the HEI as per HEI policy on contract research

The RPG Scheme is designed with the objective of facilitation **researchers and research teams** to build capacity and there is therefore scope for institutional collaborations as set out on Pages 6 and 7 of the Terms & Conditions.

As per the terms & conditions “At the deadline of the call, applicants must have held an appointment on the academic staff for a period of no less than two and no more than nine years”.
(K) Existing postgraduates are bound by the Terms & Conditions of their award in relation to additional duties, and any additional work proposed for them would have to meet these conditions.
(L) All funded research staff are required to be based within Ireland for the duration of the project
(m) The eligibility of an existing Council funded Postdoc Fellow to apply to the RPG Scheme will be dependent on their status /employment situation at the closing date of the Call – 17th September 2013. As per the Terms & Conditions, the applicant needs to be a full-time member of the academic staff, either permanent or on a temporary contract of sufficient duration to cover the period of the proposed project. The host institution must endorse the application.
(n) No. Researcher must have between two and nine years’ experience and this is across institutions.
(o) Yes
(p) The period of time spent as an academic staff member is regardless of whether it was full or part time and so someone with greater than 9 years on academic staff is not eligible to apply. The clock starts with the academic staff appointment and not from the obtainment of a PhD.
(q) The time spent as an academic staff member is counted cumulatively across institutions.
(r) Yes. There are no limitations on the eligibility of the Associate Investigator as they are not in receipt of funding from the Irish Research Council, only the PI and co-PIs have to adhere to the eligibility criteria.
2. Eligible Subject Areas
(a) Are Strands 1, 2 and 3 restricted to the “eligible subject areas” or are scientific proposals welcome for these strands?
(b) Psychology is one of the fields presented in the eligible subject areas. However, the relevant form says Psychology (applications relevant to the humanities and social sciences). Does that mean the biopsychological (e.g., neuropsychopharmacology) research may not be eligible?
(c) Are digital humanities / digital social sciences in scope for this awards scheme? They are not specifically listed in the appendix of eligible subject areas but perhaps they are understood as being within humanities/social sciences. Or is this intended for Strand 3 (Interdisciplinary) only?
Strands 1 & 2 are restricted to applications from the eligible subject areas. However as per the Terms & Conditions, applications of an interdisciplinary nature are required from two collaborating PIs for Strand 3 (RPG 2013-3). One of the PIs must be nominated as the lead for the purposes of administration of the Grant and this lead PI must be representative of the core subject areas in the AHSS list above. The nominated co-PI may be from any discipline. This is the only Strand that allows applications from outside of the eligible subject areas.
Applications will be accepted in Strands 1 and 2 for these areas. It is accepted that the eligible subject areas can be further delineated. The digital humanities and digital social science would fall under the broad subject area of media and communications.
3. Salary
(a) Is there any scope for employing someone at a higher research fellow rate?
(b) Is 20 K the maximum staff buyout per year?
(c) For a project that runs from December 2013 to December 2016, does the above restriction mean that the PI could apply for 20k for the period of July-December 2014 and then another 20k for the period of January-June 2015? This would allow the PI to offer 40k to a single post-doc who would cover all the PI's teaching for the academic year 2014-15
(d) Can the teaching buyout be spent on a pro rata appointment and or hourly additional teaching?
(e) Does the buyout funding directly fund the person who is being replaced.
(f) Under Strand 2, may the award be used to buy our teaching for Associate Investigators or may

only the P.I. buy out teaching
(g) Can a part time member of staff apply to get paid a ½ time salary from this project (Starter Research Grant)?
(a) + (b) + (c) Under this scheme, PIs are eligible to apply for staff replacement (buy-out) costs up to 50% of their time in a calendar year. This is calculated at 50% of the Postdoctoral Researcher rate for a calendar year. The staff replacement costs can be pro rata for shorter periods. The salary rate is set by the Irish Research Council.
(d) + (e) It is a matter for the institution what type of contracts they offer in utilising the buyout funds. However the buyout funding should be used to cover the replacement costs and not the existing P.I., who should continue to be paid as per existing contractual arrangements. Institutions should also determine the format of contract for the replacement person, but the overall teaching buyout must not exceed 50% of the P.I.'s time in a calendar year
(f) Buy out is only for the P.I. and co-P.I. (under Strand 3) It is not available for an associate P.I.
(g) As per the Terms & Conditions applicants have to be full time members of academic staff so part-time applicants are not eligible to apply.
4. Research Performing Organisation
(a) Can a research performing organisation that is not a HEI or eligible institution apply for this scheme in its affiliation with a University?
<p>(a) The current policy of the Council is that in order to be considered an eligible institution for the purpose of applying to our funding programmes (postgraduate, postdoctoral and project) an institution must be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) A third-level institution within the meaning of Section One of the Higher Education Authority Act, 1971 <i>and/or</i> in receipt of public funding as approved by the Minister for Education and Skills for the purposes of the Free Fees Initiative. (ii) Be in receipt of public funding from the Department of Education and Skills for the purpose of higher education and research. <p>In recognition however of the contribution of non-HEI publicly funded research performers to Ireland's research base, other research performing organisations (RPOs) may also be eligible, subject to a qualification process, to apply to the Council's postdoctorate and project schemes. In this regard, an RPO would possess an existing in-house capacity to carry out research that materially extends and enhances the Irish research base and be in a position to demonstrate an independent capability to undertake and lead research projects/programmes.</p> <p>In order to qualify as a designated RPO for the Council's postdoctorate and project schemes, an organisation must satisfy all of the conditions as outlined in the Council's 'Application to become an eligible research performing organisation for the purposes of the Irish Research Council's postdoctorate and project schemes' on the Council's website here http://www.research.ie/aboutus/host-institution-eligibility. In this regard, an eligible RPO would not need to be affiliated with a University as they could apply to the Postdoctoral and Project Schemes in their own right.</p>
5. Maternity & Career Leave Periods
(a) Consideration of Maternity, Career Leave and other Leave Periods?
(b) Should maternity leave be verified within the proposal
(b) Maternity leave periods should be verified by the Research Office in endorsing the experience of the applicant
Exceptions to the description of applicant eligibility on the basis of experience may be made for those who have taken eligible career breaks.

The career break should be detailed in the application form and **verification of the career break will be required before the grant can start.**

Eligible career breaks are: Maternity leave, paternity leave, and leave taken for long-term illness. Leave taken for unavoidable statutory reasons may also be considered. No allowance will be made for part-time working (2 years of half-time count as 2 full-time years)

- **Verification for maternity leave must be provided in the form of a copy of the birth certificate and proof of accumulation of actual time off, maximum of one year per child born after the PhD award.**
- Verification for paternity leave must be provided in the form of a copy of the birth certificate and proof of accumulation of actual time off, maximum of one year per child born after the PhD award.
- Verification for long-term illness must be provided in the form of a medical certificate.
- Verification for leave taken for unavoidable statutory reasons must be provided in an appropriate form, e.g. clinical qualifications.

6. Project & Other Costs

(a) The project start date is 1st December, is that the effective start date of the Project?

(b) Are PhD costs covered?

(c) Does the Research Council require applicants to apply for overheads 25% as per p.8 of the Terms & Conditions? Can the amount applied for be less?

(d) Is there an indication of the size of the overall budget for this year, the number of proposals that will be funded and if there is a breakdown between the different strands?

(e) Are recruitment costs an eligible expense?

(f) What kind of activities has the IRC/IRCHSS funded in the past under the heading of collaboration costs?

(g) For Strand 2, can a PI include an Associate Investigator based in an Irish research institute which is not currently included in the list of eligible institutions? The AI would receive some funding from the budget for the provision of specialised surveying equipment and training expertise

(a) Administratively, the project must commence on 1st December, however it is recognised that it can take time to recruit and so staff are not required to commence work on 1st December. For example, The Starter Grants incorporate a 3 month lead in time on this basis in the 15 months provided.

(b) PhD costs are only eligible in Strand 6

(c) No, the amount of overhead should be 25%

(d) The overall budget for the RPG scheme is not fixed at this point and that there is no predetermined number of proposals that will be funded under each strand, but rather the Council will await the outcome of the assessment process to see the distribution and quality of the applications received.

(e) Recruitment costs are ineligible

(f) It is not possible to give definitive examples. It is the responsibility of the applicant to make justification for such costs as stated in the Terms & Conditions.

(g) As already indicated in 1. (f) above it is permissible to list an A.I. in an Irish Research Institute which is not currently included in eligible institutions. However any subcontracting of activities and funding by the P.I. and host institutions to the A.I. would need strong justification

6. Proposal
(a) Can reference lists, bibliographies and figures be used in the proposal?
(b) Can a collaborator on the proposed project also be your referee?
(c) Does 'Methodology' include theoretical framework?
(d) Do the tick boxes on the application form refer to the RDI scheme in 2012 or this current call and its various strands?
(e) Does written permission for access to archival material in private custodianship, or archival material with restricted access, need to be obtained and furnished with project proposal?
(f) Under Detailed Project Description/Description of topic in the application form, applicants are asked to describe/include 'Alignment with selected Strand/Theme' and 'Alignment with RPG Research Projects (as per Terms and Conditions)'. As there is no particular alignment for Strands 1 & 2, how should applicants proceed?
(g) In the application form there is a reference to 'Methodology' and 'Research Strategy'. Is it possible to get some clarification between these two terms?
(a) Bibliographies, reference lists, Gantt charts and any other visual image methods of articulating the proposal may now be submitted in addition to the 2,500 Detailed Project Description section. It is recommended that the top five to ten publications and/or research outputs are listed rather than an exhaustive list.
(b) It is not permissible to have a collaborator as a referee
(c) Yes
(d) They refer to this current call
(e) Preliminary agreement from the third party should be obtained and stated in the proposal with formal agreement to be verified before the commencement of the project if approved for funding.
(f) It is up to the P.I. to align the objectives of the research and their selected with the overall objectives for both Strands and the overall aims of the RPG Scheme.
(g) Methodology is the theoretical framework (or frameworks) and how it (they) will be applied to address the research question at hand. The research strategy on the other hand is the timetable or project plan – the practical approach as opposed the theoretical approach.