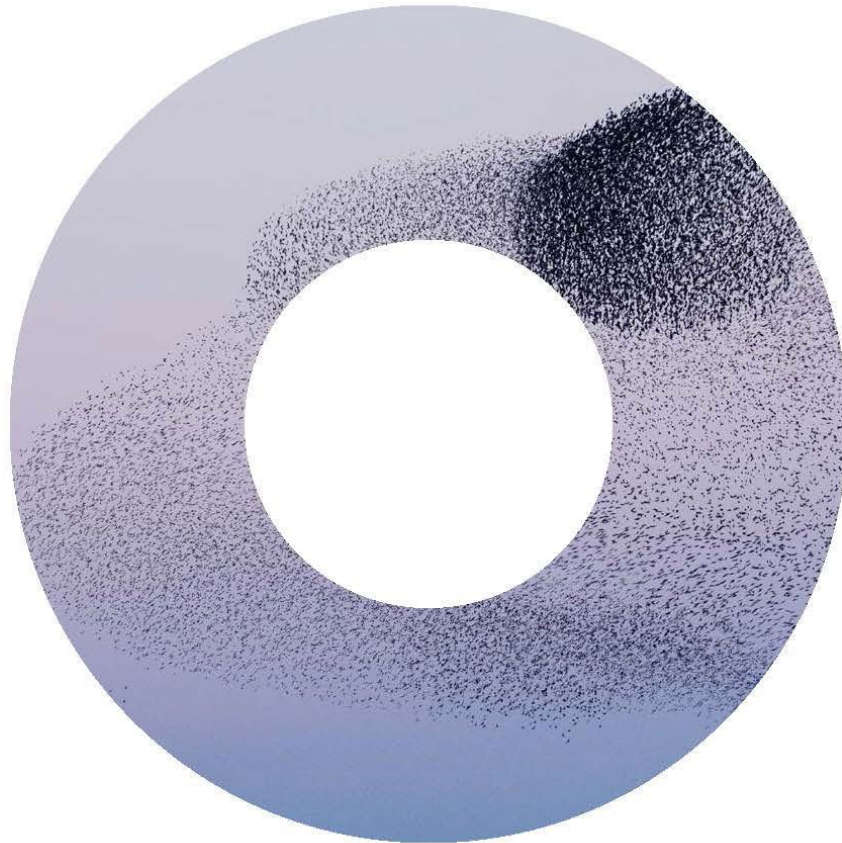


Science Foundation Ireland



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SFI Industry RD&I Fellowship



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SCIENCE FOUNDATION IRELAND

SFI Industry RD&I Fellowship Programme 2021

Call for Submission of Proposals

KEY DATES

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| • Call launch | 31 March 2021 |
| • Online application form opens | 20 April 2021 |
| • Call deadline | 21 July 2021 at 13:00 Dublin local time |
| • Notification to applicants | Early November 2021 |

Call document updated: 13 May 2021 to clarify Industry Partner eligibility

Terms of Reference

While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy and reliability of this document, it is provided for information purposes only and as a guide to expected developments. It is not intended, and should not be relied upon, as any form of warranty, representation, undertaking, contractual, or other commitment binding in law upon Science Foundation Ireland, the Government of Ireland, or any of their respective servants or agents. Science Foundation Ireland Terms and Conditions of Research Grants shall govern the administration of SFI grants and awards to the exclusion of this and any other oral, written, or recorded statement.

All responses to this Call for Submission of Proposals will be treated in confidence and no information contained therein will be communicated to any third party without the written permission of the applicant except insofar as is specifically required for the consideration and evaluation of the proposal or as may be required under law, including the Industrial Development (Science Foundation Ireland) Act, 2003, the Industrial Development (Science Foundation Ireland) (Amendment) Act 2013 and the Freedom of Information Acts 1997 and 2003.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) funds excellent and impactful research and talent, and shapes the future of Ireland through anticipating what's next and widening engagement and collaboration.

SFI's 2025 strategy *Shaping Our Future*¹ sets out the vision that Ireland will be a global innovation leader in scientific and engineering research for the advancement of Ireland's economy and society. The strategy has two ambitions: Delivering Today and Preparing for Tomorrow. The *Tangible Benefits* theme in *Delivering Today* aims for the research we fund to make the greatest possible difference for our society and economy. In support of this, SFI seeks to foster academia-industry interactions by building strategic partnerships with industry to perform cutting-edge, industry-informed STEM research.

SFI is pleased to launch a new programme, the SFI Industry RD&I Fellowship Programme, which seeks to support academia-industry interactions and will be an important vehicle to support industry research, development and innovation. Grants awarded under the programme can be made to academic researchers (at faculty and postdoctoral level) wishing to spend time in industry worldwide. Fellowships can be between 1 and 12 months and can be taken on a full or part-time basis. SFI recognises that the type, mode, structure and duration of Fellowships must be flexible and scalable, and must facilitate different sorts of activities, ranging from knowledge-exchange, skills development and collaborative research projects. The expectation is that the award will enhance the skills of the fellow and will be of mutual benefit to both the industry and academic partners.

Researchers placed into industry will have the opportunity to gain a working knowledge of relevant business drivers (e.g., intellectual property, regulatory, investors and markets) and will gain from industry's established contacts. The upskilling and industry exposure provided to postdoctoral academic researchers through the Industry RD&I Fellowship Programme will prepare them for a career in industry and maximise the impact of the training received by these researchers so far. For faculty researchers, it is expected that their Fellowship will help seed subsequent industry collaborations and shape the direction of their research going forward.

Industry partners hosting researchers will benefit from the expertise of the fellow embedded in their company bringing innovative solutions to industry challenges, providing support to enhance competitive advantage and future resilience, and developing links with academia to seed future longer-term collaborations.

The Grants awarded under this new programme will operate under European Commission State aid rules and in particular will be subject to the General Block Exemption Regulation (GBER)². GBER sets out a number of conditions under which research, development and innovation funding is exempt from the obligation of prior notification to the European Commission.

¹ <https://www.sfi.ie/strategy/>

² [EU Commission Regulation \(EC\) No. 651/2014](#)

2. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Industry RD&I Fellowship Programme 2021 are to:

- Connect scientific research and researchers with beneficiaries and potential users through supporting the exchange of knowledge and expertise between academia and industry.
- Maximise the economic and societal impact of Irish State-funded research and resources, by enhancing and co-funding collaborations between researchers in academia and industry.
- Foster impactful innovation by supporting industry-informed research.
- Enhance the breadth of training of researchers, and their employability.
- Facilitate increased participation in research, development and innovation by companies of all sizes and stages of growth in the regions across Ireland.
- In light of the impact of the ongoing COVID-19 crisis on the economy, support companies to build/enhance competitive advantage and future resilience by engaging in research, development and innovation through partnership with academia.

3. DEFINITIONS

Fellow (applicant)	<p>A faculty or postdoctoral researcher currently working in an eligible Irish <i>Research Body</i>, or a postdoctoral researcher having held a research contract in an eligible Irish <i>Research Body</i>, or the holder of a PhD awarded by an eligible Irish <i>Research Body</i> (see specific eligibility criteria in Section 6 below). The Fellow will be hosted by the <i>Industry Mentor</i> to work on the <i>Industry Partner's</i> premises.</p> <p>The Fellow (applicant) is responsible for submitting the proposal to SFI and, if successful, for the technical direction of the work programme and the submission of reports to SFI. If successful, the applicant becomes the independent award holder of the Industry RD&I Fellowship award and has primary responsibility and accountability for carrying out the award activities within the funding limits awarded and in accordance with the SFI Terms and Conditions of Research Grants. The applicant will serve as the primary point of contact for SFI during the review process and, if successful, on the award. No co-applicants are permitted on Industry RD&I Fellowship applications.</p>
Faculty Researcher	<p>A researcher who is, at the time of application, employed as an academic staff member of an eligible Irish <i>Research Body</i> (e.g., lecturers, assistant, associate and full professors), who is either permanent or temporary (contract of more than 2 years). [Classified as a Category A applicant under the Industry RD&I Fellowship Programme.]</p>
Postdoctoral Researcher	<p>A researcher who holds a PhD at the time of application and who additionally holds, or has held, a postdoctoral research contract in an eligible Irish <i>Research Body</i> or is the holder of a PhD degree awarded by an eligible Irish <i>Research Body</i>. [Classified as a Category B applicant under the Industry RD&I Fellowship Programme.]</p>
Industry Mentor	<p>An industry researcher/leader employed by an <i>Industry Partner</i> who will host a Fellow. The Industry Mentor is the primary contact on the <i>Industry Partner's</i></p>

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	premises where the Fellow is hosted, and who will accommodate the Fellow during their <i>Fellowship</i> . The Industry Mentor is committed to providing mentoring, an appropriate work environment and infrastructure for the duration of the award, as well as logistical support required to facilitate the Fellowship.
Industry Partner	The company that will host the Fellow. Please see Section 6 for further details.
Academic Collaborator	Category B applicants only may include a maximum of one academic collaborator on their application. An academic collaborator is an individual based in the applicant's <i>Research Body</i> who is committed to providing a valuable intellectual and/or technical contribution to the proposed research. Academic collaborators may not receive funding through the grant.
Research Body	The Research Body signs off on the Industry RD&I Fellowship application and submits it to SFI on behalf of the applicant. The Research Body may be the current employer of the applicant at the time of application or may become the employer of the applicant if the application is successful.
Placement	The time spent by the Fellow working on their project on the Industry Partner's premises.
Award Duration	The overall time between the beginning and the end of the award.
Time Commitment	The percentage of the total award duration spent on the placement (typically 50-100% time).
Aid Intensity	The aid intensity is the gross aid amount expressed as a percentage of the total eligible costs. Under State aid guidelines, the permitted SFI funding rate (aid intensity) can vary from 25% to a maximum of 80% of total project costs depending on the size of the Industry Partner company and the type of research involved. See Section 5 below for further details.

DURATION AND STRUCTURE OF THE FELLOWSHIP

Awards can have an award duration of between 1 and 24 months.

Full-time awards. For full-time awards, the fellow spends between 1 and 12 months on placement over a maximum award duration of 12 months (e.g., a full-time fellow spends 100% of their time working on their project).

Part-time awards. For part-time awards, the fellow spends only part of their working time on placement i.e., the fellow spends between 2 and 12 months on placement over a maximum award duration of 24 months. The time commitment is expected to be 50% of the award duration but may vary depending on the needs of the project and training plan. Only the placement time is funded through the award (see Funding section 5 below). Applicants are required to demonstrate that the duration, frequency and number of visits associated with a part-time placement is appropriate to deliver the proposed project and training plan. Part-time awards are also suitable for Category A applicants and applicants wishing to work reduced hours due to family commitments and/or those wishing to return to employment following a career break.

Location Fellows are expected to be embedded in the industry partner's premises and located there for the duration of the Fellowship.

Start date. Successful applicants will be expected to start the Fellowship within 6 months following notification of funding from SFI. In the case of maternity leave³ or other justified circumstances, the start date of the Fellowship may be further delayed, subject to prior approval from SFI.

4. PROGRAMME REMIT

The legal remit of SFI is to promote, develop and assist the carrying out of oriented basic and applied research in strategic areas of scientific endeavour that concern the future development and competitiveness of industry and enterprise in the State.⁴ Oriented basic research is “research that is carried out with the expectation that it will produce a broad base of knowledge that is likely to form the background to the solution of recognised, or expected, current or future problems or possibilities”. Additionally, applied research is defined as “an original investigation undertaken to acquire new knowledge and is directed primarily to be valid for a single or limited number of products, operations, methods, or systems”.

Research carried out in this call must be aligned to SFI’s legal remit: 1) the research should be oriented basic or applied; and 2) the research should align with one of the six Refreshed Priority Themes for 2018-2023⁵ or with any other area where there is convincing evidence that there will be significant potential for economic and/or societal impact in Ireland. In this call there is an additional requirement for projects to meet the definition of industrial research or experimental development (See Section 5) which implies that the research is oriented basic or applied.

5. FUNDING

STATE AID

During December 2020, SFI made a submission to the EU Commission of its intent to avail of the General Block Exemption Regulation (GBER), with the objective of providing aid for research and development projects that align with SFI’s mandate to promote and assist the development and competitiveness of industry, enterprise and employment in Ireland.

The SFI Industry RD&I Fellowship Programme is subject to the EU Commission General Block Exemption Regulation (GBER)⁶ under Article 25 in which different categories of research, development and demonstration projects can be supported. The EU Commission Regulation stipulates the levels of

³ <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/gender/>

⁴ <https://www.sfi.ie/about-us/about-sfi/what-we-do/>

⁵ <https://dbei.gov.ie/en/Publications/Publication-files/Research-Priority-Areas-2018-to-2023.pdf>

⁶ [EU Commission Regulation \(EC\) No. 651/2014](#)

funding support (grant aid) that can be provided by SFI. The maximum funding level for which a project is eligible depends on the category of research the project falls under and the status of the industry partner company. As such, SFI can only provide a fixed proportion of the total eligible project costs with the remaining funding to be met by the industry partner. For example, the SFI funding rate will vary from 25% to a maximum of 80% of total eligible project costs depending on the size of the industry partner and the category of research being undertaken.

Categories of Research

Under the Industry RD&I Fellowship Programme, proposals must align with SFI's legal remit **and** fall under one of the following categories of research* as defined by the EU⁷:

Industrial Research:

- planned research or critical investigation aimed at the acquisition of new knowledge and skills for developing new products, processes or services or for bringing about a significant improvement in existing products, processes or services.
- it comprises the creation of component parts of complex systems and may include the construction of prototypes in a laboratory environment or in an environment with simulated interfaces to existing systems as well as of pilot lines, when necessary for the industrial research and notably for generic technology validation.

Experimental Development:

- means acquiring, combining, shaping and using existing scientific, technological, business and other relevant knowledge and skills with the aim of developing new or improved products, processes or services.
- this may also include, for example, activities aimed at the conceptual definition, planning and documentation of new products, processes or services.
- experimental development may comprise prototyping, demonstrating, piloting, testing and validation of new or improved products, processes or services in environments representative of real-life operating conditions, where the primary objective is to make further technical improvements on products, processes or services that are not substantially set.
- this may include the development of a commercially usable prototype or pilot which is necessarily the final commercial product, and which is too expensive to produce for it to be used only for demonstration and validation purposes.
- experimental development does not include routine or periodic changes made to existing products, production lines, manufacturing processes, services and other operations in progress, even if those changes may represent improvements.

**If your proposed project spans more than one research category please contact SFI by email to irdif@sfi.ie to request a modified budget template.*

⁷ The definition of the categories of research/studies as are described in Articles 2(84), (85), (86) and (87) of GBER

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Applicants will be required to justify in their application which category of research their project falls under.

Fellowship projects

Applicants are required to submit their application to the Industry RD&I Fellowship Programme prior to project commencement and the application must be approved in writing by SFI before work can commence on the project. Where the industry partner is a large company, additional conditions will be applied to ensure that the aid has an incentive effect. The applicant in conjunction with their industry mentor must provide justification in their proposal which establishes that the aid will achieve one or more of the following: a material increase in the scope of the project/activity; a material increase in the total amount spent by the industry partner on the project/activity; or a material increase in the speed of completion.

Funding under this programme must not be used for any purpose or activity other than as approved in writing by SFI. Further, funding under this programme must not be used to subsidise the costs of an activity that an industry partner would anyhow incur and must not compensate for the normal business risk of an economic activity.

BUDGET

Under State aid guidelines, the SFI funding rate (aid intensity) can vary **from 25% to a maximum of 80%** of total eligible project costs depending on the size of the industry partner company and the type of research involved. The industry partner supports the remaining project costs. The maximum SFI contribution to the cost of the Fellowship is €100,000 direct costs.

The baseline funding rate for each Fellowship project is determined as follows:

- 50% of the total eligible costs for **industrial research**
- 25% of the total eligible costs for **experimental development**

Company Size

The size of the industry partner determines the funding rate available under the call. The European Commission defines what qualifies as a small or medium-sized enterprise (SME). In general, the staff headcount and financial thresholds determine the enterprise categorisation.

Company Size	Number of employees AND	Annual Turnover OR	Annual Balance Sheet
Small	1-49	<€10 M	<€10 M
Medium	50-249	<€50 M	<€43 M
Large	>250	>€50m	>€43 m

Industry partners will be required to provide SFI with the latest set of financial records (P&L and balance sheet). SMEs will need to verify their status by submitting an SME Declaration.

For clarification with regard to the potential eligibility of an industry partner, please email irdif@sfi.ie.

The funding rate may be increased up to a **maximum aid intensity of 80%** of the total eligible costs as follows:

- by 10% for medium-sized enterprises
- by 20% for small enterprises
- by a further 15% (available to all industry partners irrespective of company size) if the results of the project are widely disseminated through conferences, publication, open access repositories, or free or open-source software. SFI will monitor awards to ensure outputs are widely disseminated.

The below table summarises the maximum aid intensity that can be granted by SFI.

Category of Research	Industry Partner Company size		
	Small Company	Medium Company	Large Company
<i>Industrial Research with wide dissemination of results</i>	80%	75%	65%
<i>Experimental Development with wide dissemination of results</i>	60%	50%	40%

The applicant, in conjunction with their industry mentor, and TTO as appropriate, is responsible for selecting a research category which appropriately reflects the proposed project activities, however SFI reserves the right to final assessment of project research categorisation.

SFI SUPPORTED COSTS

SFI will fund up to a maximum of **€100,000** in direct costs to support the fellow's salary (or teaching buy-out) and mobility costs only.

Applicants are required to submit a fully costed budget that includes a full breakdown of both the industry partner's costs in supporting the project and the SFI requested costs (i.e., the total eligible costs). The industry partner costs must be verifiable using standard accounting practices. The requested budget from SFI must not exceed the permitted aid intensity (as determined by the company size and research category) as a percentage of the total eligible costs. The applicable aid intensity of a project is to be determined on the basis of the total "**eligible costs**" of the project (e.g., and may include costs of the fellow, the industry partner, etc.)⁸.

The budget for the **requested SFI contribution** to the Fellowship must be completed within the SESAME grants system. Additionally, applicants are also required to prepare a separate **detailed budget** of the total eligible costs (SFI requested costs plus industry partner company contribution)

⁸ Article 25(3) and (4) of GBER

using a Microsoft Excel budget template provided, which must be uploaded as an attachment to the proposal in SESAME.

Teaching Buy-out (Category A applicants only)

Teaching buy-out can be requested for when the fellow (Category A) is located on the industry partner's premises, but only for Fellowships of >3 months duration. Teaching buy-out costs should be fully justified, detailing the number of hours per week of teaching buy-out. Requests must be pro-rata and proportional to the time commitment.

Salary (Category B applicants only)

Category B applicants may apply for funding to support their own salary; salary requests should be in line with their number of years post-PhD experience. Please refer to the **SFI Grants Team Member Budgeting Scale**⁹. Please note that the submission of an application by the host Research Body must only take place once the salary requested has been approved and justified. Applicants who are employed at the time of application should specify their current salary in the Research Body letter of support. Unless appropriately justified in the budget justification section and by the letters of support, the salary will be allocated based on the number of years post-PhD of the applicant at the time of application counting one salary point per year. For example, a Category B applicant with 3 years' experience post-PhD at the time of application will be allocated a salary corresponding to Level 2A Point 4 on the Grants Team Member Budgeting Scale. When information on the current salary is not available, a salary based on the number of years post-PhD of the researcher will be allocated. Salary requests must be pro-rata and proportional to the time commitment of the applicant.

If the salary requested is on the Research Fellow or Senior Research Fellow SFI salary scale, an additional formal letter from the Research Body should be supplied describing how Research Fellows are contractually differentiated by the Research Body from the standard cohort of postdoctoral researchers. Please refer to the **SFI Grant Budget Policy**¹⁰ for further details. It is important to note that the inclusion of a support letter will strengthen but not guarantee funding contributions at Research Fellow level.

Mobility Allowance (all applicants)

A contribution (max. €10,000) towards travel and accommodation costs directly related to the progress of the Fellowship may be requested. Where relevant and justified, these costs can be requested to support:

- Attendance at one relevant international conference. This is limited to €1,500 unless specific costings for the named conference are provided.

⁹ https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/budget-finance-related-policies/SFI-Team-member-scales_June-2021-with-pension-and-increments.pdf

¹⁰ https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/budget-finance-related-policies/SFI-Grant-Budget-Policy_2019_urlupdates.pdf

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- Attendance at one relevant national conference, only where a specific conference is named and appropriate costs supplied.
- Temporary accommodation costs (in the case of part-time awards). These costs must be relevant and justified.
- In the case of fellows relocating overseas:
 - Travel to and from the industry partner location at the beginning and end of the Fellowship. Travel costs should be calculated based on the cheapest available public transport option.
 - Visa and health insurance costs related to the relocation of the fellow.
 - One return trip per year for personal reasons.
- Costs associated with one short visit (e.g., a few weeks) to a location relevant to the award, such as the company's headquarters.
- Costs associated with visits to the fellow's Research Body e.g., to consult with the academic collaborator, if relevant and fully justified.

Should any taxation issue related to these costs arise, it is the responsibility of the fellow and the Research Body to address it.

Indirect Costs

In addition to the SFI direct costs, SFI also makes an indirect or overhead contribution to the applicant's Research Body, which is reflected as a percentage of the **SFI requested** direct costs. Overheads are payable as a contribution to the Research Body for the indirect costs of hosting or facilitating SFI-funded research programmes and are intended to enable the Research Body to develop internationally competitive research infrastructure and support services. All awards are made directly to the applicant's Research Body¹¹.

TOTAL PROJECT COSTS

Applicants are required to submit a fully costed budget for the project that includes both the SFI requested costs (fellow salary/teaching buy-out and mobility costs) **and a full breakdown of all the industry partner's costs in supporting the project**. All costs must be verifiable using standard accounting practices. In line with State aid requirements the following costs are eligible:

- **Personnel costs:** researchers, technicians and other supporting staff to the extent employed on the project. SFI will contribute to the salary costs/teaching buy-out of the fellow as outlined above. The industry partner costs of its staff working on/contributing to the Fellowship project may be included and should be detailed in the industry partner costs. Eligible costs should include salaries plus social security contributions and other statutory costs and must be in line with the industry partner's standard remuneration policy.

¹¹ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/budget-finance-related-policies/>

- **Costs of instruments and equipment:** provided by the industry partner to the extent and for the period used for the project. If such instruments and equipment are not used for their full life of the project, only the depreciation costs corresponding to the life of the project, as calculated on the basis of good accounting practices, are considered as eligible.
- **Costs of contractual research** and knowledge and patents bought or licensed from outside sources at arm's length conditions, as well as costs of consultancy and equivalent services used exclusively for the project.
- **Other operating expenses:** including costs of materials, supplies and similar products incurred directly as a result of the project.

A budget template is provided and must be completed and uploaded onto the SESAME grants system as part of the application. This spreadsheet checks to ensure that the requested SFI budget does not exceed the permitted aid intensity.

6. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

ELIGIBILITY OF THE RESEARCH BODY

The Research Body is the body responsible for the overall financial and administrative coordination of research programmes supported by research grants from SFI. A list of eligible Research Bodies is available on the SFI website. The Research Body will administer the funds of successful awardees¹².

ELIGIBILITY OF THE INDUSTRY PARTNER

Only one industry partner company per application is permitted.

Eligible industry partner companies:

- Must be a research-active company, with a minimum of one employee engaged in research.
- Must be a private for-profit company located in Ireland or abroad.
- Must have the financial capacity to provide a *minimum* contribution of 20% of total eligible project costs. Please refer to Section 5 above for further details on the company contribution.
- Must possess the appropriate independent infrastructure, revenue and staffing, to provide appropriate working conditions and training to prospective fellows.
- Commercial semi-state companies such as the group of companies under CIE, EirGrid, ESB etc. and their similar counterparts worldwide are eligible industry partners.
- Academic spin-outs are eligible industry partners provided they meet all other eligibility criteria, including the disclosure of any potential conflicts of interest. Note also that industry employees seconded to Research Bodies, such as Researchers-in-Residence, are not eligible industry partners.

¹² <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/eligibility-related-information/>

Non-eligible industry partner companies include:

- Government-funded entities such as hospitals, technology transfer offices of public entities, Government departments or other agencies of the State.
- Charities and not-for-profit organisations.

Undertakings in Difficulty

Under State aid rules (**General Block Exemption Regulation (GBER)**) SFI cannot provide funding for fellows to be placed with industry partners that are 'undertakings in difficulty'¹³. Industry partners will be required to confidentially provide additional financial information/declarations to SFI (see Section 10). These documents will be used by SFI to determine eligibility of the company to receive State aid. Please refer to programme FAQ for definition of 'undertaking in difficulty'.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA OF THE APPLICANT (FELLOW)

There are two categories of applicant:

A) Faculty Researcher

and

B) Postdoctoral Researcher

All applicants must be:

- A permanent member of the academic staff ("Faculty researcher") of an eligible Irish Research Body
- OR**
- A former or current contract postdoctoral researcher in an eligible Irish Research Body
- OR**
- The holder of a PhD degree awarded by an eligible Irish Research Body.

All applicants must hold a PhD or equivalent. Please consult the **SFI Policy of PhD Equivalence**¹⁴ for further information. Note that *the PhD must have either been:*

i) conferred at the time of application. The official date is defined as the day, month and year that the degree was conferred i.e., the month and year printed on the official PhD certificate.

or

ii) the applicant has been certified by the awarding university as having fulfilled all the requirements for the award of a doctoral degree, including the submission of the hardbound corrected thesis at the date of submission.

¹³ article 2, no. 18 of COMMISSION REGULATION (EU) No 651/2014 of 17 June 2014

¹⁴ <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/eligibility-related-information/index.xml>

Verification of the official date of conferral/certification of fulfilment of requirements by the awarding University must be available upon request.

Additionally:

- The fellow remains an employee of the Research Body at all times, *including* during the placement.
- Proposals are not accepted from applicants who wish to be hosted in an organisation in which they have a financial interest or hold a decision-making role (see Section 13 – Disclosure of Conflict of Interest).

Specific eligibility criteria for each category of applicant are outlined below:

(A) Faculty Researcher

All Category A Applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Applicants must be a member of the academic staff (“Faculty Researcher”) of an eligible Irish Research Body (permanent or with an active contract at the time of application).
- Applicants must hold a PhD or equivalent for at least 3 years by the submission deadline. The official date is defined as the day, month and year that the degree was conferred i.e., the month and year printed on the official PhD certificate.
- Applicants must be senior author on 3 international peer reviewed articles. Only original research publications, and not review articles, are acceptable.

Additionally:

- Applicants holding a fixed-term contract academic/faculty appointment, including full-time, fixed-term lecturing contracts **of more than 2 years** should apply under Category A. Please note that for these applicants, SFI will not support a Fellowship beyond the end date of their faculty appointment. As such, these applicants are only eligible to apply before the last year of their contract and must ensure that the award duration would not extend beyond the end of the applicant’s faculty appointment.
- Applicants holding a fixed-term contract academic/faculty appointment, including full-time, fixed-term lecturing contracts **of less than 2 years** should apply under Category B.

(B) Postdoctoral Researcher

All Category B Applicants must be:

- A postdoctoral researcher (including Research Fellows and holders of personal Fellowships) *currently* working on either an SFI-funded or a non-SFI-funded research, innovation or commercialisation award in an eligible Irish Research Body,
OR
- A postdoctoral researcher (including Research Fellows and holders of personal Fellowships) who *previously* held a contract to work on either an SFI-funded or a non-SFI-funded research, innovation or commercialisation award in an eligible Irish Research Body,
OR
- The holder of a *PhD degree awarded by an eligible Irish Research Body*, who is:

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- i. Not eligible under Category A.
- ii. Not a current or previous contract postdoctoral researcher, as per two points above.
- iii. Not currently employed in industry, either in Ireland or abroad (i.e., the applicant may be based overseas at the time of application).

Additionally:

- Applicants currently residing or working abroad are eligible to apply to undertake Fellowships with industry partners based in Ireland only.
- Category B applicants may apply through an eligible Irish Research Body that is different from their current employer. In such cases, the application must be submitted through the prospective employing Research Body, and not the current one.
- Postdoctoral holders of individual Fellowships (e.g., SFI Starting Investigator Research Grant, IRC postgraduate scholarships, MSCA Fellowships) must apply under Category B and cannot apply earlier than one year before the end of their Fellowship/contract.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA OF THE INDUSTRY MENTOR

The industry mentor must be an employee of an eligible industry partner company, and have:

- Relevant experience working in an industry environment.
- Experience and knowledge of industry processes including operational and business procedures.
- A proven record of leadership and accomplishment appropriate to international standards in their field, industry sector and career stage.

Additionally:

- Academic employees currently seconded on industry partner's premises are not eligible industry mentors.
- Industry employees seconded to Research Bodies, such as Researchers-in-Residence, are not eligible industry mentors.

SFI expects that the industry mentor and fellow will be located at the same industry partner site during the course of the award; if this is not the case (e.g., for multinational companies with several sites), applicants must provide a full justification for any remote mentoring in the proposal. In addition, a nominated point of contact at the industry partner company who will take responsibility for day-to-day supervision of the fellow must be named in the industry partner letter of support. Where it is proposed to undertake remote working, (in cases where it is the policy of the industry partner) a full justification must be provided.

Research Body endorsement certifies that the applicant meets the relevant eligibility criteria. Where an applicant, industry partner or industry mentor fail to meet the eligibility criteria outlined above, the application will be deemed ineligible and will not be accepted for review.

7. RESEARCH IMPACT

SFI funds research on behalf of the Government of Ireland. As with all public spending, it is necessary to demonstrate and articulate the potential impact and benefits of scientific research. Applicants are required to address the impact of the proposed programme as part of their application.

Defining Impact

Impact can be described as the demonstrable contribution that excellent research makes to the economy and society¹⁵. Impact embraces the diverse ways in which research-related knowledge and skills benefit individuals, organisations and nations by:

- Powering an innovative and enterprising economy.
- Creating high-value jobs.
- Attracting, developing and nurturing businesses, scientists and talented people.
- Increasing the effectiveness of public services and policy.
- Enhancing the quality of life, health and creative output.
- Developing the country's international reputation.
- Educating and training the population.
- Solving the major national and global problems and challenges, such as food security and world hunger, climate change, energy security, ageing population, rural sustainability, and other sustainability challenges.

Measuring and assessing impact

SFI recognises that some research projects may have immediate impact whereas other projects may take much longer to achieve impact. For example, an output such as a filed patent is unlikely to create an impact until the patent is licensed to develop a product, which can then generate revenue and jobs. The adoption of a project output such as a new standard or protocol could improve the performance of an existing business, which could also impact revenue and jobs. The discovery of a new treatment or medical device will have obvious health, as well as potential economic benefits. Enhancing the sustainability of an agricultural or energy system will have societal and environmental impacts as well as potential economic benefits e.g., through resource use efficiency.

8. PROPOSAL REVIEW PROCEDURE AND CRITERIA

Following the submission of proposals to the Industry RD&I Fellowship Programme 2021 Call, all proposals will be checked for compliance with: **non-technical** mandatory criteria (e.g., all sections complete, page numbers not exceeded, all letters of support included); **technical** mandatory criteria

¹⁵ <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/award-management/research-impact/>

(e.g., employment/qualification status, publication requirements, alignment with the legal remit of SFI and State aid requirements, and all other relevant eligibility criteria); and any other requirements outlined in the call document. Proposals identified as ineligible at this stage will be declined without review. Additionally, SFI will assess the financial documents submitted by the industry partner to determine their eligibility to receive State aid through this programme.

San Francisco Declaration of Research Assessment (DORA)

SFI is a signatory to the **San Francisco Declaration of Research Assessment (DORA)**¹⁶ and, as such, is aligning its review and evaluation processes with DORA principles. To this end, all types of research output are recognised and SFI is committed to assessing the quality and impact of research through means other than journal impact factors. This is reflected in the CV template. In the spirit of supporting open research and as a signatory of **Plan S**¹⁷, SFI will also consider a commitment to making data and other types of research, open and accessible.

Proposals will be reviewed by a 'virtual panel' comprised of a large number of domain-specific international reviewers; where each member of the virtual panel receives a number of proposals, typically six, to review. Proposals are assigned to each reviewer based on expertise. All reviewers engaged by SFI are required to adhere to the **SFI Reviewer Code of Conduct**¹⁸.

During the review, three equally weighted review criteria (Quality of Research and Training; Potential for Impact; Execution and Delivery) are applied by the international reviewers. Please see Table 1 below for further details.

Following submission of reviews from the remote panel, all eligible proposals will progress to the second stage of full proposal review. This is undertaken by a sitting panel composed of SFI staff and at least one independent expert engaged by SFI. This panel convenes to discuss each proposal and the postal reviews submitted as part of the first stage of review. Only proposals demonstrating a strong potential for deepening intersectoral engagement, academia-industry exchange of knowledge and upskilling of researchers are recommended for funding by the sitting panel. In the event of applications receiving the same final score when evaluated for their quality, SFI will give priority in the review process to applications from female candidates. If required, further ties will be decided based on the quality of the proposed research plan criterion. SFI reserves the right to modify the review process. Applicants will be notified of any relevant modification to the review procedure.

The written evaluations provided by the remote reviewers will be provided as feedback to applicants at the end of the overall review process.

¹⁶ <https://sfdora.org/>

¹⁷ <https://www.coalition-s.org/>

¹⁸ <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/review/>

Table 1 below details the evaluation criteria and associated guidance provided to reviewers.

Review Type	SFI Industry RD&I Fellowship Programme
Review Questions	<p>1. Question pertaining to Research and Training Programme</p> <p>SFI is a signatory of the San Francisco Declaration of Research Assessment (DORA)¹⁹. As such, SFI is aligning its review and evaluation processes with DORA principles. To this end, all types of research output are recognised by SFI and we are committed to assessing the quality and impact of research through means other than journal impact factors. Furthermore, in the spirit of supporting open research and as a signatory of Plan S,²⁰ SFI will positively consider where there is a commitment to making data and other types of research open and accessible. Please take these positions into account during your assessment of the DORA-compliant CV(s) submitted by the applicant(s).</p> <p>Please comment on the following sub-criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality and innovative aspects of the research programme. • Quality and innovative aspects of the training programme, where appropriate, including mentoring. • Suitability and/or complementarity of the fellow’s expertise with the research and training programme. • Relevance of the sex/gender dimension in the research area. <p><i>Sex and Gender Dimension in Research</i></p> <p>This section should not include information on gender equality, diversity and inclusion in the research team/environment but should focus on the proposed research.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the applicant adequately addressed the sex and/or gender dimension/s in their proposal? Yes/No • If the applicant has not included a sex and/or gender dimension/s in their research proposal, are you satisfied that they have justified this position sufficiently? If not, please explain. • If the applicant has included a sex and/or gender dimension/s in their research proposal, is the design/analysis described sufficiently rigorously to test for differences between the sexes and/or genders? If not, please explain. • If the applicant is only studying one biological sex and/or gender, has the applicant provided sufficient justification with reference to the scientific literature, preliminary data, or other relevant consideration in their proposal? <p>Please rate the quality of the research and training programme (half scores are permitted)</p> <p>Score Description:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 Quality of research and training is not in line with programme objectives • 2 Quality of research and training has serious deficiencies • 3 Quality of research and training is lacking in one or two critical aspects; key issues need to be addressed • 4 High quality of research and training in most respects

¹⁹ <https://sfdora.org/read/>

²⁰ <https://www.coalition-s.org/>

- 5 Outstanding quality of research and training

2. Question pertaining to Potential for Impact

Please comment on the potential impact of the Fellowship. In your assessment, please consider points such as:

- Potential for long-term collaboration and knowledge exchange between the participants, and their commitment to the programme
- Enhancement of the career perspectives and employability of the fellow and contribution to their skills development
- Quality of the proposed measures to exploit and disseminate the results, including IP management plans.

Please rate the applicant's ability to demonstrate the potential for impact of the Fellowship (half scores are permitted)

Score Description:

- 1 Very low impact potential
- 2 Low impact potential
- 3 Good impact potential
- 4 High impact potential
- 5 Outstanding impact potential

3. Question pertaining to Execution and Delivery

Please comment on the:

- Coherence and feasibility of the work and training plan. Please note: for faculty researchers applying to undertake a Fellowship, SFI is entirely supportive of part-time applications.
- Appropriateness of the infrastructure and mentoring arrangements provided by the industry mentor. Please note: where relevant, SFI recommends that reviewers do not differentiate between fellows being hosted in a microSME or spin-out setting, and those hosted by an SME or MNC once the appropriate facilities/supports are available. SFI values the experience a researcher gains from being embedded in all types of companies.

Please rate the execution and delivery plans

Score Description:

- 1 Execution and delivery plans not credible
- 2 Poor execution and delivery plans
- 3 Good execution and delivery plans
- 4 High execution and delivery plans
- 5 Outstanding execution and delivery plans

4. Question pertaining to Budget and Award Duration

Please comment briefly on the appropriateness of the budget and duration requested.

5. Question pertaining to Ethical Issues

Please comment on any ethical issues, particularly related to any aspects of the proposed research that involves animals, human participants, human biological material, or identifiable/potentially identifiable data.

Experts engaged by SFI are required to abide by the **SFI Reviewer Code of Conduct**²¹. Amongst other requirements, this includes operation in a confidential, fair, independent and equitable manner. Experts are required to confirm, in advance of carrying out their review(s), that they will do so in a confidential manner. The identity of experts who conduct the postal reviews shall remain confidential and shall not be disclosed to the applicant. SFI shall not be liable for the release of information concerning proposals to third parties by those international experts involved in the peer-review process.

Adherence to the SFI Reviewer Code of Conduct also requires experts to immediately identify and declare where a conflict of interest exists or arises; in such cases, alternative reviewers will be appointed.

Reviewers must adhere to high standards of integrity during the peer-review process. They must not compromise the intellectual property integrity of the application 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.

9. DEADLINES

Submission deadline **21 July 2021 at 13:00 Dublin local time**

10. APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Applicants are strongly encouraged to engage early with their Research Office and Technology Transfer Office while preparing their application.

10.1 GENERAL PROPOSAL SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Proposals will only be accepted through SESAME, SFI's online grants and awards management system.

Access to SESAME is controlled by staff at the Research Office of your host Research Body. Please follow your internal organisational process to request this access.

SESAME is accessed using the internet; no additional software needs to be installed. You can access SESAME online from any location. SESAME supports Internet Explorer, Chrome and Firefox. With Mac we recommend that you use either Firefox or Chrome. The configuration of some browsers and internet infrastructure (popup blockers, firewalls etc.) can restrict an individual's access to the internet and as a result to the SESAME system. If you are having any such difficulties, please contact your organisation's internal IT support team.

²¹ <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/review/>

The SESAME system is accessed using the following Internet address:

<https://grants.sfi.ie>

Please see the **SESAME Researcher User Guide**²² for more detailed information.

Proposals must be submitted online through SESAME to SFI by the Research Office of the applicant's Research Body:

- Submission deadline **21 July 2021 at 13:00 Dublin local time**

Please note that in addition to the proposal documents, the industry partner is required to confidentially provide additional financial information/declarations (see Section 10.3 below), which must be emailed to irdif@sfi.ie by a delegated officer of the company by **4 August 2021. These documents will be used to determine eligibility of the industry partner to receive State aid.**

Once logged into the SESAME system, the full proposal application form will be available to applicants under the "Applications Pending Action" heading on your workbench.

- **All text in uploaded PDFs** should be provided in Times New Roman font or similar, with minimum font size of 11, and at least single-line spacing, as well as a minimum margin size of 2.5cm. Text in diagrams may be in any clearly legible font.
- Uploads to SESAME must be submitted in **Adobe or Microsoft PDF format only**. Please use unencrypted, non-password protected PDFs with the copying function disabled, developed using either Adobe or Microsoft word PDF convertor software only.
- The number of pages in uploads must not exceed the specifications for any given section. **Applications that do not comply with these requirements will be deemed ineligible and will be returned without review.**
- Appendices or other unsolicited documentation are not permitted. **Applications that include such unsolicited documentation will be returned without review.**
- File sizes of attachments should be **less than 5MB**.
- Hyperlinks and URLs are only allowed when specifically noted in call documents or SESAME guidance/instructions. The use of hyperlinks is typically limited to citing information already in the public domain which is non-critical to the evaluation of the proposal. Hyperlinks and URLs may not be used to provide additional information, which would be necessary for application review, and as a means of circumventing page limits. Reviewers are not obligated to view linked sites and are cautioned that they should not directly access a website (unless the link to the site was specifically requested in application instructions). When allowed, you must reference the actual URL text so it appears on the page, for example in brackets or in a footnote, rather than hiding the URL behind a specific word or phrase. You must complete all mandatory SESAME profile fields (marked in red) before submitting your application. It is not possible to submit an application without completing all mandatory sections.

²² <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/award-management-system/>

Early submission in SESAME is strongly recommended. Applicants who wait until shortly before the close of the call to upload their proposal for Research Body review and approval prior to the deadline, are at serious risk of encountering submission issues. The submit button will cease to be active at the indicated deadline.

Once an application is submitted by the Research Body to SFI, it cannot be withdrawn and subsequently modified for resubmission in the same call, regardless of the date of submission.

Please note that the deadlines referred to in the call document refer to submission of the finalised application to SFI by the applicant's Research Office. Research Offices may mandate internal submission deadlines in order to ensure that they have sufficient time to review applications and submit them to SFI.

Applications that are incomplete in content, or exceed the page limit specifications, will be deemed ineligible and will not be accepted for review.

Proposal eligibility checks will be completed by SFI staff.

10.2 ORCID ID

ORCID²³ provides a unique digital identifier for researchers which can then be linked to their different research works across different platforms.

There are a number of benefits to creating an ORCID iD that include:

1. ORCID allows you to pull information from different platforms creating a centralised reference to your different works (e.g., publications, patents, awards) in one location using a single sign in.
2. Your ORCID iD is a unique identifier which distinguishes you from other researchers with a similar name.
3. Using the ORCID iD assists in making your research works more visible to funders and publishers. It allows you to build a complete picture of your research in one location.

As part of the integration of SESAME with ORCID, it is possible for researchers to import publication data from ORCID directly into their SESAME Researcher Profile.

For the Industry RD&I Fellowship Programme 2021 Call, you are required to have your SESAME Researcher Profile linked to an ORCID iD before an application can be submitted.

10.3 APPLICATION DOCUMENTS

The following documents must be created outside SESAME and uploaded onto the system as PDF documents:

- 1. Proposal (max. 6 pages).** See Proposal Template in Appendix A.

²³ <http://orcid.org/>

- 2. Applicant CV (max. 5 pages).** See CV Template in Appendix B.
- 3. Industry Mentor CV (max. 5 pages).** While a template is not provided for the industry mentor, SFI aligns its review and evaluation processes with the principles of the San Francisco Declaration of Research Assessment (DORA)²⁴, which focuses on the quality, impact and variety of outputs arising from research. SFI requests that this and the following areas are considered by the industry mentor in preparing their CV:
 - Contribution to the generation and implementation (including the commercialisation) of new knowledge.
 - Mentorship, supporting colleagues or teams, demonstration of successful collaborations.
 - Evidence of cross-sectoral and cross-disciplinary experience.
 - If including a publication list, the use of journal metrics is not permitted. Deviating from these instructions may result in the redaction of these details or make your application ineligible for review.
- 4. References List (max. 1 page).**

A list of references should be provided, which includes author(s), title of article, name of publication, date of publication, and details (such as volume, pages).
- 5. Budget Justification (max. 3 pages)**

The applicant should provide a justification for all eligible project costs including both the SFI supported costs and the industry partner's costs in supporting the project. Please note that costs that are not considered to be fully justified in this section will not be approved for funding. The industry partner costs must be verifiable using standard accounting practices.
- 6. Letters of Support (max. 2 pages each).** See Section 10.4 for details.
- 7. If relevant, Academic Collaborator CV (max. 2 pages).** See CV Template in Appendix C.

The following documents must be confidentially provided by the industry partner to SFI directly by email to irdif@sfi.ie from the industry partner mentor or designated representative before **4 August 2021**. Please ensure that the Applicant's Name and Proposal ID are quoted in the email subject line.

1. Declaration of financial capacity.
2. Declaration of SME status (for applications requesting increased grant intensity based on company size).
3. Declaration of solvency.
4. Latest set of financial records (P&L and balance sheet). If the industry partner is not required to produce audited accounts, management accounts signed off by an accountant will be accepted.

Templates for the industry partner documentation are provided in Appendix D.

²⁴ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/review/>

10.4 SESAME INSTRUCTIONS FOR PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

APPLICANT DETAILS

PhD awarding institution: Please provide the name of institution that awarded your PhD.

PhD awarding country: Please provide the country of the institution that awarded your PhD.

Applicant category: You will be asked to select either: *Faculty Researcher* (Category A) or *Postdoctoral Researcher* (Category B). Applicants who are a postdoctoral researcher (Category B applicant) will be asked to select an applicant sub-category based on their current circumstances. Category (B) applicants who are current or previous postdoctoral researchers on a research or commercialisation grant held by an eligible Irish Research Body are requested to name the grant code that is, or has been, funding their work.

Location of applicant: Please provide your location at the time of application; select from the drop-down menu.

Applicant associated with an SFI Research Centre: Please indicate whether you are currently associated with an SFI Research Centre and provide the name of the Centre.

Supervisory experience: Please provide details of supervisory experience to date.

Current, pending and expired support of applicant: You must report on any current, pending and expired funding. You must complete the textbox detailing any potential overlap between current and pending funding and the proposed research in this application. For each current and pending grant listed above, you must clearly indicate any scientific overlap with this application, referring only to overlap in content.

Applicant DORA-compliant CV: An applicant CV, using the template provided in the Downloads section of the SFI Industry RD&I Fellowship Programme website²⁵, must be completed and uploaded (max. 5 pages). The template allows for the provision of additional information such as periods of leave from research if relevant. Also, reference to metrics such as journal impact factor, h-index and total number of publications are not permitted. Failure to use this template or deviating from the instructions in the template may result in an application being deemed ineligible.

PROPOSAL SUMMARY

Proposal title (max. 30 words): The research proposal title should clearly convey the nature of the research to be undertaken, in up to 30 words. Please note that the title should be non-confidential.

Duration of award requested: The duration of the award (in months) should be provided. For full-time Fellowships, the award duration may vary between 1 month and 12 months. For part-time Fellowships, the award duration may vary between 2 months and 24 months.

²⁵ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/funding-calls/sfi-industry-fellowship-programme/>

SFI Industry RD&I Fellowship Programme

Research Body: If you are applying through another Research Body you will be asked to select the Research Body that will endorse the proposal.

Time commitment to Fellowship: Indicate the percentage time spent on placement against the total award duration.

Duration of placement requested: The duration of the placement (in months) should be provided. This is the time spent by the fellow working on their project which should be on the industry partner's premises. Fellows are expected to be embedded in the industry partner's premises and located there for the duration of the placement. The duration of the placement may vary between 1 month and 12 months. The duration of the placement must be 100% of the total award duration for full-time Fellowships (100% time commitment). For part-time Fellowships, the duration of the placement (and related time commitment) is expected to be 50% of the award duration but can vary depending on the needs of the project.

Total industry partner costs: Enter the total value (€) of contributions which the industry partner will commit to the project. (this should be the same value as that provided in the budget spreadsheet, see Budget section below)

Resubmission statement: Applications to any call that are based primarily on unsuccessful submissions (following peer review) to any SFI programme must demonstrate that the review comments resulting from the initial application have been taken into account in the preparation of the new submission. Resubmissions that have not clearly taken into account the major comments or concerns resulting from the prior assessment will be withdrawn without review.

You must declare whether this proposal relates to a previously submitted application to any SFI scheme. Where the application is a resubmission, a statement referencing the previous application and explaining the differences must be provided and references to reviewers' comments must be made where relevant. This statement will assist SFI scientific staff in the assessment of eligibility of a revised application and will not be shared with reviewers. Resubmissions that have not clearly taken into account the major comments or concerns resulting from the prior assessment will be withdrawn without review. Please see **SFI Policy on Resubmission of Grant Applications**²⁶ for further information.

Alignment with SFI's legal remit: You must complete a statement (max. 250 words) justifying how your proposed research is aligned with SFI's legal remit. This statement will be used as part of SFI's determination on the eligibility of the application.

Priority area and alignment: You should select one of the 14 refreshed priority areas from the drop-down menu as the primary priority area, which best describes the proposed research. It is also possible to detail secondary priority areas that the research will be relevant to. Alternatively, applicants may select "Other".

Research area (Primary): Select a primary research area to which the proposed research best aligns.

²⁶ https://www.sfi.ie/resources/SFI_Resubmission-Policy_August-2016.pdf

Research area (Secondary): Select a secondary research area to which the proposed research best aligns.

Research category: Please select the appropriate research category: *Industrial Research* or *Experimental Development* and provide a justifying narrative for the selected research category (max. 250 words). Please refer to Section 5 for definitions of each research category. Applicants are encouraged to discuss the selection of research category with their Technology Transfer Office.

Alignment with the objectives of the Industry RD&I Fellowship Programme: You must complete a statement (max. 250 words) outlining how the proposed project is aligned with the objectives of the Industry RD&I Fellowship Programme.

COLLABORATOR(S) DETAILS

ADD INDUSTRY MENTOR

Information on the industry mentor must be added in this section. Clicking on the “Add” button will open a form into which details about the industry partner should be completed. Ensure that “Industry” is selected in the ‘Collaborator Type’ drop-down menu. Once details regarding the name and affiliation of the industry partner have been added, you must click on ‘Assign Collaborator’ and then save, which is achieved by clicking on the ‘Save Draft’ button at the bottom of the application form.

It will be possible to upload the industry mentor’s CV (max. 5 pages) by clicking on the appropriate button.

Additional industry mentors are not permitted on Industry RD&I Fellowship applications.

ADD ACADEMIC COLLABORATOR

Category B applicants may *choose* to include one academic collaborator from their Research Body. This individual may provide intellectual and/or technical contribution to the proposed research or may act in the capacity of a mentor to the fellow. The role of the academic collaborator must be clearly outlined in the proposal. The academic collaborator may not receive funding through the grant.

Clicking on the “Add” button will open a form into which details about the academic collaborator should be completed. Ensure that “Academic” is selected in the ‘Collaborator Type’ drop-down menu. Only one academic collaborator may be assigned in the proposal. Once details regarding the name and institution of the academic collaborator have been saved it will be possible to upload the academic collaborator’s CV (max. 2 pages) by clicking on the appropriate button. A template CV is provided in Appendix C.

Conflict of Interest

SFI recognises that applicants or their supervisors may have a prior relationship with the prospective industry partner (e.g., holding a decision-making role in the company, such as being the CEO or a major shareholder in the company). In the context of applications submitted to SFI that involve

industry either directly (e.g., as partners or collaborators) or indirectly (e.g., through engagement for concept/market validation), applicants and Research Bodies should manage any potential conflicts of interest. Where a potential conflict of interest exists, SFI requires that you disclose it to the Foundation and Research Body and that it is managed by the Research Body in accordance with the principles and mandates laid out in the document: *Ireland's National IP Protocol*²⁷.

Potential conflicts of interest with respect to any industry partners named in the application should be directly declared within the proposal. Furthermore, the host Research Body letter of support (see Section 11 below) should contain a description of the institutional policy regarding management of such conflicts.

COMPANY INFORMATION

You will be asked to indicate if your industry partner is located in the Republic of Ireland and if so, state the county in which they are based. Information on the company (industry partner) must be added in this section including annual turnover, type of organisation (SME, MNC etc.), a description of the organisation and business sector (max. 1000 words) and details on the number of employees in the company.

MAIN BODY OF PROPOSAL

- **Keywords (max. 15 words):** Please list the keywords/phrases from the research discipline or sub-discipline that best describe the research proposed in the application. If your proposal responds to issues arising due to the COVID-19 pandemic, please ensure that you include 'COVID-19' as a keyword (**max. 15 words**).
- **Scientific abstract (max. 200 words):** This should be a succinct, stand-alone and accurate summary, in technical language, of the proposed work. Confidential information should **not** be included in the scientific abstract.
- **Lay Abstract (max. 100 words):** This should be a succinct, stand-alone and accurate summary in lay, non-technical language of the proposed work. Confidential information should **not** be included in the lay abstract.
- **Fellowship proposal (max. 6 pages):** The proposal must be at maximum 6 pages in total (excluding references) and must be structured under the headings and sub-headings described in Appendix A. This document should be uploaded to SESAME as a PDF.
- **References (max. 1 page):** This document should be uploaded to SESAME as a PDF.

ETHICAL ISSUES

²⁷ <https://www.knowledgetransferireland.com/ManagingIP/National-IP-Protocol/>

All applicants, in particular those expecting to carry out research involving the use of animals, human participants, biological material or identifiable (or potentially identifiable) data, are required to complete an ethical issues questionnaire within SESAME, which forms part of the application. The project proposal section must include a description of the proposed research and methodology relating to the intended animal- and/or human-based studies. Guidance on the ethical and scientific issues related to such studies is provided on the SFI [website](#). For any studies where research involving the use of animals, human participants, biological material or identifiable (or potentially identifiable) data will be conducted outside of Ireland, applicants must ensure that this research will comply with both Irish legislation and the legislation of the jurisdiction in which the work takes place.

SFI will require evidence that relevant ethical and regulatory approval has been granted for studies involving human or animal subjects prior to an award commencing. In cases where such research does not commence until a later stage of an award, SFI may permit submission of ethical and regulatory approvals following the award start date but prior to commencement of the research involving animal and/or human subjects.

Sex and gender dimension in research statement (max. 1000 words).

In accordance with the **SFI Gender Strategy (Strand 3: Integrating Gender in Research and Innovation)**²⁸, all applicants must complete a statement articulating the consideration of biological sex and/or social gender variables in their research programme. Applicants must consider how the sex and/or gender dimension impacts your research. Please consult the **Guidance for Applicants on Ethical and Scientific Issues**²⁹ for resources on how to address the sex and/or gender dimension of research in your grant.

Do not include information on how you have addressed gender equality, diversity and inclusion in your research team/environment; this should be addressed in your CV, should you choose to highlight.

To complete this section, please consider the following questions:

1. Is sex as a biological variable taken into account in the research design, methods, analysis and interpretation, and/or dissemination of findings?
2. Is gender as a socio-cultural factor taken into account in the research design, methods, analysis and interpretation, and/or dissemination of findings?

If the answer is yes, please describe how sex and/or gender considerations will be integrated into your research proposal. If no, please explain why sex and/or gender are not applicable to your research proposal.

²⁸ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/gender/>

²⁹ <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/ethical-and-scientific-issues/>

Clinical trials

Clinical trials and investigations requiring approval by the Health Products Regulatory Authority (HPRA) will not be permitted through the Industry RD&I Fellowship Programme.

PROPOSED BUDGET

Please note that the **Budget Table** is located at the end of the full proposal application in SESAME. **See notes for completion in the SESAME Users Guides³⁰ and within SESAME.**

Please complete the **Budget Table** for the requested SFI contribution to the Fellowship. Additionally, you are also required to prepare a detailed budget using a Microsoft Excel budget template provided, which must be uploaded as an attachment to the proposal in the SESAME.

SFI BUDGET TABLE

- Staff: Teaching Buy-out (Category A applicants only)**
 Teaching buy-out can be requested for when the fellow (Category A) is located on the industry partner's premises, but only for Fellowships of >3 months duration. Teaching buy-out costs should be fully justified, detailing the number of hours per week of teaching buy-out. Requests must be pro-rata and proportional to the time commitment.
- Staff: Salary (Category B applicants only)**
 Category B applicants may apply for funding to support their own salary; salary requests should be in line with their number of years post-PhD experience. Please refer to the **SFI Grants Team Member Budgeting Scale³¹**.
- Travel: (Category A and B applicants)**
 A contribution (max. €10,000) towards travel and accommodation costs directly related to the progress of the Fellowship may be requested (see eligible costs under Section 5).

TOTAL PROJECT COSTS

In addition to the SFI-requested budget applicants are required to submit a fully costed budget that includes both the SFI requested costs (fellow salary/teaching buy-out and mobility costs) and a full breakdown of all the industry partner's costs in supporting the project. A budget template is provided on the Industry RD&I Fellowship Programme webpage³² and must be completed and uploaded onto the SESAME grants system as part of the application. This spreadsheet checks to ensure that the requested SFI budget does not exceed the permitted aid intensity (see total eligible project costs under Section 5).

³⁰ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/budget-finance-related-policies/>

³¹ https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/budget-finance-related-policies/SFI-Team-member-scales_June-2021-with-pension-and-increments.pdf

³² <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/funding-calls/sfi-industry-fellowship-programme/>

BUDGET JUSTIFICATION (MAX. 3 PAGES)

All information required to complete the budget justification can be found in Section 7 of the **SFI Grant Budget Policy** (version November 2019)³³. Details of the industry partner costs should be included.

Please include the salary scale (as per **SFI Grants Team Member Budgeting Scale**³⁴) for Category B applicants.

LETTERS OF SUPPORT

Category A Applicants (Faculty Researchers)

The following letters of support should be provided by Category A Applicants:

- **Research Body letter of support [mandatory]**. The Research Body submitting the application must supply a signed letter of support endorsing the suitability of the applicant's and industry mentor's expertise for the proposed research project. It is recommended, where possible, that this letter is signed by both the applicant's Head of School/Department and Vice-President for Research (or equivalent).
- **Industry Mentor letter of support [mandatory]**. The industry mentor must supply a signed letter of support endorsing the relevance of the applicant's expertise to the proposed research project. The industry mentor must also describe how they will provide the required infrastructure and capability to host the fellow for the duration of the programme. The industry partner's financial contribution should be detailed in the letter of support and correspond to the detailed project budget spreadsheet submitted as part of the application.
- **Technology Transfer Officer (TTO) letter of support [mandatory]**. A signed letter of support from the Research Body's TTO should indicate that the TTO is aware of the proposed Fellowship and highlight any relevant IP issues or discussions. The letter is expected to describe how the IP generated by the project will be protected and managed. For the purpose of the Industry RD&I Fellowship Programme, the IP arrangements are the responsibility of the Research Body, and shall reflect the collaborative nature of the project, the level of commitment of the industry partner and compliance with State aid regulations.
- **Statement from an SFI-funded applicant [where relevant]**. If you are already the holder of an active SFI award, a signed statement must be submitted describing how this programme will not negatively impact on the activities of all active SFI awards in which you are involved, how these awards will be managed for the duration of the Fellowship and what arrangements will be put in place for the supervision of associated team members. If you have previously held an SFI Industry Fellowship award, describe the added benefit to your career of the proposed Fellowship.

³³ https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/budget-finance-related-policies/SFI-Grant-Budget-Policy_2019_urlupdates.pdf

³⁴ https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/budget-finance-related-policies/SFI-Team-member-scales_June-2021-with-pension-and-increments.pdf

SFI Industry RD&I Fellowship Programme

- **Centre Director letter of support [where relevant].** If you are a co-PI in a SFI Research Centre, a signed letter of support from the Centre Director, indicating their support for the application and describing what arrangements will be put in place such that temporary departure from the Centre will not negatively impact on the activities of the award.
- **Conflict of Interest statement [where relevant].** A statement from the Research Body describing the management of any potential conflicts of interest arising from the Fellowship.

Category B Applicants (Postdoctoral Researchers)

The following letters of support should be provided by Category B Applicants:

- **Research Body letter of support [mandatory].** The Research Body submitting the application must supply a signed letter of support endorsing the suitability of the applicant's and industry mentor's expertise to the proposed research project. Where an applicant has previously held an SFI Industry Fellowship award, the added benefit of the proposed Fellowship to the applicant's career should be described. This letter of support must include details of the postdoctoral researcher's current funding award, details of the funding body and details of the postdoctoral researcher's current remuneration level as aligned to the **SFI Grants Team Member Budgeting Scale**³⁵. It is recommended, where possible, that this letter is signed by both the applicant's Head of School/Department and Vice-President for Research (or equivalent).
- **Industry Mentor letter of support [mandatory].** The industry mentor must supply a signed letter of support endorsing the relevance of the applicant's expertise to the proposed research project. The industry mentor must also describe how they will provide the required infrastructure and capability to host the fellow for the duration of the programme. The industry partner's financial contribution should be detailed in the letter of support and correspond to the detailed project budget spreadsheet submitted as part of the application.
- **Technology Transfer Officer (TTO) letter of support [mandatory].** A signed letter of support from the Research Body's TTO should indicate that the TTO is aware of the proposed Fellowship and highlight any relevant IP issues or discussions. The letter is expected to describe how the IP generated by the project will be protected and managed. For the purpose of the Industry RD&I Fellowship Programme, the IP arrangements are the responsibility of the Research Body, and shall reflect the collaborative nature of the project, the level of commitment of the industry partner and compliance with State aid regulations.
- **Academic Collaborator letter of support [where relevant].** A signed letter of support (max. 2 pages) from any named academic collaborator. [Please note that only one academic collaborator may be named on a proposal; the inclusion of an academic collaborator is optional]. Letters from academic collaborators should provide full details of the intended intellectual and/or technical input to the proposal. Letters of support that do not originate from the officially listed academic collaborator will be removed from the proposal. The letter should include a statement outlining how the collaborator will provide added value to the proposal.

³⁵ https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/budget-finance-related-policies/SFI-Team-member-scales_June-2021-with-pension-and-increments.pdf

- **Research Fellow salary justification [where relevant].** If the salary requested is on the Research Fellow or Senior Research Fellow SFI salary scale, an additional formal letter from the Research Body should be supplied describing that you will be contractually differentiated by the Research Body from the standard cohort of postdoctoral researchers. Please refer to the **SFI Grant Budget Policy**³⁶ for further details. It is important to note that the inclusion of a support letter will strengthen but not guarantee funding contributions at Research Fellow level.
- **Conflict of Interest statement [where relevant].** A statement from the Research Body describing the management of any potential conflicts of interest arising from the Fellowship.

VIEW PROPOSAL PRIOR TO SUBMISSION

A PDF of your proposal is available in SESAME and should be reviewed prior to submission to enable you to validate your application. The responsibility lies with the applicant in this regard. Submission is made initially to your local Research Office for approval, prior to submission by the Research Office to SFI. Please contact your Research Office well in advance to obtain registration details for SESAME and familiarise yourself with any internal Research Body submission deadlines.

You will receive a notification from SESAME periodically when the status of your proposal changes. Alternatively, if you wish to track the status of your proposal e.g., proposal pending Research Office approval or under review at SFI, this information will be displayed in SESAME.

APPLICANT AGREEMENT TO TERMS AND CONDITIONS

It should be noted that submission of an application represents your agreement to **SFI Terms and Conditions of Research Grants**³⁷. The submission of an application shall also be construed as consent by the applicant to participate in the peer-review process. SFI reserves the right to return applications without review where they do not meet the eligibility criteria.

RESEARCH BODY APPROVAL

It should be noted that Research Body submission of an application represents their approval of an application and agreement to **SFI Terms and Conditions of Research Grants**³⁸.

Submission must only be made by an authorised Research Body representative. In particular, the Research Body is approving:

- The eligibility of the applicant.
- That the applicant is, or will be upon receipt of the grant, recognised as an employee of the Research Body for the duration of the grant.
- That the requested SFI budget including salaries/stipends, teaching buy-out and travel are in line with accepted institutional guidelines.

³⁶ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/budget-finance-related-policies/index.xml>

³⁷ <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/sfi-general-terms-and-conditions/index.xml>

³⁸ <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/sfi-general-terms-and-conditions/index.xml>

- The availability of infrastructure within the institution as outlined by the applicant in the research proposal.
- That the proposed research programme has not been funded by other sources.
- That relevant ethical and regulatory approval has been or will be sought and must be granted prior to the award commencing.
- That the relevant licences will be in place at the time of award.
- That the details provided in relation to research funding history i.e., current, pending and expired grants, as detailed in the application, are valid and accurate.

DEADLINE

- Submission deadline **21 July 2021 at 13:00 Dublin local time**

11. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

Intellectual Property management practices will be in accordance with national guidelines. In particular, the management of IP arising out of the Industry RD&I Fellowship must comply with the practices and procedures described in the national IP protocol document *Ireland's National IP Protocol 2019*³⁹. The arrangements related to the management of IP arising from the Industry RD&I Fellowship Programme are the responsibility of the Research Body and shall reflect the collaborative nature of the project, the level of commitment of the industry partner and compliance with State aid regulations.

An intellectual property rights agreement must be concluded by the Research Body with the relevant industry partner prior to commencement of the research programme.

12. FELLOWSHIP AGREEMENT

Fellowship agreements shall be agreed by the Research Body with the industry partner company prior to the commencement of the Fellowship and such agreements shall be provided to the Foundation upon request. The agreement should name a designated point of contact in the Research Body and outline the terms and conditions of the Fellowship including, but not limited to, the working conditions and arrangements of the fellow, performance management processes, confidentiality, data protection and other specific requirements of the industry partner company. Please note the Fellowship agreement can be incorporated in the intellectual property agreement with the industry partner.

³⁹ <https://www.knowledgetransferireland.com/ManagingIP/National-IP-Protocol/>

13. DISCLOSURE OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The Research Body hereby represents and warrants on its own behalf and on behalf of the applicant, having made reasonable and diligent enquiries, that no conflict of interest (CoI) arises from their participation in the programme and full and frank disclosure has been made in the proposal concerning all pre-existing interests.

When a potential or perceived conflict of interest arises e.g., when a postdoctoral researcher proposes to carry out a Fellowship in a company where the researcher's current supervisor has a financial interest or decision-making role, these should be disclosed, and a management plan provided by the Research Body (see letters of support in Section 10.4).

Failure to provide a conflict of interest statement, where applicable, may result in the application being deemed ineligible.

14. SFI POLICIES AND POSITIONS

In addition to complying with **SFI's Grant General Terms & Conditions**⁴⁰, applicants are expected to be familiar and consult with SFI policies/positions and with all relevant national policies when preparing their application to any SFI programme. Please note that the following is a non-exclusive list, some of which may not apply to this particular programme (noted with an *). Applicants must also be aware that SFI policies are reviewed and updated from time to time.

*Clinical Trials (*not relevant to this programme)*

Research programmes that include clinical trials as part of the study must adhere to the **SFI Clinical Trial and Clinical Investigation Policy**⁴¹, as well as with the requirements set out by the Health Products Regulatory Authority (HPRA).

Animal Usage

Applicants intending to use animals in their research projects are obliged to comply with the **SFI Use of Animals in Research Policy**⁴² and should also ensure that their studies are in line with the HPA's position on the use of animals in research.

Research Integrity

SFI places paramount importance on ensuring that the highest standards of research integrity underpin all aspects of the research that it supports. To this end, SFI endorses the **National**

⁴⁰ <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/sfi-general-terms-and-conditions/index.xml>

⁴¹ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/ethical-and-scientific-issues/>

⁴² http://www.sfi.ie/resources/SFI-Policy-on-the-Use-of-Animals-in-Research_June_2016.pdf

Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland;⁴³ that is, all institutions and SFI award holders are expected to abide by this policy statement and the **European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity.**⁴⁴

Doctoral Education

For postgraduate students funded by SFI, the host Research Body is expected to adopt the principles, standards and good practice for doctoral education as described in the **National Framework for Doctoral Education (2015),**⁴⁵ which SFI has endorsed.

Intellectual Property Management

Intellectual Property (IP) should be managed according to the policies set out in the Government publication: **Ireland's National IP Protocol 2019**⁴⁶ and must comply with State aid Regulations⁴⁷. The IP arrangements are the responsibility of the Research Body and shall reflect the collaborative nature of the project and the level of cash and in-kind commitment made by the industry partner.

Gender Strategy

Research should fully consider potential biological sex and socio-cultural gender dimensions as key analytical and explanatory variables. As articulated in the **SFI Gender Strategy (Strand 3: Integrating Gender in Research and Innovation)**⁴⁸ applicants are advised to demonstrate that they have considered any potential sex/gender aspects in their proposed research programme. The strategy also sets out a target for 30% of SFI's portfolio of award holders to be female and for research teams to be composed of at least 40% of each gender by 2020. As such, applicants should consider how these targets can be achieved at all levels of the research team.

Maternity Supplement

SFI is committed to removing and mitigating any existing or perceived factors that may limit the participation of women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) careers. SFI invites its award holders to apply for a supplemental discretionary allowance to support their SFI funded award when either an SFI awardee or a team member, including PhD students funded on an SFI award, takes a period of maternity or adoptive leave.⁴⁹

Appeals Process

⁴³ https://www.iaa.ie/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/IAA_Research_Integrity_in_Ireland_Report_2019.pdf

⁴⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/other/hi/h2020-ethics_code-of-conduct_en.pdf

⁴⁵ http://hea.ie/assets/uploads/2017/04/national_framework_for_doctoral_education_0.pdf

⁴⁶ <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/national-policies-sfi-positions/>

⁴⁷ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/national-policies-sfi-positions/>

⁴⁸ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/gender/>

⁴⁹ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/gender/>

This policy establishes procedures and responsibilities for the appeal of the declination of a proposal by SFI.⁵⁰

State aid

All SFI funding granted under this call will be subject to, and must be compliant with, European Union State aid law. All grants under this programme are to operate under the State aid rules and in particular GBER⁵¹. GBER sets out a number of conditions under which research, development and innovation funding is exempt from the obligation of prior notification to the European Commission. Where State aid applies to a project, grants will be provided at a level determined on basis of the size of the industry partner involved, the category of research undertaken in the project and the total eligible costs of the project. SFI funding will be provided at the rates set out in Section 7. The State aid information in this call document is provided by way of guidance only and it is not a substitute for legal or professional advice, which is the responsibility of applicants.

Child Protection

Where relevant, applicants and Research Bodies are required to comply with the provisions of the **Children First Act 2015**⁵² and the **National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017**⁵³. It is the responsibility of the Research Body to ensure that they are compliant with all applicable law.

Data Protection Policy

The General Data Protection Regulation⁵⁴ is a legal framework that sets out guidelines for the collection and processing of personal information of individuals within the European Union. Applicants are advised that they must be compliant with this regulation if they collect or process personal data.

SFI may collect, use and disclose personal data provided in the application and/or otherwise obtained under, or in connection with, the application for processing the submission, for the performance of its statutory powers and functions, and for the general activities of SFI. Further details regarding SFI's collection, use and disclosure of personal data, and the rights of individuals with respect to any personal data held by SFI, are available in the **SFI Privacy Statement**⁵⁵.

During peer-review procedures, information may be sent to external experts in countries outside of the European Economic Area, including countries that are not recognised by the

⁵⁰ <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/review/>

⁵¹ [EU Commission Regulation \(EC\) No. 651/2014](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/REGULATION/?uri=CELEX:32014R0651)

⁵² <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2015/act/36/enacted/en/pdf>

⁵³ http://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Children_First_National_Guidance_2017.pdf

⁵⁴ <https://www.dataprotection.ie/docs/GDPR/1623.htm>

⁵⁵ <http://www.sfi.ie/privacy/>

European Commission as having adequate data protection laws. By submitting an application to SFI, the Research Body and members of the research team are agreeing that they consent to the processing and transfer of personal information in this way.

During the application process or at any time thereafter, SFI may contact the Research Body, the principal investigator, or any member of the research team with regard to funding opportunities, activities or events organised by SFI or other relevant bodies, or for the purposes of monitoring and evaluation (including, but not limited to, the collection of scientific data or data relating to the application process). SFI may choose to authorise a third party to contact the Research Body, the principal investigator or any member of the research team on its behalf.

Conflict of Interest

SFI recognises that applicants may have a prior relationship with an industry partner engaged in an application for funding to SFI (e.g., industry consultancy role, founder of an academic spin-out company) which may be perceived as a conflict of interest. Where a potential conflict of interest exists, SFI requires that it is disclosed by the applicant to SFI and their Research Body and that any such situations are managed by the Research Body in accordance with the principles and mandates laid out in **Ireland's National IP Protocol 2019**⁵⁶.

Open access

In line with the principles espoused by **Plan S**⁵⁷ and those of the **National Framework on the Transition to an Open Research Environment**⁵⁸ SFI is committed to ensuring that all publicly funded research articles are openly available. Where a research publication arises in whole or in part from SFI funded research (i.e., where one or other of the researchers concerned receives SFI funds in support of their endeavours), **SFI's Open Access policy**⁵⁹ should be adhered to. SFI monitors compliance with this policy through scientific and financial reporting, financial audits and its annual stocktake of Research Outputs.

Data Management

Good data governance and stewardship are key components of good research practice. SFI is part of an initiative for the voluntary international alignment of research data management policies⁶⁰. Applicants may find it helpful to consult with this and Science Europe's framework for discipline-specific research data management if preparing a data management plan as part of their application for funding to SFI⁶¹. Applicants should review individual programme

⁵⁶ <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/national-policies-sfi-positions/>

⁵⁷ <https://www.coalition-s.org/principles-and-implementation/>

⁵⁸ <http://norf-ireland.net/>

⁵⁹ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/open-research/SFIs-Open-Access-Policy-2019.pdf>

⁶⁰ <https://www.scienceeurope.org/our-resources/practical-guide-to-the-international-alignment-of-research-data-management/>

⁶¹ <https://www.scienceeurope.org/our-resources/guidance-document-presenting-a-framework-for-discipline-specific-research-data-management/>

funding call requirements regarding data management plans and timelines as to when they are required to be submitted.

Current SFI policies and positions will be reviewed on a regular basis; applicants are advised to consult the policy information in advance of submission of a proposal.

15. AWARD MANAGEMENT

State aid

SFI will monitor and verify, on an on-going basis and as required, the Research Body's compliance with State aid law. Upon request, the Research Body will provide the Foundation with all documentation reasonably required to satisfy SFI that the Research Body complies with State aid law. The Research Body is responsible for retaining such documentary records as are required to demonstrate compliance with State aid law, and ensure, where relevant, that all necessary third-party consents are procured to allow for such documentation to be disclosed to SFI.

Progress Reporting Requirements

SFI has stringent requirements for the reporting on awards that it makes. Individuals who hold the primary responsibility for reporting and who fail to comply with reporting requirements, run the risk of having their grant payments suspended. Failure to report can also prevent future applications being considered for funding. Please refer to SFI's guidance on reporting compliance⁶² for further detail.

Industry RD&I Fellowship grant holders will be required to complete the annual stocktake of SFI Research Outputs, an annual report and a final report (which includes a statement from the industry partner), guidance for which is provided⁶³. The purpose of the annual and final reports will be to assess how the award has delivered on the programmatic objectives and associated Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), as set out in **SFI's 2025 strategy *Shaping our Future***⁶⁴.

Awardees are obliged to keep their SESAME research profile updated since the annual stocktake of SFI Research Outputs is drawn directly from the data entered into the research profile; this must be updated and completed in January every year⁶⁵.

Each of the SFI Industry RD&I Fellowship Programme call objectives, with expected outputs, is discussed in turn below:

Connecting scientific research with potential users through supporting the transfer of knowledge and expertise between academia and industry.

⁶² <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/award-management/reporting-compliance/>

⁶³ https://www.sfi.ie/funding/award-management/reporting-procedures/IF-Final-Report-Guidance_-Oct-2019.pdf

⁶⁴ <https://www.sfi.ie/strategy/>

⁶⁵ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/award-management/reporting-procedures/>

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Both partners will be requested to illustrate the key areas of expertise acquired as a result of the Fellowship and how this expertise will benefit the relevant groups beyond the funding period. Both partners will be expected to explain how the Fellowship has enhanced the exploitation and commercialisation of Irish State-funded research and/or how the Fellowship has helped solve issues faced by the industry partner. It would be anticipated that as a consequence of this, the award will result in the industry partner gaining new knowledge and identifying growth areas and new market opportunities.

Maximise the economic and societal impact of Irish State-funded research and resources, by enhancing academia-industry collaborations through the funding of collaborative industry-academia projects.

The Industry RD&I Fellowship Programme sets out to provide support for the research community to foster new partnerships with industry, or to enhance existing ones. In this regard, it is anticipated that the Fellowships will result in academic researchers being equipped to participate in more rewarding and ongoing collaborations with innovative businesses and that they will act as a platform to enable industry to garner new networks with academia and academic institutions. Academic awardees will be asked to outline how they benefited from this expertise and knowledge, and how they intend to use this within their group and institution beyond the term of the award/funding period.

Foster impactful innovation by supporting industry-informed research and the exchange of knowledge and expertise between academia and industry.

In the scientific information section of the report, awardees are asked to outline the progress with reference to the associated outputs and outcomes from the collaborative research project carried out over the term of the award. Reference should be made to the deliverables outlined in the research programme and Gantt charts, where relevant. Furthermore, the report will gather information pertaining to dissemination of research outputs (where additional aid intensity is granted for wide dissemination of results) and key areas of expertise acquired by both partners as a result of the programme, and how this expertise will benefit the relevant groups beyond the term of the award.

Enhance the breadth of training of researchers, and their employability.

It is anticipated that this close alliance between academia and industry will contribute to upskilling the next generation of academic researchers with a broader skill set encompassing business and industry relevant competencies. The Fellowship will enable academic researchers to gain a better understanding of the business requirements and operations central to carrying out research and development activities in industry.

Facilitate increased participation in research and innovation by companies of all sizes and stages of growth in the regions.

The Industry RD&I Fellowship Programme aims to support companies in enhancing their existing research efforts through collaboration with academic research institutions/bodies. This includes companies of all sizes ranging from microSMEs and SMEs through to MNCs. The programme provides the opportunity for companies across Ireland, including those that have not previously engaged in

collaborative research with the Irish Higher Education system, to participate in the hosting of academic researchers in order to support industry-informed research and the sharing of knowledge and expertise.

In light of the impact of the current COVID-19 crisis on the economy, support companies to build/enhance competitive advantage and future resilience by engaging in research and innovation through partnership with academia.

It is anticipated that the collaboration between academia and industry will provide research and innovation opportunities for companies emerging from the COVID-19 crisis to either pivot into new market opportunities or to consolidate and strengthen existing business practice within their company.

16. QUESTIONS

Please read this call document thoroughly. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) are available on the Industry RD&I Fellowship Programme webpage⁶⁶. For general queries, including eligibility queries, please contact the Research Office of the Research Body you intend to submit your application through. For additional information or clarification, contact: irdif@sfi.ie

⁶⁶ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/funding-calls/sfi-industry-fellowship-programme/index.xml>

APPENDIX A – PROPOSAL TEMPLATE

The proposal must be a maximum length of 6 pages in total (excluding references). All text in uploaded PDFs should be provided in Times New Roman font, or similar, with minimum font size of 11, and at least single line spacing as well as a minimum margin size of 2.5cm. Text in diagrams may be in any clearly legible font.

The proposal content must be structured under the following 3 headings and address each sub-heading:

1) Research & Training

- **Challenge:** Describe the research/technological challenges to be addressed and their relevance to the industry partner's activities.
- **State of the art:** Describe the current state of the art in the area.
- **Research programme:** Describe the novelty and/or innovative aspects of the research programme, including work packages and detail any training activities as appropriate.
- **Applicant and Mentor:** Describe the mentor's expertise and business sector, and how the fellow's expertise is suitable to carry out the proposed research programme.

2) Impact

- Describe the potential for long-term collaboration between the participants, and their commitment to the programme.
- Describe how the Fellowship will enhance the career perspectives and employability of the fellow and how it will contribute to their skills development.
- Describe how the proposed research will impact on the industry partner's activities.
- Describe the proposed measures to exploit and disseminate the results, including intellectual property (IP) management measures.
- Applications where additional grant aid is requested for wide dissemination of results must detail how results will be disseminated.

3) Execution & Delivery

- Describe how the research programme will be implemented (include a Gantt chart).
- Describe the supervision and mentoring arrangements, including risk management.
- Describe the infrastructure, facilities and space to be provided by the mentor. This should include details of the office, laboratory, computing, animal or other facilities as necessary, where the research will be done, including the equipment and materials that will be available.
- Disclose any potential conflicts of interest arising from the Fellowship.

APPENDIX B – APPLICANT DORA-COMPLIANT CV TEMPLATE

Applicant CV must be no more than 5 pages.

Please note that your full research funding track record and supervisory details should be uploaded via SESAME and should **not** be included in this CV. Please **do not** include any type of journal or publication metrics, e.g., impact factor and h-index⁶⁷, or refer to the total number of papers you have authored or co-authored. Deviating from these instructions may result in the redaction of these details or make your application ineligible for review.

SECTION 1 – Applicant Details (max. 3 pages)

NAME AND CONTACT DETAILS

CAREER PROFILE (Education and employment)

Please outline your education and employment history, provide details of any periods of leave from research (e.g., due to parental leave, long-term absence through illness or working in industry) or periods of part-time work.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN RESEARCH EXCELLENCE & IMPACT

*Describe the **significance and/or impact** of up to 3 key achievements per category below. For each example, provide an outline of the stated achievement, what **specific** role you played, why you think it is important, any benefit to the field and, where relevant, the resulting impact.*

A. Key achievements in the generation of knowledge

[Please describe how you have contributed to the generation of new ideas and hypotheses, and the significance and/or impact of the latter, including but not limited to, preprints, open data sets, software, publications, innovation and commercialisation activities (e.g., verified invention disclosures, patents, licences, novel assays and reagents), policy publications and evidence synthesis pieces. Highlight if these are openly available and include a Digital Object Identifier (DOI) if available. Please delete this guidance once completed.]

B. Key achievements in the development of individuals and collaborations

[Please describe your role in the success of a team or team members. You may wish to refer to how you have supported individuals in progressing their careers or how you have been integral to a team's success (including supporting equality, diversity and inclusion in your team and mentoring). You may also wish to refer to contributions you have made to the success of consortia, collaborations, academic activities (e.g., teaching and workshops). Please delete this guidance once completed.]

C. Key achievements supporting broader society & the economy

[Please describe your key achievements in supporting society and knowledge exchange, such as engagements with the private sector, the public sector and/or the broader public e.g., spin-out activities, policy changes, including but not limited to, inclusion and/or collaboration of the

⁶⁷ Examples include, but are not limited to, H-index, i10-index, G-index, H(2)-index, HG-index, Q2-index, AR-index, M-quotient, M-index, W-index, Hw-index, E-index, A-index, R-index, W-index, J-index

public in research processes, community education and public engagement, efforts to advise policy makers, positive stakeholder feedback or the provision of information to the press. Please delete this guidance once completed.]

D. Key achievements supporting the research community

[Please describe your key achievements supporting the wider research community such as editing, reviewing and evaluation of researchers and applications for funding. Your response can also include activities such as organising events that benefited the research community, improving research culture (including, but not limited to, ethics, research integrity, equality, diversity and inclusion). Please delete this guidance once completed.]

SECTION 2 – Publication Details (max. 2 pages)

Please **do not** exceed the maximum number of publications requested. Deviating from these instructions may result in the redaction of these details or make your application ineligible for review. Please briefly describe the importance/impact⁶⁸ of your publication and whether these publications are openly available.

A. SELECTED SENIOR-AUTHOR PUBLICATIONS

*Detail up to 3 peer-reviewed, senior-author (that is, first, joint-first or last author) primary-research publications, which will confirm, **where relevant** that you meet the eligibility requirements for publications for this programme. Refer to the appropriate section of this call document for details on senior-authorship requirements. Preprints may only be included where a DOI is quoted. **Note that publications where the applicant claims joint-first authorship will only be accepted as senior-author publications where the article clearly verifies this.***

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

B. OTHER PUBLICATIONS

You should list up to 7 other publications (where you are a senior author or otherwise) that you wish to be considered in the assessment of this application. You should ensure that your primary research outputs are prioritised; however, reviews, essays and any other secondary-research articles relevant to this application may also be listed.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.

⁶⁸ Number of citations is appropriate in this instance.

APPENDIX C – ACADEMIC COLLABORATOR DORA-COMPLIANT CV TEMPLATE

Academic Collaborator CV must be no more than 2 pages.

Please **do not** include any type of journal or publication metrics, e.g., impact factor and h-index⁶⁹, or refer to the total number of papers you have authored or co-authored.

NAME AND CONTACT DETAILS

CAREER PROFILE (Education and employment)

Please outline your education and employment history, provide details of any periods of leave from research (e.g., due to parental leave, long-term absence through illness or working in industry) or periods of part-time work.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN RESEARCH EXCELLENCE & IMPACT

*Describe the **significance and/or impact** of up to 2 key achievements per category below. For each example, provide an outline of the stated achievement, what **specific** role you played, why you think it is important, any benefit to the field and, where relevant, the resulting impact.*

A. Key achievements in the generation of knowledge

[Please describe how you have contributed to the generation of new ideas and hypotheses, and the significance and/or impact of the latter, including but not limited to, preprints, open data sets, software, publications, innovation and commercialisation activities (e.g., verified invention disclosures, patents, licences, novel assays and reagents), policy publications, and evidence synthesis pieces. Highlight if these are openly available and include a DOI if available. Please delete this guidance once completed.]

B. Key achievements in the development of individuals and collaborations

[Please describe your role in the success of a team or team members. You may wish to refer to how you have supported individuals in progressing their careers or how you have been integral to a team's success (including supporting equality, diversity and inclusion in your team and mentoring). You may also wish to refer to contributions you have made to the success of consortia, collaborations, academic activities (e.g., teaching and workshops). Please delete this guidance once completed.]

C. Key achievements supporting broader society & the economy

Please describe your key achievements in supporting society and knowledge exchange, such as engagements with the private sector, the public sector and/or the broader public, e.g., spin-out activities, policy changes, including but not limited to, inclusion and/or collaboration of the public in

⁶⁹ Examples include, but are not limited to, H-index, i10-index, G-index, H(2)-index, HG-index, Q2-index, AR-index, M-quotient, M-index, W-index, Hw-index, E-index, A-index, R-index, W-index, J-index

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research processes, community education and public engagement, efforts to advise policy makers, positive stakeholder feedback, or the provision of information to the press. Please delete this guidance once completed.]

D. Key achievements supporting the research community

[Please describe your key achievements supporting the wider research community, such as editing, reviewing, and evaluation of researchers and applications for funding. Your response can also include activities such as organising events that benefited the research community, improving research culture (including, but not limited to, ethics, research integrity, equality, diversity and inclusion). Please delete this guidance once completed.]

APPENDIX D – INDUSTRY PARTNER FINANCIAL DECLARATIONS/DOCUMENTATION TEMPLATES

1) Declaration of Financial Resources

On Company Letterhead

DECLARATION OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES AVAILABILITY FOR THE PROJECT

I, _____, in my capacity as **Managing Director/Finance Director / (or equivalent)** of _____ (hereinafter called “the Industry Partner”) confirm to Science Foundation Ireland that the Industry Partner has access to an amount of _____ in place to meet the costs of the project outlined in the applicant’s grant application to the Industry RD&I Fellowship Programme 2021.

Managing Director/Finance Director

(or equivalent): (Print)

Signature:

Date:

2) SME Declaration

On Company Letterhead

DECLARATION OF SME STATUS*

Industry Partner Identification:

Name or Business Name	
Address (of registered office)	
Company Registration Number	
VAT Number	
Names & titles of the principal director(s)	

Data used to determine the category of enterprise:

Reference period (**):		
Headcount ***	Annual Turnover (€) ***	Balance Sheet Total (€) ***

Signature:

Name & position of the signatory authorised to represent the enterprise.

I declare that the information provided above is a true and accurate reflection of the size of the enterprise.

I declare that in case of change affecting the SME status of the enterprise, I will immediately inform the Research Body.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

***Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are defined in the EU recommendation 2003/361.** Data must be related to the last approved accounting period and calculated on an annual basis. In the case of a newly established enterprise whose accounts are not yet approved, the data should be derived from a reliable estimate made during the course of the year.

** Headcount number of full-time equivalent employees.

*** Please submit a copy of your company's most recent financial and management accounts (Profit & Loss and Balance Sheet signed off by an accountant)

3) Declaration of Solvency

On Company Letterhead

DECLARATION OF SOLVENCY

I, _____, in my capacity as **Managing Director/Finance Director/(or equivalent)** of _____ (hereinafter called “the Industry Partner”) wish to assure Science Foundation Ireland that I am unaware at this time of any issue that could present a threat to the solvency of the Industry Partner.

I declare, based on my own judgement and on the information at my disposal, that the Industry Partner can meet its financial obligations and does not envisage any challenge to this situation in the immediate future. I believe the Industry Partner will continue to operate as a going concern.

Furthermore, I am not, at this time, aware of any undisclosed matter which could be damaging to the financial interests of the Industry Partner, including a pending litigation.

I commit to informing Science Foundation Ireland via the Research Body immediately should such a situation arise. In accordance with Commission Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 I declare that I am NOT:

- An undertaking subject to a recovery order following a previous Commission decision declaring an aid illegal and incompatible with the internal market,
- a limited liability company where more than half of its subscribed share capital has disappeared as a result of accumulated losses,
- a company where at least some members have unlimited liability for the debt of the company, where more than half of its capital as shown in the company accounts has disappeared as a result of accumulated losses,
- an undertaking which is subject to collective insolvency proceedings or fulfils the criteria under its domestic law for being placed in collective insolvency proceedings at the request of its creditors,
- an undertaking which has received rescue aid and has not yet reimbursed the loan or terminated the guarantee, or has received restructuring aid and is still subject to a restructuring plan,
- an SME regarding which, for the past two years, its book debt to equity ratio has been greater than 7,5 and its EBITDA interest coverage ratio has been below 1,0. I understand that any false, fictitious or fraudulent statements knowingly made by me to Science Foundation Ireland may result in the grant being revoked, demand for grant repayment and current and future grant applications being deemed ineligible by Science Foundation Ireland.

Managing Director/Finance Director

Signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX E – INDUSTRY RD&I FELLOWSHIP PROPOSAL CHECKLIST

SECTION	DESCRIPTION	REQUIREMENTS
	Proposal title (max. 30 words)	Max. 30 words
	Proposal ID	Autogenerated
	Research Body	
Applicant Details	Applicant name	
	Department	
	Applicant Research Body	
	Address details	
	Telephone	
	Email	
	Year of PhD	
	Gender	
	Location of applicant at time of submission	
	Applicant associated with an SFI Research Centre	If Yes - Specify Research Centre name or proposal ID
	PhD awarding institution (name and country)	
	Applicant category	
	Applicant sub-category	
	Grant number of current or previous employing grant	
	Name of current or previous supervisor	Category B applicants
Applicant's current or previous contract expiry date	Category B applicants	
Proposal summary	Duration of grant requested (in months)	1-24 months
	Time commitment to Fellowship (percentage time spent on placement against the total award duration)	
	Placement duration	1-12 months
	Total Industry Partner Costs (€)	
	Does your proposal relate to a previously submitted application to any SFI scheme? If the application is a resubmission, a statement referencing the previous application and explaining the differences must be provided below, making reference to reviewer comments where relevant. This statement will assist SFI scientific staff in the assessment of eligibility of a revised application and will not be shared with reviewers:	Yes/ No
	Resubmission statement	Max. 1000 words

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	Please describe how your proposal is aligned with SFI's legal remit	Max. 250 words
	Primary Priority Area	
	Secondary Priority Area	
	Research Area - Primary	
	Research Area - Secondary	
	Please describe how your proposal is aligned with the remit of the Industry RD&I Fellowship Programme	Max. 250 words
	Select Research Category	
	Please provide justifying narrative for the selected Research Category	Max. 250 words
Applicant Details & supervisory experience	Supervisory experience	
	Lead Applicant CV (PDF upload)	Max. 5 pages
Research Funding	For each current and pending grant listed above, clearly indicate any scientific overlap with this application, referring only to overlap in content (max. 1000 words)	Max. 1000 words
	Please confirm that you have completed the research funding section or that you have no current, pending or expired funding.	Yes/No
COLLABORATOR DETAILS Industry Mentor	Organisation	Name of company
	Department	
	Prefix	Select title
	First name	Insert name of industry mentor
	Last name	
	Job title	
	Collaborator type	'Industry' must be selected
	Email	
	Address	
	City	
	Country	
	Postal code	
	Industry mentor CV (PDF upload)	Max. 5 pages
COLLABORATOR DETAILS Academic Collaborator	Organisation	
	Department	
	Prefix	Select title
	First name	Insert name of academic collaborator
	Last name	
	Job title	

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	Collaborator type	'Academic' must be selected
	Email	
	Address	
	City	
	Country	
	Postal code	
	Academic Collaborator CV (PDF upload)	Max. 2 pages
Company Information	Company name	
	Location of Company	
	Annual turnover (€)	
	Organisation type	
	Organisation description/Business sector	Max. 1000 words
	Total number of employees (FTEs)	
	Number of employees in R&D (FTEs)	
	Independently owned premises	Yes/No
	Irish Owned	
Main Body of Proposal	Keywords	Max. 15 words
	Scientific abstract	Max. 200 words
	Lay abstract	Max. 100 words
	Fellowship proposal (PDF upload)	Max. 6 pages
	References (PDF upload)	Max. 1 page
Ethical Issues	Does your research involve the use of animals?	Yes/No
	Does your research involve human participants, human biological material, or identifiable/potentially identifiable data?	Yes/No
Sex/Gender Dimension in Research	Is there a sex and/or gender dimension to be considered in your research proposal?	Yes/No
	If yes, please describe how sex and/or gender considerations will be integrated into your research proposal.	Max. 1000 words
	If no, please explain why sex and/or gender are not applicable to your research proposal.	Max. 1000 words
Budget	Research Category (Grand aid intensity 1)	Drop-down
	Company Size (Grant aid intensity 2)	Drop-down
	Dissemination (Grant aid intensity 3)	Drop-down
	Requested Grant Aid (%)	
	Please indicate the requested salary level (point on scale)	Drop-down
	SFI requested budget	Budget table
	Budget Justification (PDF upload)	Max. 3 pages
	Detailed project budget (Excel upload)	
Letter(s) of Support	Research Body	PDF upload max. 2 pages

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	Category A (Faculty Researchers)	Industry Mentor	
		Technology Transfer Office	
		Statement from SFI-funded applicant (where relevant)	
		Centre Director (SFI Research Centre co-PIs only)	
		CoI statement (where relevant)	
	Category B (Postdoctoral Researchers)	Research Body	
		Industry Mentor	
		Technology Transfer Office	
		Academic Collaborator (where relevant)	
		Research Body (Research Fellows only)	
		CoI Statement (where relevant)	

Viewing the PDF of your application prior to submission allows you to verify content.

There is no system validation on multiple upload file fields as the number of documents required may vary for each application.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that all documentation is included and that page lengths are not exceeded.