

**2018 Government of Ireland Postgraduate Scholarship Programme
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
Version 4 – 20 October 2017**

New questions are marked ****New****

Similar questions have been grouped under the following headings:

1. Eligibility
2. Applying to the programme
3. Conditions of award

Please note that questions as presented below are an exact replication of what has been received from research offices.

1. Eligibility

****New**** A current taught MSc student wishes to apply for a 4 year PhD but their current course is not due to end until December 2018. Can they apply to start a PhD in October 2018 and defer the start date until 1st of January 2019

All scholarships must commence on 1 October 2018. It is not possible to defer this start date unless for reasons of maternity leave, paternity leave, adoptive leave, prolonged sick leave or carer's leave. Provision of documented evidence will be required if an exception is to be granted.

****New**** Can you advise where a PhD student is first registered in July 2017, is the student eligible for the two year or three funding where the applicant is registered on a Structured PhD Programme.

If successful, the applicant would be eligible for two years of funding to complete a structured doctoral degree as their date of first registration would be taken as September/October 2016.

****New**** Are PhD candidates currently in receipt of school scholarships eligible for IRC funding? The UCD school scholarships on the average include €15k per annum stipend, up to €2k in travel allowance over four years plus fees. The funding is from school funds not from a specific research grant and requires the student to undertake tutor/demonstrator duties: 6- 9 hours per week with no additional remuneration.

A scholar will not be eligible to hold a Council scholarship if, during the funding term, they are in receipt of another bursary or scholarship (including travel bursaries or equipment grants) or a combination of other bursaries or scholarships with a total value greater than €16,000 *per annum*. This limit is inclusive of stipend, fees and research expenses. While the applicant may apply to the current call, the Council would not permit them to hold both scholarships simultaneously given that the value of the UCD scholarship described is in excess of the €16,000 *per annum* limit. Furthermore, teaching is only permitted if the additional duties do not exceed a total of 50 hours per academic term and do not adversely affect the scholar.

****New**** We have a student who started their PhD this year and is currently funded from a European Commission grant. Only 1 year of funding is available for the student from this grant. Can they apply for an IRC scholarship for years 2,3,4 (year 2 starts in October 2018) for which no funding will be available due to grant finishing

The scholar will be eligible to hold a Council scholarship if, during the funding term, they are not in receipt of another bursary or scholarship (including travel bursaries or equipment grants) or a combination of other bursaries or scholarships with a total value greater than €16,000 *per annum*. This limit is inclusive of stipend, fees and research expenses.

****New**** We have an applicant in their 2nd year of PhD applying for 24 months of funding to complete years 3 and 4 of the degree. They are currently in receipt of €2,000 per annum stipend

from a project funded by a national funding agency and separately have a fee waiver from the school. Are they eligible for IRC funding?
The scholar will be eligible to hold a Council scholarship if, during the funding term, they are not in receipt of another bursary or scholarship (including travel bursaries or equipment grants) or a combination of other bursaries or scholarships with a total value greater than €16,000 <i>per annum</i> . This limit is inclusive of stipend, fees and research expenses.
New I've previously applied for the Postgraduate Scholarship (2016) and the Enterprise Partnership Scheme (2017). As these are two different schemes run by the IRC, am I still eligible to apply for the Postgraduate Scholarship 2017?
Applications to the Government of Ireland Postgraduate Scholarship Programme and Enterprise Partnership Scheme are treated separately. Therefore, the applicant is eligible to apply once more to both programmes.
New Is someone with a BSc. with Education (Biology and Maths) eligible to apply to the GOI Scholarship call for funding for a PhD in Biology (assuming a 1st/2:1)? It's a level 8 degree. They are also currently pursuing a 1 year Professional Masters in Education.
The applicant is eligible to apply provided they satisfy the requirement of having a first class or upper second-class honours bachelor's, or the equivalent, degree.
An applicant began his structured PhD in September 2016, and has taken a leave of absence after completing his 1st year, to be employed in a job that contributes to his career development. He will return to start the 2nd year of his PhD in September 2018. His questions are A) Can he apply to the current round of scholarships, while he is on leave? B) Is his career break eligible to be considered for 3 years of funding?
Eligible career breaks include maternity leave, paternity leave, adoptive leave, prolonged sick leave and carer's leave. The applicant in question can apply for funding to the current call however his date of first registration will be taken as September 2016. This means he will be eligible for two years of funding to complete a structured doctoral degree as detailed in the table on page 4 of the Terms and Conditions .
I am having several queries from students currently in the final year of their undergrad (i.e. graduating in September 2018). Thus, they do not have a Masters, and they currently do not know what their undergrad result will be. Are these people eligible to apply for this year's Postgrad Call?
Students currently in the final year of their undergraduate degrees are eligible to apply to the programme. If undergraduate examination results are not known at the time of application, applicants should detail their indicative graduation date and the final grade they expect to achieve. Any award offer made by the Council will be provisional until the applicant provides supporting material to confirm that they have met the eligibility requirements for the programme i.e. they have achieved a first class or upper second-class honours bachelor's, or the equivalent, degree.
The Professional Doctorate Degree programme focuses on taught modules and professional placements in years 1 and 2 and on research thesis in year 3. Can you please clarify if students could apply for an IRC scholarship for the 3rd year only?
The Council does not provide support for applicants intending to complete professional doctorate degrees. The aim of the Irish Research Council Government of Ireland Postgraduate Scholarship programme is to support awardees intending to complete research master's or doctoral degrees only.
My registration date is 16th October 2014. However, I have a 1 year medically approved leave of absence from February 16th 2015-February 15th 2016. My understanding is that I am still eligible to apply for one year of funding. The T&Cs state that evidence must be submitted. Would you be able to advise on what evidence I need to submit and also at what time point this is required (i.e. with application or if awarded) please?
For applicants who have already completed part of the degree for which they are seeking Council funding, the duration of funding to be awarded will be dependent on the type of degree being pursued and the date of first registration as detailed in the table on page 4 of the Terms

[and Conditions](#). Exceptions to the date of first registration may be made for those who have taken eligible career breaks from their degree programmes. This includes prolonged sick leave. Provision of a medical certificate will be required at the award offer stage if an exception is to be granted.

If an applicant has not, at the time of application, registered with a host institution as a PhD student (as they have not commenced their PhD yet), do they need to provide any evidence that they have been accepted onto the PhD programme?

This is not a requirement at the application stage. Awardees must be registered as full-time postgraduate students at their higher education institutions from 1 October 2018.

I am interested in applying for IRC funding for my PhD research. IRC guidelines say that PhD students who began their studies prior to 2016 are ineligible. I originally registered in Autumn 2015, but then had to take a leave of absence from UL for circumstances out of my control. I am now prepared to return to my studies with the intent of finishing my degree, am I eligible to seek IRC funding?

For applicants who have already completed part of the degree for which they are seeking Council funding, the duration of funding to be awarded will be dependent on the type of degree being pursued and the date of first registration as detailed in the table on page 4 of the [Terms and Conditions](#). Exceptions to the date of first registration may be made for those who have taken eligible career breaks from their degree programmes. Eligible career breaks include maternity leave, paternity leave, adoptive leave, prolonged sick leave and carer's leave. Provision of documented evidence of an eligible career break will be required at the award offer stage if an exception is to be granted.

A potential applicant started their PhD (part-time, self-funded) in September 2016 and, if successful, would change to full-time. Can you confirm that a move from part-time to full-time is acceptable for this scheme?

For applicants who have already completed part of the degree for which they are seeking Council funding, the duration of funding to be awarded will be dependent on the type of degree being pursued and the date of first registration as detailed in the table on page 4 of the [Terms and Conditions](#). The duration of funding to be awarded will be calculated based on when the applicant first registered for their postgraduate degree, regardless of whether they registered as a part-time or full-time student. If successful in the competition, the applicant will be expected to register as a full-time student as of 1 October 2018.

I'm currently finishing my dissertation for my Master degree and wish to apply for an IRC postgrad scholarship. I was hoping to use my master degree to apply for it, however the dissertation result will only come up on November 27th, 2017. This is after the deadline of IRC application (November 1st, 2017). Can I use my current Master results to apply? Will the IRC will be willing to receive my Master degree full result after the deadline?

Applicants must have a first class or upper second class honours bachelor's, or the equivalent, degree in order to apply to the programme. If a scholar does not have a first class or upper second-class honours bachelor's, or the equivalent, degree, they must possess a master's degree. If the applicant's master's degree results are not known at the time of application, the Council may make a provisional offer based on completion of the degree. Supporting materials and non-returnable transcripts of the academic record must be forwarded to the Council for inspection before the scholarship can commence.

2. Applying to the programme

****New**** We are looking at Climate Theme 1 in the EPA scholarship, however, there are some sections in Climate Theme 2 that could be relevant. Can you clarify if the EPA are looking for climate modelling in Theme 2. Also, Sustainability theme 3 is relevant. Does the EPA allow for cross-cutting applications or is it better to focus on one theme?

The Environmental Protection Agency have confirmed that they allow for cross-pillar applications — the pillar themes and sub-themes are indicative and linkages/synergies are expected.

New Can the project title in a draft application be changed after a referee has submitted a reference?
All sections of the application can be edited prior to final submission by the applicant. This is not affected by either of the referees submitting their references.
New I would ideally like to submit a web link to a private youtube page containing the audio track - only the IRC panel would have access. This track would be extremely useful in describing the arts practice research proposal and would strengthen the proposal significantly
Supplementary material should only include essential information required for the interpretation and understanding of the proposed research. This can be uploaded in PDF format only and should not include links to external audio or video sharing platforms. Applications will be deemed ineligible and will not be considered for funding if they include additional information about the research proposal or applicant.
New We would like to add a secondary supervisor from the National Biodiversity Data Centre, but it is not clear if the secondary supervisor has to come from a HEI or RPO. Would including this supervisor invalidate the application?
Secondary supervisors may be from organisations other than higher education institutions or research-performing organisations provided they are a good fit for the applicant's research. Applicants can make use of the free-text fields to add a secondary supervisor to their application. Please note that secondary supervisors will not receive an email notifying them they have been added as a participant to an application. Please note that primary academic supervisors may not act as referees, however secondary supervisors are permitted to do so.
An applicant has already started his PhD and would like to present preliminary results in a pdf to be uploaded with his GOI scholarship application. Is this permitted?
Applicants are permitted to upload preliminary results in PDF format if they are considered essential for the interpretation and understanding of the proposed research.
One of our applicants has just started an M.Litt with the intention of transferring on to the structured PhD programme after one year. As such they aim to do 3 further years of study after this year. Presumably they should answer 'No' to the question: 'Will you be a new entrant to the degree for which you are seeking Council funding?'? If so, how should they answer: 'What date did you first register for this degree?' and 'Please indicate the duration of scholarship for which you are applying in order to complete the degree type specified above'?
The applicant should select 'no' to being a new entrant to the degree for which they are seeking Council funding. They should specify that they intend to complete a 48-month structured doctoral degree and require 36 months of funding to do so. The date of first registration should correspond with the date the applicant initially registered for their M.Litt.
For purposes of eligibility, what American GPA corresponds to 2.1 degree result? Is there published guidance on how to calculate whether foreign results are the equivalent of 2.1 result?
Degree results entered in the application form and endorsed by the authorised contact in the higher education institution 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. The applicant should enter their American GPA when asked to detail their 'final grade or grade point average'.
On the drop-down menu on the application site are only 2 options: 4-year structured and 3- year unstructured Neither applies, my course is 3 years AND structured. Which option would you choose?
The applicant should select that they wish to apply for a 36-month traditional doctoral degree and use the 'proposed research' section to provide additional information relating to the structure of the degree they intend to complete.
This question relates to the Supervisor Form. The section 'Recommendations' seems to assess the extent to which the supervisor knows the applicant, but in the case of applicants who have yet to start their PhD, supervisors may have not worked with them yet, apart from preparing this application. Will applicants be penalised if they haven't worked with their supervisor previously?

Do you have any advice in relation to this section for supervisors who don't have an established working relationship with the applicant?
Applicants won't be penalised if they have not previously worked with their proposed supervisor. The proposed supervisor should use the reference form to provide observations on the characteristics and achievements of the applicant and their suitability for a career in research to the best of their ability. This statement should also contain details as to why they decided to support the applicant.
Is it possible to include charts as supplementary documents in partial response to the application (e.g. a Gantt chart outlining milestones and deliverables)? If so, where should these documents be placed within the application?
If an applicant has supplementary information, e.g. diagrams or a bibliography, to accompany their research proposal, they can be uploaded in PDF format as part of the application. Supplementary material should only include essential information required for the interpretation and understanding of the proposed research. A Gantt chart would be considered as essential information required for the interpretation and understanding of the proposed research. Applications will be deemed ineligible and will not be considered for funding if they include additional information about the research proposal or applicant.
My research primarily falls under the category of History of Art. This category is no longer available on the IRC system. Could advise as to which category this discipline would fall under given the IRC's current selection of categories?
'History of art and architecture' falls under the primary area of 'cultures and cultural production'. Please see the research categorisation document here for further information. The 'other research area' and 'keywords describing proposed research' fields in the application form can be used to provide further information relating to the applicant's area of research.
Does "confirmed on the PhD register" mean that a currently registered PhD student has completed the Annual Progression Process within their institution?
This statement refers to confirmation of the fact that the applicant has transferred from the master's to PhD register at their higher education institution.
A proposed Academic Supervisor for the GOI scheme is also the current employer for an applicant she would like to support (the applicant is currently a research assistant). The supervisor, in this context, would like to be able to submit a reference for the applicant. Is there any way around this (apart from the supervisor being a secondary supervisor)?
All applications require a primary academic supervisor who is willing to supervise the proposed research project and two referees who know the applicant sufficiently well to provide them with a reference. A primary academic supervisor may not also act as one of these referees. The primary academic supervisor should use their reference form to provide observations on the characteristics and achievements of the applicant and their suitability for a career in research.
Can an IRC postgrad candidate register in an Irish HEI with a primary academic supervisor in that institution and a co-supervisor/ secondary supervisor in an institution in the UK or abroad?
An applicant to the GOI Scholarship scheme with a Primary Supervisor at Maynooth University would like to include on their application a Secondary Supervisor in another EU country. Is a Second Supervisor who is based abroad acceptable from the IRC's point of view?
Applicants can make use of the free-text fields to associate a secondary supervisor from any higher education institution with their application. Please note that secondary supervisors will not receive an email notifying them they have been added as a participant to an application. Please note that primary academic supervisors may not act as referees, however secondary academic supervisors are permitted to do so.
I am not able to source two referees. Can I be my own referee for the application?
All applications require a primary academic supervisor who is willing to supervise the proposed research project and two referees who know the applicant sufficiently well to provide them with a reference. Under no circumstance is an applicant permitted to act as their own referee.
We have a new member of staff starting at the university in January 2018. A prospective applicant to the 2018 IRC GOI Scholarship call would like to apply for funding to undertake a

PhD with this new member of staff as his supervisor. Can I register this new staff member as a University supervisor before she has started work here, so that the applicant can include her in his application as supervisor?

Yes, provided the institution is satisfied that the individual in question will adhere to institutional norms in terms of their ability to commit to supervision of the scholarship for the full duration of the award.

3. Conditions of award

Can you confirm that there is no longer a budget section to be filled out by GOIPG applicants in the online form? Will awardees be assigned with €2,250 per annum by default, with the understanding this amount will be spent on eligible costs, or returned to the IRC?

Successful awardees will receive €2,250 *per annum* towards eligible direct research costs to enable them to carry out their research. Please see Appendix 5 of the [Terms and Conditions](#) for guidance on what is considered an eligible direct research cost. Applicants are no longer required to submit a detailed financial justification as part of their application. The higher education institution must ensure proper financial management of the award and accountability for the use of public funds. It should also ensure that all unspent funds are returned to the Council at the end of the funding term.

In light of the fact that the Council invoked a limit of €1,000 per annum for conference / travel costs during award stage of the 2017 round, can you please advise if there is a cap on conference / travel costs for this 2018 round?

As detailed above, awardees will receive €2,250 *per annum* towards eligible direct research costs to enable them to carry out their research. Awardees are free to allocate these funds as they see fit provided they are an eligible direct research cost as detailed in Appendix 5 of the [Terms and Conditions](#).