

2021 Employment-Based Postgraduate Programme: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

All enquiries should be submitted to the research office of the proposed Higher Education Institution. See the Terms and Conditions document for further details and context.

Similar questions have been grouped below in the following themes:

1. Eligibility
2. Applying to the Scheme
3. Conditions of Award

1. ELIGIBILITY

How do I find out if I'm eligible to apply for this Scheme?

Please see the Terms and Conditions document and Guide to Applicants to ascertain eligibility.

Under the new Terms and Conditions, are schools and hospitals eligible Employment Partners?

The above entities must meet the criteria for Employment Partners, i.e. a business, a company, a registered charity, a social, cultural or not-for-profit civic organization, a semi-state commercial organization or eligible public body with a physical operational base located in Ireland that will employ the Scholar for the duration of the award.

Where a school or hospital is a public service body with specific scientific or cultural infrastructure that is integral to the conduct and completion of the proposed research it is eligible.

If a public body or HEI is a research performing organisation eligible to apply independently for Irish Research Council schemes, it is not eligible to be funded as an Employment Partner under this scheme.

Any potential Employment Partner must be aware that in accordance with the terms, they must employ the awardee for the duration of the award.

I am applying for an EBPPG scholarship. My Enterprise Partner's primary office is in Northern Ireland. I am wondering if the language in Sec. 1.4 of the Terms and Conditions document ("...a physical operational base in Ireland...") includes Northern Ireland. We do have a physical, operational base in the Republic of Ireland but it is not our primary office location and I am wondering which location to use.

Section 1.4 and 1.7 of the Terms and Conditions is with reference to the Republic of Ireland. The scholar must be a full-time employee and based in the Republic of Ireland.

In relation to the Employment-Based PG scholarship, I was wondering if this is an option for Non-EU applicants?

Non-EU individuals can apply for the scheme. As stated in the Terms and Conditions (clauses 6.5-6.6), Scholars must satisfy the State's regulations on immigration and have the support of their HEI and Employment Partner with respect to these regulations and requirements if not a national of a member state of the European Union (EU). For all Scholarships, arrangements with respect to immigration will be a matter for settlement between the Scholar, his/her HEI, the Employment Partner, and the relevant immigration authorities of the State. This must be completed in advance of signing a contract with the Irish Research Council.

While a majority of Postgraduate Scholarships awarded by the Council will be offered to those who are citizens of the European Union (EU) and whose legal and permanent residence is within a member state of the EU, a proportion of awards may also be offered to exceptional applicants who do not fulfil these requirements.

See the EBP Terms and Conditions and the Guide for Applicants for more information.

I have applied for the IRC Government of Ireland Postgraduate (GOI PG) scholarship scheme. Am I still eligible to apply for the IRC Employment-based (EBP) programme?

Yes. An applicant may submit to the Government of Ireland Postgraduate Programme in addition to either the Employment-Based Programme or the Enterprise Partnership Scheme.

I am currently completing an MSc funded by a not for profit organisation. Would I be eligible under the Employment-Based postgrad scheme?

Scholars must be full-time postgraduate students affiliated with an eligible HEI in Ireland and during the funding term must exclusively spend all of his/her working time on the research project and associated training and career development activities. Please see the Terms and Conditions document and the Guide to Applicants to ascertain eligibility.

Is it possible for the employer and the academic supervisor to be the same person, for example a Medical Doctor who is also part of the academic staff of a university?

It is not permissible for an awardee's Employment Mentor and Academic Supervisor to be the same person. However, in cases where an Employment Partner employs staff who are also members of a HEI's academic faculty, an awardee could feasibly have one member of staff act as an Academic Supervisor and another act as Employment Mentor for this award. Please note that such an arrangement may be looked on unfavourably by assessors as it would not be in line with the key goals of the scheme.

Is the HSE an eligible public body?

The HSE is considered an eligible Employment Partner under the EBP if it possesses specific scientific or cultural infrastructure that is integral to the conduct and completion of the proposed research i.e. if the project could not be completed with any other organisation.

Applicants should be aware that HSE and similar governmental bodies may be subject to employment 'head-counts' (number of staff they can employ) and may be unable to employ an applicant for the duration of their award. Employment Mentors should ensure that they can arrange employment for the awardee for the duration of the award.

Is there a similar programme for post-doctoral researchers?

The Irish Research Council's Enterprise Partnership Scheme (EPS) provides funding for postdoctoral research.

Would the Irish Defence Forces be an eligible Employment partner?

The Irish Defence Forces would be considered an eligible Employment if it possesses specific scientific or cultural infrastructure that is integral to the conduct and completion of the proposed research i.e. if the project could not be completed with any other organisation.

Applicants should be aware that the Irish Defence Forces and similar governmental bodies may be subject to employment 'head-counts' (number of staff they can employ) and may be unable to employ an applicant for the duration of their award. Employment Mentors should ensure that they can arrange employment for the awardee for the duration of the award.

What is the value of the award?

The award value totals a minimum of €32,000 per annum – this is inclusive of the maximum €24,000 from the Irish Research Council and a minimum contribution of €8,000 from the Employment Partner.

Can you just confirm that the Financial Justification section has been removed from the online application for Employment and Enterprise Schemes?

The Financial Justification section of the Application has been removed from the Online Applications System.

My Employment Partner has a physical base in Ireland where I would be based for the duration of this award. However, if successful they would prefer to process my salary through their offices in the UK. Is this OK?

Under the Employment-Based Programme, the award holder must be employed within the Republic of Ireland. Therefore the salary should be processed through the Irish base.

Further, the Employment Partner will operate PAYE/PRSI/USC withholding on the salary paid by it to the Scholar and the relevant tax must be remitted to the Revenue Commissioners in line with the normal payroll procedures.

Would Sport Ireland / The Sport Ireland Institute / Athletics Ireland / Swim Ireland be considered eligible Employment or Enterprise Partners for the scheme?

It would be considered an eligible Employment Partner if it possesses specific scientific or cultural infrastructure that is integral to the conduct and completion of the proposed research i.e. if the project could not be completed with any other organisation.

Applicants should be aware that public bodies may be subject to employment 'head-counts' (number of staff they can employ) and may be unable to employ an applicant for the duration of their award. Employment Mentors should ensure that they can arrange employment for the awardee for the duration of the award.

I am in the second year of my PhD and I am trying to determine my eligibility.

"A Scholar who is already registered for one of the degrees as listed in the table below is not eligible for funding apart from Scholars falling within clauses 5.5.1 – 5.5.4 inclusive:

5.5.1 A Scholar who has completed part of the degree on the basis of being self-funded."

My current funding, which runs out in May, is from EU funded research project and covers half of fees and a stipend of 1200 a month.

My query is if I pay part of my fees can I be considered as "self-funded" or does clause 5.5.1 only apply if you have been entirely self-funded for the part of the degree you have completed?

The Scholarship is not intended to substitute for or to augment funds available under programmatic research actions, such as research project grants funded by national agencies. However, a scholar may apply for further funding on the basis of being in receipt of a HEI-funded bursary or scholarship.

I am performing research in conjunction with a HEI. Can this HEI act as both the Employer Partner and HEI?

No. Employment Partner shall mean a business, a company, a registered charity, a social, cultural or not-for-profit civic organization, a semi-state commercial organization or eligible public body with a physical operational base located in Ireland that will employ the Scholar for the duration of the award. Eligible Public Body shall mean: a public service body with specific scientific or cultural infrastructure that is integral to the conduct and completion of the proposed research.

If a public body or HEI is a research performing organisation eligible to apply independently for Irish Research Council schemes, it is not eligible to be funded as an Employment Partner under this scheme.

Can an applicant resubmit an application that previously failed?

Yes, unsuccessful applicants may only re-apply to each Council Scheme on one subsequent occasion. Description of modifications made to this proposal if the proposal was previously submitted but was unsuccessful under an Irish Research Council scheme.

Do prospective candidates need to have their degree in hand when applying or can they apply ahead of award and provide proof at a later stage?

If examination results are not known at the time of application, the applicant is eligible to apply.

Degree results entered in the 'Final Grade or Grade Point Average' section must be the applicant's overall results and be verified as such on official transcript(s). If official degree transcript(s) do not confirm the applicant's final grade and date of award exactly as detailed in the application, any conditional offer of a scholarship will be withdrawn. Ensure that it is clear on your application that the grade is anticipated and not your actual grade.

Any additional information relating to this degree or your final grade can be included in the subsequent section including current and anticipated grade.

Are applicants required to hold an honours degree to be eligible for this call?

The applicants must be eligible to register for a Masters or PhD as applicable in the proposed HEI. Applicants may hold a pass degree – i.e. a 2.1 is not required. The evaluation criteria for the capability of the applicant includes: Track record and research potential of the applicant, Personal Statement, Referees' reports and Match between applicant profile and research project (see the Guide for Applicants).

Are current employees of an Employment Partner eligible to apply?

Yes, these candidates are eligible to apply.

Please note that a requirement of the award is that during the funding term scholars must exclusively spend all of his/her working time on the Research Project at Masters or PhD education level and Training and Career Development activities, as per the Training & Career Development Plan.

Existing employees of the Employment Partner or applicants that will be newly employed if awarded the EBP scholarship are eligible to apply. This is the case for all types of organisations listed, including eligible public bodies.

Applicants must confirm before applying that the Employment Partner can fulfil their responsibilities in the T&Cs including directly employing the applicant for the duration of the award and providing a minimum contribution of €8,000 per annum.

Is a student eligible to apply who has already commenced their PhD studies with a stipend provided by their supervisor's research project funded by another agency?

No, see the T&Cs section 5.5 and Guide for Applicants. If a student has completed part of the postgraduate degree for which they are to receive Council funding, they are only eligible to apply on the basis of any of the following: 1. being self-funded; 2. being in receipt of a Student Universal Support Ireland (SUSI) grant; 3. being in receipt of a HEI bursary or HEI scholarship; or 4. being in receipt of a Central Remedial Clinic Ciaran Barry Graduate Scholarship.

Can the same supervisor and employment mentor apply for more than one EBP award?

An Academic Supervisor at an Irish HEI and/or Employment Mentor is/are permitted to support more than one Scholar under the Employment-Based Postgraduate Programme call. The Irish Research Council funds individual Scholars to carry out original Research Projects. In instances where an Academic Supervisor and/or Employment Mentor support(s) more than one Scholar, the Research Projects must be distinct and original with no significant overlap.

Please take note of the section on plagiarism in the Terms and Conditions.

There is a relevant question on the supervisor and mentor forms “Are you intending to support more than one application to this year's programme? If Yes, please confirm that the projects are different and explain how”.

Please note that in the event of a successful outcome, they must be in the position to support all of the awards that they submit.

Can a university spin out company, based in a business incubator on the university campus, be an Employment Partner for the Employment-Based Postgraduate Scheme?

Does IRC accept start-ups as employment partners on the EBP call?

Yes, a university campus spin out or a start-up is an eligible enterprise partner provided that the entity is separate to the university itself and operates as a standalone enterprise in the normal way. All companies must adhere to employment law in Ireland. Please see clauses of the Terms and Conditions in particular that the Employment Partner must employ the scholar (either temporarily or permanently) for the duration of the award as a fulltime employee on the normal terms and conditions for salaried employees.

The candidate is the director of a company and we are wondering if that prohibits them being sponsored in this programme by their own company? **Updated**

The owner of a company may be an eligible applicant, though the application also needs an academic supervisor and an Employment Mentor from the Employment Partner. See T&Cs section including that the Employment Mentor must be capable of mentoring the scholar with regard to the employment partner's related aspects of the research project and contribute to the scholar's professional development in the employment environment. The employment partner must have the capacity to provide professional guidance and to provide access to experimental facilities or data and have a professional working environment capable of supporting the research project. If it is a campus company – please note the FAQ above.

There is a question on the application form where the conflict of interest must be declared and described how it will be managed.

2. APPLYING TO THE SCHEME

An applicant may be in a position to apply to the Enterprise Partnership Scheme. If he/she applies to the Employment-Based Postgraduate Programme, will he be allowed to apply to the Enterprise Partnership Scheme as well? **Updated**

Applicants to the Employment-Based Postgraduate Programme **may not** apply to the Enterprise Partnership Scheme (EPS) 2021 call. An applicant may submit to the Government of Ireland Postgraduate Programme in addition to either the Enterprise Partnership Scheme or the Employment-Based Programme.

We have a graduate on an 'IRC Employment-Based Scholarship' (he applied and was successful to get a masters by research). He is interested in continuing his study to PhD but from my reading

of the T&Cs he would not be eligible to transfer from the masters scholarship to a PhD? Could he apply for a PhD Scholarship though he has had a masters scholarship?

If an applicant currently holds or has previously held an Irish Research Council Employment-Based Postgraduate (Masters) Scholarship, he/she may apply to calls with the Council for a scholarship to undertake a Doctoral Degree. The applicant must have finished their Research Masters degree prior to the start date of the Doctoral Degree.

A PhD student is awaiting the outcome of their application to the Government of Ireland Postgraduate Scholarship. The PhD student is inquiring as to whether they are eligible to submit to the EBP Scheme.

Yes. An applicant may apply to both, although if they accept an offer on one they need to withdraw from the other process.

Is the applicant the only person who requires an ORCID ID - does the academic supervisor require one?

The applicant and the academic supervisor require an ORCID ID. Please see the Guide for Applicant and Guide for Supervisor for information on how to submit forms.

Is there a list of Employment Partners?

It may be useful to search the database of awardees for information on past awards found at this link: research.ie/awardees/

Employment Partners must have a physical operational base located in the Republic of Ireland. Please note that the definition of Employment Partner includes a business, a company, a registered charity, a social, cultural or not-for-profit civic organization, a semi-state commercial organization or eligible public body.

Some organisations have expressed an interest in supporting postgraduate researchers through the Employment-Based Programme – see logos of featured partners on the EBP webpage research.ie/funding/ebp/. Potential candidates should contact these organisations directly to discuss an application.

When applying to the employment-based programme, if your primary supervisor is based at an Irish university, can a secondary supervisor be affiliated with a non-Irish university?

Yes, in addition to the academic supervisor and the enterprise mentor, there is a section that allows you to add the contacts details and HEI (inside or outside of Ireland) of a secondary supervisor where suitable.

3. CONDITIONS OF AWARD

One of our potential applicants would like to know if it's possible, should their application be successful, to have a part-time job to supplement their income, alongside their scholarship? If it's possible, what will be the restrictions, in terms of workload and salary they can earn from that part-time job?

Is it possible to apply for a Masters scholarship on a part time basis, extended further than 2 years? The organisation are fully supportive of the employee, and their time release would work around the methodology and they could be released for 2 days a week or blocks of 1-2 weeks, depending on the stage of the research.

Awardees must not assume any other duties that would adversely affect their ability to engage in their scholarship on a full-time basis. This includes undertaking additional remunerative activities (with the exception of that pertaining to teaching-related duties as per clause 10.3) during the funding term.

Likewise, awardees must engage on their EBP Scholarship on a full-time basis only. Part-time study is not permitted under the award's Terms and Conditions.

Who owns IP generated during the course of the research project?

By way of employing the scholar, the Employment Partner is entitled to own foreground Intellectual Property generated during the course of the Research Project. See the Knowledge Transfer section of the Terms and Conditions for full details. A Research Agreement (which includes IP) is a condition of the award – a sample agreement is included in the Terms and Conditions Appendix III.

Is the council's contribution included in the scholar's salary?

The scholar's salary will be negotiated between the scholar and the Employment Partner and is inclusive of the Council's contribution of €16,000 to the employment of the scholar. The net salary must not be less than €16,000, or the net salary for graduate entry to the Employment Partner, whichever is the greater.

There is no upper limit as to how much an employment partner can contribute. The Employment Partner is required to contribute a minimum of €8,000 per annum, which may be used to cover employment/salary costs, including Employer's PRSI, and as a contribution to cover the cost of expenses incurred by the scholar e.g. as a result of travelling back and forth between the Employment Partner and the HEI. Part of this contribution may also be put towards additional research costs and/or the scholar's Training and Career Development activities as specified in the application.