University Research Fellowships 2024
Republic of Ireland Applicants

The following scheme notes set out the eligibility and application process of the **University Research Fellowships 2024 round for applicants who wish to conduct their research in the Republic of Ireland**. Please read through the entire document before proceeding with an application.

1   Overview

1.1   Background

The Royal Society and Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) have established a partnership to ensure that outstanding early career researchers from the Republic of Ireland have the opportunity to establish an independent research career. This partnership will award a prestigious Royal Society – SFI University Research Fellowship to outstanding early career researchers. The fellowship should be hosted within an SFI Eligible Research Body. Funding will be provided for successful candidates for 8 years, with the final 3 years of funding subject to a mid-point assessment. Applicants from the Republic of Ireland will be assessed along with candidates from the UK through the normal Royal Society peer review process. Successful candidates will be awarded a fellowship by the Royal Society, the cost of which will be met by Science Foundation Ireland.

1.2   Aims of the Scheme

The University Research Fellowship (URF) programme aims to support the next generation of research leaders undertaking cutting-edge research. Those appointed are therefore expected to be very strong candidates for permanent posts in universities at the end of their fellowships.

The objectives of the URF programme are to enable outstanding early career scientists with the potential to become leaders in their field to:
- Build an independent research career.
- Gain the freedom, time, and long-term flexible support to pursue high-quality and innovative lines of scientific research.
- Develop as research leaders by offering tailored high-quality professional development, networking and engagement opportunities.

Applicants to the University Research Fellowship should submit a research proposal and costs for eight years. Costs for years six to eight will be subject to satisfactory progress and completion of a mid-fellowship checkpoint review at the start of year four.

1.3   Subjects Covered

Research must be within the Royal Society's remit of natural sciences, which includes but is not limited to biological research, biomedical sciences, chemistry, engineering, mathematics and physics. For a full list, please see the breakdown of subject groups and areas supported by the Royal Society.

Submissions from clinically qualified scientists may be considered. The Society does not support clinical or interventional research on humans at the individual or group level, social sciences, or humanities, unless otherwise stated.

If there is any doubt about the eligibility of a project, please contact the Grants team via urf@royalsociety.org.

1.4   Duration and Start of Fellowship

Fellowships are expected to commence between 01 October 2024 and 01 January 2025.

Funding is provided for 8 years, with years 6 to 8 subject to satisfactory progress and completion of a mid-fellowship checkpoint review at the start of year four.

The number of awards offered will be defined by the quality of the applications.

Flexibility during the Fellowship: The University Research Fellowship is a flexible award. It can be held on either a full-time or on a part-time basis for health reasons or caring responsibilities. There is also provision for maternity, paternity, shared parental leave, adoptive or extended sick leave as well as financial support for childcare costs that arise from attending conferences, etc.

If you would like to hold the fellowship at less than 1.0 FTE, please provide the costs at 1.0 FTE in the application form. If successful, you will be able to submit a change in working hours request for consideration and the Office will adjust the payments accordingly.

2   Timetable

Opening date	Tuesday, 11 July 2023
Closing Date	**Thursday, 07 September 2023, 3:00 PM (UK Time)**
Interviews for shortlisted applicants	Thursday, 04 April 2024 to Thursday, 18 April 2024
Expected results	July 2024

3   Finance

Total Funding Available

Funding will consist of:

- **Research Fellow's basic salary costs and associated on-costs (100% contribution).**

It is expected that the requested basic salary for the first year will be comparable to academic staff at an equivalent career stage. The maximum contribution to the URF salary is based on the SFI Grants Team Member budgeting scale.

For the first five years of the project the URF salary should be starting at Point 1 of the Research Fellow scale (Level 3), and moving to Point 2 for the second year, Point 3 for the third year and Point 4 for year four. For year five no further increments will be applied. Following successful mid-term review, URFs will be entitled to transition to the next level on the scale, so for years 6 to 8 applicants should be requesting salary at Senior Research Fellow scale (Level 4), starting at Point 1 in year six, moving to Point 2 in year seven and Point 3 in year eight. Please see the SFI Grant Budget Policy for full details. Please note that the URF's salary contribution includes PRSI at 11.05% and an employer pension at 20%.

All salary costs must be justified, and the Society reserves the right to award a salary different to that requested. Should the host organisation wish to supplement the basic salary provided by the Society it is free to do so at its own discretion.

- **Overhead costs**, equivalent to 30% of the value of the award excluding equipment.

- **Research expenses (Other Directly Incurred Costs): contribution of up to €90,000 per annum**. These funds can be used to cover:

o **Consumables, equipment under €12,000, travel**, etc **(100% contribution).**

o **Equipment over €12,000 (50% contribution)**

Any equipment costing more than €12,000 (inc. VAT) will require a 50% contribution from the host organisation (this can be financial or in-kind). Equipment purchased under this scheme is for the use of you the grant-holder. If the equipment is expected to be used more widely in the organisation, you should only request part of the total cost. In the event that the Society meets only part of the cost of the equipment, the grant holder should have priority access to the equipment during the award period. **The Head of Department must confirm priority access to this equipment within their statement of support.** Grant holders are not permitted to charge access costs for equipment purchased under this scheme. Applicants should clarify the VAT position on purchases before seeking a grant.

For all equipment and services costing more than €25,000 (excluding VAT), professionally qualified procurement staff must be consulted at the beginning of the procurement process and must approve the order before it is placed with the supplier.

o **Research assistance:** SFI provides a contribution to team members in SFI awards. Please ensure all team member salaries align with the SFI Team Member Salary Scales and ensure the inclusion of each team member at that level is appropriately justified. Please see the Grant Budget Policy for full details. **If you are requesting a contribution to a PDRA we will require a statement from you and your Head of Department outlining any further support covered by the host organisation and clarifying the feasibility of the appointment.**

o **Contribution to a 4-year PhD studentship, including PhD stipend and fees:** If you are requesting costs towards a 4-year PhD studentship, we will require a statement from you and your Head of Department confirming that:

- In the event of the award-holder (research fellow) leaving the host organisation, the PhD student will be permitted to decide whether to remain at the host organisation or move with the supervisor (with advice from the supervisor and other academic staff as appropriate). The host organisation will provide a deputy supervisor who will become lead supervisor in the event that the research fellow leaves the host organisation.

o **Public engagement**

Research fellows may request up to €1,000 per year to support their public engagement activities.

o **Training**

In addition, research fellows may use up to €8,000 over the entire duration of their fellowship to support their own technical and non-technical training and career/professional development e.g., professional coaching. As well as training for any staff and students supported on this award.

Core Funding Rules are listed within the SFI Grant Budget Policy. Please note that in instances where Core Funding Rules are in conflict with Programme Specific Funding rules, **the Programme Specific Funding rules always take precedence**.

4 Eligibility

4.1 Applicant Eligibility

This scheme is open to:
- Early career, postdoctoral researchers with between **three to eight years of actual research experience since their PhD** (i.e. date on which the degree was approved by the board of graduate studies) by the closing date of the round. Career breaks will be taken into consideration (see below for more details).
- Applicants of **all nationalities**.

This scheme is **not** for researchers that:
- Hold a permanent post (including proleptic or rolling contract of employment) in a university or not for profit research organisation.
- Hold or previously have held an equivalent fellowship in the Republic of Ireland to establish an independent research group and therefore independent researcher status (such as but not limited to being the recipient of a research fellowship of 5 or more years that provides funding for your salary and your research costs and being able to submit research grants as an independent PI). For example, SFI Starting Investigator Research Grant (SIRG), SFI-IRC Pathway Programme. (Please note, holders of postdoctoral training fellowships such as the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions can apply.).

Additional information regarding eligibility can be found in the [FAQs document for the round](#).

The Society appreciates that there are diverse research career paths and understands the challenges of managing a research career alongside other personal commitments. When reviewing applicants' eligibility and research experience, the Society will consider time spent outside the research environment (e.g. time away due to personal reasons such as maternity, paternity, shared parental and adoptive leave or other caring responsibilities; ill-health or working in a non-research environment/role, such as industry).

Furthermore, where applicants have taken formal periods of maternity, paternity, shared parental, and adoptive leave as the primary carer (either the mother, father, partner or adopter), or extended sick leave, the Society will allow an additional amount of time on top of each period of leave when assessing eligibility. Each case will be considered individually as per guidelines below:

Maternity, paternity, shared parental leave and adoptive leave: In addition to the actual time taken off work, an additional amount of time equivalent to 100% of the duration of leave taken will be added on top, up to a maximum of 6 months.

Example 1: If an applicant took 4 months' leave, an additional 4 months would be added, and a total of 8 months would be deducted.
Example 2: If an applicant took 18 months' leave, an additional 6 months would be added (maximum additional time allowed) and a total of 24 months would be deducted.

Extended sick leave (defined as more than four weeks off work): In addition to the actual time taken off work, an additional amount of time equivalent to 100% of the duration of leave taken will be added on top, up to a maximum of 6 months. As with parental leave, cases will be considered individually, and the host organisation may need to confirm that the applicant qualifies for this provision. Supporting documents may be requested at

the Society's discretion. The Society reserves the right to consider individual requests outside of the outlined policy in exceptional circumstances.

The Royal Society recognises that diversity is essential for delivering excellence in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). The Society wants to encourage applications from the widest range of backgrounds, perspectives and experiences to maximise innovation and creativity in science for the benefit of humanity. We regularly review and revise processes to help ensure that all talented applicants have an equitable chance to succeed as per the assessment criteria. This includes ensuring all panel members are briefed on unconscious bias in decision making as part of our assessment process.

Support to applicants with disabilities: The Royal Society welcomes applications from scientists with disabilities and provides adjustments to ensure that they can participate fully in the selection process. If you need an adjustment when accessing the application form, attending interviews if applicable, or for any other part of the application process, please contact the Grants team at urf@royalsociety.org or call +44 20 7451 2666. Adjustments can include but are not limited to:
- Extension of the deadline;
- Additional support to complete the application form;
- Technical support during interviews for candidates with hearing or visual impairments;
- Support during interviews for neurodiverse candidates and those with mental health conditions.
- Additional costs to support candidates requiring a chaperone during interviews.

The Grants team will be pleased to answer questions about eligibility and/or points covered in this section.

4.2 Host Organisation Eligibility

Applicants must be applying to hold their fellowship in an SFI Eligible Research Body. Host Research Bodies must be situated in the Republic of Ireland. Research Bodies will include Universities, Technological Universities, Institutes of Technology and independent not-for-profit public research organisations that receive a significant share of their total funding from public sources. Queries regarding eligibility of research bodies should be directed to SFI prior to submission. A list of eligible research bodies is available on the SFI website.

Candidates are not required to move institutions for the proposed Fellowship, however those wishing to remain at their current organisation should clearly explain their planned route to independence and reasons for staying.

Successful applicants are expected to be strong candidates for permanent posts in institutions at the end of their fellowships. Therefore, the application period may be an opportunity to begin initial discussions with your proposed host department regarding your future and the resources that they will commit to you, should your application be successful. Due to the complex nature of these conversations, we cannot provide bespoke advice.

5 Assessment Criteria and Review Process

5.1 Assessment Criteria

- The scientific track record of the applicant commensurate with research experience: past achievements, research career to date, publication record, likely contribution to research field, future potential to become a research leader.
- The scientific merit, originality, significance and quality of proposed research project and likelihood of achieving goals.

- The suitability of host institution including appropriate expertise/equipment and research environment. Support for career development

5.2   Review Process

Applications are assessed by the Research Appointments Panels, which are split by subject group into two Biological Sciences Panels and three Physical Sciences Panels. The Panel membership is likely to include Fellows of the Royal Society and Members of the Royal Irish Academy.

Applications are assigned to a Panel by the Office based on the subject group/areas and keywords you select, with oversight from the Panel Chairs. All proposals submitted are initially reviewed and assessed by at least two members of the selection Panel(s) who have the most appropriate scientific expertise. Following initial assessment, a longlist is drawn up, with longlisted proposals subject to high quality independent peer review. Following completion of independent peer review, proposals are re-assessed by the Panel members assigned to the proposal, and a shortlist for interview is drawn up with oversight from the Panel Chair. If successful at this stage, you will be notified about your interview at the end of February. Interviews are held in April. All applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application in July.

Please find a schematic for the Review Process below:

1	**URF 2024 round open to applications** During this period, the application form should be completed and submitted on Flexi-Grant. Contributions by the Head of Department, Nominated Referee and Research Office must also be completed before the closing of the round, as they are required for the successful submission of the application. Any queries regarding the scheme notes, application form, Flexi-Grant, etc, should be sent to University Research Fellowship team (urf@royalsociety.org) while the round is open.	**11th July 2023 – 7th September 2023**
2	**Eligibility checks** Applications are checked for eligibility.	**September – October 2023**
3	**Assessment: Panel Review 1** Applications assessed by at least two members of the Research Appointment Panel(s).	**November 2023**
4	**Longlisting** Each Research Appointment Panel draws up a longlist for independent peer review, with oversight from the Panel Chair. Applicants will be notified in **January 2024.**	**December 2023**
5	**Assessment: Peer Review** Longlisted applications are sent out to Independent Peer Reviewers.	**January – February 2024**
6	**Assessment: Panel Review 2** Panel members reassess applications based on the Peer Review reports.	**February 2024**
7	**Shortlisting** Each Research Appointment Panel draws up a shortlist for interview, with oversight from the Panel Chair. Applicants will be notified **at the end of February 2024.**	**February 2024**

8	**Assessment: Interview** **April 2024**
	 In this final assessment stage, the Research Appointment Panels decide on the outcome of the applications:
	    1. Successful
	    2. Reserve
	    3. Unsuccessful

9	**Notification outcome:** Applicants will be notified in **July 2024.**
10	**Offer letters sent to successful applicants** **August 2024**

The subject tags you select on your application play an essential role in matching your application with appropriate reviewers, so it is extremely important to select only the most relevant subject tags on your application.

Please be assured that the Royal Society specifically requests anyone involved in reviewing applications to consider them in confidence. More information on the Review Process can be found in Appendix 1.

All applicants will be notified of outcomes via email.

5.3   Mid-fellowship checkpoint review

University Research Fellows awarded a fellowship in the 2024 round will be asked to complete a mid-fellowship checkpoint review at the start of year four of their fellowship. This will provide an opportunity for research fellows to update on their progress since starting the fellowship and future plans. Funding for years six to eight of the fellowship will be subject to successful completion of this stage. The assessment criteria for the checkpoint review are:

1. **The updated research fellows' track record since the start of their award:** including past achievements, research career to date, publication record (i.e. evidence of first or senior, if appropriate to field, authored papers). Evidence of effective research and publication management that will ensure dissemination of research outputs and recognition of contribution from team members.
2. **Evidence of independent research and efforts to build an independent research career:** including any additional grants secured, new collaborations and plans to obtain further funding, as well as plans for the next career step and beyond (i.e. offer of a proleptic position).
3. **The proposed research project:** quality and originality of proposed project, contribution to the field as a research leader, definition of a research plan, likelihood of achieving goals.
4. **The host institution:** suitability, appropriate expertise/equipment, research environment, support for career development.

Mid-fellowship reviews will be assessed by a member of the Research Appointment Panel through which your URF application was originally assessed and final decisions will be ratified by the Panel Chair. Research fellows will be informed of the outcome of the checkpoint review within two months of submission of their progress. Further information regarding the mid-fellowship review will be provided closer to the date.

6   References and Participants

To complete and submit the application form, the lead applicant is required to provide supporting statements or references from two individuals. The following individuals must be included:

- Head of Department at the Host Organisation
- One nominated Referee

The primary consideration for a nominated referee is that they are able to comment independently and authoritatively on your application. The referee should be someone who has worked closely with you and is familiar with your research (for example, a PhD or postdoctoral supervisor, mentor, prior collaborator). You should make sure they are able to provide a reference before adding them to your application.

Nominated referees **must not** be:

- A named collaborator in your application
- A member on the assessment Panel for this scheme
- A member of the Royal Society's Council

References must be submitted in English. If a reference is not submitted in English, it will not be accepted and may render the application ineligible. The Head of Department supporting statement and reference cannot be from the same person. If two references from the same person are submitted, it may make the application ineligible.

The supporting statements must be submitted through Flexi-Grant. Please follow the steps below.

Step 1 | Ensure all participants have a Flexi-Grant account

- All referees and other participants must set up a Flexi-Grant account in order to contribute to an application.
- If a participant already has a Flexi-Grant account they should use that, if not then a new account should be set up.

Step 2 | Invite participants to contribute to an application

- Applicants should invite referees and other individuals to submit their supporting statements through the 'participants' tab.
- The participants tab can be found on the application form summary page and contains details of each participant required to contribute to the application.
- Applicants should select 'invite' and enter the e-mail address of the person they wish to invite to provide the relevant reference or statement and send the invitation.

Step 3 | Monitor participants responses

- The recipient will need to accept your invitation before they can participate in the application.
- You can monitor the progress of your participants' activity through this section of the application form and issue reminders as required.
- Once the participant has accepted your invitation, their status will be displayed as 'active'.
- Once participants have completed all their sections of the application form they should select **'Save & Submit'** on the application form page or select '**Submit your contribution'** on the summary page.
- Upon completion of their section of the application form their status will be displayed as 'complete'.

Please note that you will not be able to submit your application form until the status of all participants shows 'complete'.

Please note that once an applicant submits an application on Flexi-Grant®, it is then directed to the designated Approver for the employing organisation at which the applicant has applied to host an award (see Application Approvals in the 'Application Guidance Notes' Section). It is recommended that referring and supporting participants fulfil their requirements **at least 5 working days** before the submission deadline (Thursday, 07 September 2023 – 3:00PM UK time) to ensure there is sufficient time for organisational approval. The Host Organisation approver must approve the completed application by the submission deadline.

It is the applicant's responsibility to liaise with the Host Organisation's Approver, Head of Department and Nominated Referee to ensure that the required tasks are completed by the deadline. Please contact the Grants team before the deadline if there is any issue. Alternatively, the Host Organisation's Approver, Nominated Referee and Head of Department can contact us directly. The Royal Society will not be held responsible for emails that are not received due to address errors or spam filters and no provision is made for non-receipt of emails sent by the Royal Society.

Once participants have completed all their sections of the application form, please remind them to select **'Save & Submit'** on the application form page or select '**Submit your contribution'** on the summary page.

Re-opening the Application form to Participants
On the occasion that an invited participant accidentally submits their section of the application form prematurely, the Lead Applicant has the ability to re-open the application form for the participant. To do this, the Lead Applicant should return to the Participant tab on the application form summary page. You will find a 're-open' button alongside the name of any participant who has completed their section of the form. Once you click this button, the form is reactivated and available for participants to amend.

Research Support Role
The Research Support role displayed under the participants tab is an optional role, which allows you to invite an individual from the relevant Host Organisation research support team to review and amend the application prior to submission. **The primary purpose is to ensure that the requested finances have been recorded correctly for this specific grant programme; this is strongly advised for this scheme**.

Additional system guidance can be found in the 'Systems Guidance Notes' Section.

7   Contact information

Enquiries about this scheme can be made using the contact details below. **Before contacting us, please check whether your question is answered by these scheme notes and/or the FAQs available on our website**. If not, please email the Grants team via urf@royalsociety.org or call +44 20 7451 2666.

Please quote your application reference number in all correspondence with the Grants team.

8   Use of Data

All applicant data, including personal data, is governed by the Royal Society's Privacy Policy. This Policy sets out how and why the Royal Society uses your personal data, and how we protect your privacy when doing so.

Please refer to the section entitled "Grant Applicants and Holders" for details of how the Privacy Policy determines the use of applicant data.

In addition to the usage set out in the Royal Society's privacy policy, please note that information regarding your application for the University Research Fellowship may be shared with the Department of Science Innovation and Technology (DSIT) and Science Foundation Ireland for reporting and evaluation purposes. You may also be contacted by selected third parties such as independent evaluators, consultancy groups, and career development organisations. If successful, the Royal Society will contact you regarding the administration of your award throughout the course of your funding and after its completion. You may also be contacted by the Royal Society, DSIT, Science Foundation Ireland or an agent acting on their behalf, for reporting and evaluation purposes throughout the course of your funding and after its completion.

9 System Guidance Notes

Please read these guidance notes carefully as you complete the application form.

9.1 Using Flexi-Grant ®

Applications can only be submitted online using the Royal Society's Grants management system (Flexi-Grant®) via https://grants.royalsociety.org. Further information about the Grants management system can be found at https://royalsociety.org/grants-schemes-awards/grants/flexi-grant/. If you have not previously used Flexi-Grant®, please follow the registration process from the Flexi-Grant® homepage. **Paper-based applications will not be accepted.**

Before completing the online form, all applicants should check that they comply with the eligibility requirements and ensure all necessary information is presented in the application. These requirements are strictly adhered to and applications without all the necessary information, or evidence to show the assessment criteria are met, will be rejected.

All applications must be approved by the Host Organisation and the Participants sections must be completed before you can submit via Flexi-Grant®. Late applications will not be accepted.

Further guidance and support can be found through the applicant and approver knowledge base.

9.2 ORCID Identifier

All applicants should submit an ORCID (Open Researcher and Contributor ID) identifier if they have one before their application is submitted. ORCID maintains a registry of unique researcher identifiers and a transparent method of linking research funding, research publications, research data and any other research outputs to these unique identifiers. This is a mandatory requirement at the application submission stage only. You can register for an ORCID identifier via https://orcid.org/register.

9.3 Completing the application form

The application can be completed by using the navigation tabs on the application summary page, with each page categorised as follows:

Summary
Understanding our Promotion

Eligibility Criteria
Applicant Personal Details
Applicant Career Summary
Research Proposal
Use of Animals in Research
Use of Human Patients and Tissue
Financial Details
Applicant Declaration
Head of Department Support
Nominated Reference Support

Please note that questions with * are mandatory fields, which is typically the majority of questions. You will only be able to submit your application for approval by the Host Organisation once all sections of the application form have been marked as complete, and your participants have marked their work as complete (please check the status of participants under the participants tab on the application form summary page). Late applications will not be accepted.

A full list of question fields to be completed as part of the application can be found in the Question Guidance in the 'Application Guidance Notes' Section.

10 Application Guidance Notes

10.1 <u>Application Approvals</u>

It is the Applicant's responsibility to ensure that approval of the application by the Host Organisation is completed before the closing date.

The person responsible for approving your application will be the delegated authority at the Host Organisation where you are applying to hold your award. This may be someone within the research office, Faculty administration, Vice-Chancellor, or other administrative or management role.

The approver must be someone with the authority to confirm that the potential award can be hosted within their organisation, confirm that there is the capacity to deliver the proposed research and assure the proposed budget is appropriate and eligible for the scheme.

You will only be able to submit your application for approval by the Organisation's Approver once all sections of the application form have been marked as complete and all participants have marked their work as complete <u>AND have submitted</u> their section. The Lead applicant must check the status of the participants under the 'Participants' tab on the summary page of the application form. **Applications submitted after the deadline will <u>not</u> be accepted.**

Please bear in mind it is the responsibility of the applicant to:
- o Inform the Head of Department and Referee of the deadline
- o Liaise with the Head of Department and Referee to ensure that they have received their invitation with instructions to participate in completion of your application, as no provision is made for non-receipt of these automatic emails.
- o Keep track of the progress of Head of Department and Referee completion status on your application summary page. You can issue a reminder email through the participants tab on your application summary page.

If the instruction email from the Royal Society has not been received please:

a) double check the accuracy of the email address supplied on the application form

b) advise the intended recipient to check their spam filters/junk folders

c) contact the Royal Society with an alternative email address for the recipient

The Royal Society will not be held responsible for automated emails that are not received due to address errors or spam filters.

10.2 Question Guidance

Please read the following guidance notes carefully as you complete the form. In the table below, each box represents a page of the application form; the left-hand column contains the questions within each of these pages as set out in the form; the right-hand column contains useful guidance on its completion.

Please note that questions with * are mandatory fields.

Summary	
Summary page	The summary page of the application form provides instructions for submission of your application for approval from the Host Organisation. In addition, you are provided with an overview for each section of your application form, including the approximate length of time it will take to complete each section. The summary page also allows applicants to manage and invite participants (e.g. Head of Department and Nominated Referee) who are required to contribute to the application form. Instructions for inviting participants can be found under the 'participants' tab on the application summary page. **Note:** you will only be able to submit your application for approval by the Host Organisation once all sections of the form have been completed.

Understanding our Promotion	
Understanding our Promotion *	Please select how you heard about the scheme.

Eligibility Criteria	
Eligibility Criteria *	Please provide confirmation that you meet the eligibility criteria. Details of the eligibility criteria can be found in the 'Eligibility' Section of these Scheme Notes.

Contact Details	

Title, Names, address, organisation and country *	Review and complete your **personal details** accurately. Errors in this section can cause difficulties in processing your application. Errors will not be corrected after submission. Under this section, you should edit the of **contact type** of the participants who will partake in your application form. The system default contact type is set as 'collaborator'. To amend the contact type of your Head of Department, click 'edit', and under the contact type field, select the 'Head of Department'. **Organisation**: this table will automatically display details of the intended Host Organisation (marked by a tick) which you selected previously and your current organisation, if different from the organisation where the award will be held and administered.
Email address *	This field defaults to the account in which the application has commenced and is where all correspondence pertaining to the application throughout the application process will be sent. The applicant must therefore commence the application using the login email address used to register a user account on Flexi-Grant®.

Applicant Career Summary	
Title of Current Position *	Please state the title of your current position.
Current Employer *	Please enter the official organisation name of your current employer (e.g. University of Limerick).
Current Department *	Please enter details of your current department (e.g. Department of Chemistry).
Country/Territory *	Please select the country/territory where your current employer (or last employer if currently unemployed or on leave) is based.
Current Position Start Date *	Please enter the date when your current position started.
Current Position End Date *	Please enter the date when your current position is expected to finish. If you are on an open-ended contract, please enter 31 December 2050.
Field of Specialisation *	Enter details of your field(s) of specialisation. (Maximum 20 words)
Summary of Your Current Research *	Provide an outline summary of your current research. Please also include a brief comment on the strength of your current host organisation. (Maximum 200 words)
Date of First Post-Doctoral Research Position *	Please enter the date that you started your first Post-Doctoral Research Position.
PhD Award Date *	Please enter the date that you were awarded your PhD. **(i.e. the date when you received formal notification of your PhD thesis being accepted in its final form and approved by the Board of Graduate Studies).**
PhD Institution *	Please state the name of the institution where you were awarded or are completing your PhD.
PhD Country/Territory *	Please state the country/territory in which you were awarded or will be awarded your PhD.
Personal Statement *	Please provide a personal statement about your research career to date including research-related contributions, prizes and achievements and your career and research aspirations in the long term. You should state why the aims of this fellowship will be beneficial to you at this stage in your career, how do you intend

	to build your independent research career providing a clear pathway to independence, and how the fellowship will help you to reach your goals.
	Please note that you may use the personal statement to provide details of additional activities you have undertaken to demonstrate your contribution to the wider scientific endeavour (e.g. conferences, patents, workshops, public engagement activities, etc).
	Plain text only (Maximum 500 words)
Applicant Career History *	Please provide a full list of your appointments since your PhD **in a clear and concise reverse chronological order** stating if part-time (and percentage part-time) when necessary.
	The depth of information you provide is up to you, but this will represent you under assessment and so it is worth including as much good evidence for your academic merit as possible.
	Please provide full details of any periods of part-time working, career breaks, extended sick leave or maternity/paternity/adoptive leave as your eligibility may depend on the accuracy of this information.
	Please provide dates in the format of DD/MM/YYYY (days may be omitted if unknown).
	You are not required to include prizes and achievements in this section; this can be included in the Personal Statement field.
	Note: You can retrieve your career history information from your profile to complete this section of the application form using your ORCID identifier.
Impact of Covid -19	The Society appreciates that the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on researchers and their work will be varied. Please provide a summary of how the pandemic has affected your research activities. (Maximum 500 words)
	This can include but is not limited to: delays in publishing/submitting a key paper(s) (please note preprints can be included in your publications list), pause on experiments/research plans, reduced ability to work due to additional caring responsibilities.
	Plain text only (Maximum 500 words)
Applicant Qualifications *	Please list all your qualifications **in reverse chronological order**.
	The depth of information you provide is up to you, but this will represent you under assessment and so it is worth including as much good evidence of your academic merit as possible and as appropriate for the funding for which you are applying.
	Note: You can retrieve your qualification information from your profile to complete this section of the application form using your ORCID identifier.

List your Key and/or Relevant Publications *	Please provide details of authors, titles and references of up to 20 of your key preprints and publications in refereed journals, in reverse chronological order. You should include those outputs most relevant to the application to support your case.
	Please note that publications will be reviewed on the basis of scientific content, rather than publication metrics or the identity of the journal.
	Most significant publications - Please identify with asterisks (*) up to five publications which you consider to be most significant.
	Your list should have three sections: (i) refereed papers in primary journals, (ii) contributions to symposia and compiled volumes (refereed only); and (iii) preprints.
	For publications arising from large collaborative programmes clearly specify the exact role and contribution made towards large collaborative research programmes that have resulted in multi-authored publications.
	If your field of research differs in any way from normal conventions, e.g. lead author, first author, and publications in journals being the main gauge of success, please provide a brief explanation at the top of your publication list.
	If appropriate, give the publisher or where each publication may be obtained, providing a URL if available. Citations for preprints must state "Preprint", the repository name and the articles persistent identifier (e.g. DOI).
	Plain text only (Maximum 1000 words)
	Note: You can retrieve your publications to complete this section of the application form using your ORCID identifier.
Applicant Research Funding *	Please list all your current and previous research funding **in reverse chronological order.**
	The depth of information you provide is up to you, but this will represent you under assessment and so it is worth including as much good evidence for your academic merit as possible and as appropriate for the funding for which you are applying.
	Please give particulars (type of award, value and title of research) and if relevant confirm if these would continue if you are successful in securing this fellowship.
	Please note here **pending parallel fellowship applications** and when you expect to be given a decision.
	Note: You can retrieve your information from your profile to complete this section of the application form using your ORCID identifier.

Research Proposal	
Start Date*	Please enter the proposed start date of the project. Fellowships must commence between 1 October 2024 and 1 January 2025.
End Date*	This must be exactly 8 years from the proposed start date.
Project Title*	Please give the full title of your proposed project. (Maximum 20 words)
Keywords*	Provide **5-10 keywords** which could be used to identify your research. These will aid with allocating your application to the most appropriate Research Appointment Panel(s) and identifying the most appropriate peer reviewers. More information about the Research Appointment Panels can be found on the Royal Society webpages below: Research Appointment Panel A(i) Research Appointment Panel A(ii) Research Appointment Panel A(iii) Research Appointment Panel B(i) Research Appointment Panel B(ii)
Subject Group*	Please select the group that most closely reflects your area of research. This will aid with allocating your application to the most appropriate Research Appointment Panel(s).
Subject Area*	Please select the subjects that most closely reflect your area of research. These will aid with allocating your application to the most appropriate Research Appointment Panel(s).
Abstract*	Provide a scientific summary of your proposed project. This should be a summary of your research proposal, briefly outlining the background and summarising the aims of your project. **Plain text only** (Maximum 400 words)
Lay Summary*	Please provide a lay summary of your proposed project. This should be understandable by a lay person. You should explain why you have chosen to work in this subject area and what it is about your proposed research that you find particularly exciting, interesting or important. If relevant please also explain the potential impact or wider benefits to society of your research. Please be aware the Panel is experienced and composed of a broad range of experts who will not all be specialists in your specific area. Please bear this in mind when writing your summary for a non-specialist audience. Panel members place importance on this part of the application. **Plain text only (**Maximum 250 words)
Research Proposal*	Your research proposal should provide a detailed five-year project plan alongside a broader eight-year vision and strategy. Your research proposal should include, but is not limited to, the following: • clear research objectives • description of the experimental method and techniques used, including data analysis if applicable

	• an indication of milestones/timescales • broad long-term vision and strategy Please also bear in mind that, although it is intended that your application will be viewed mostly on screen, there may be occasions when your application has to be photocopied in black and white. Consequently, illustrations and photographs with fine detail or in colour are best avoided. **PDF file upload : <u>Four sides of A4 only</u>,** in portrait orientation. If the page length is exceeded the text will be truncated by the Society. Please do not use a text size smaller than Arial 10 and make sure the document is titled. When uploading PDFs, add your name and a heading to the top of every page. Please ensure that there are no security settings activated on uploaded PDFs and avoid uploading documents containing illustrations with fine details or colour, as this can cause problems when creating a PDF of the application. Please note we will only print applications in black and white. **If using the Text Field option rather than the PDF upload then this requires plain text only (**Maximum 2000 words) When entering plain text, avoid using symbols as some may not be accepted by Flexi-Grant®. You should generate a PDF of your application (by choosing 'print' on the form) to check that the application appears as you want it to.
Named collaborators*	If you have named collaborators in your research proposal please provide letters of support. Please ensure the letters from your collaborators are only confirming their commitment to collaborate on this project. The letters should provide information about their role in the project and their commitment to this.
Host Organisation*	Please select the organisation where the award will be held from the drop down list.
Host Department*	Please provide the name of the proposed department at your host organisation where you will hold the fellowship. Please enter the official name (e.g. *School of Chemistry* rather than *Chemistry)*
Justification for Choice of Host Organisation*	Please provide a short statement justifying your choice of host institution (i.e. why is it best suited for your research and career?). Please ensure that you clarify how the fellowship will help you to achieve independence at your chosen host organisation.

Data Management and Data Sharing

The Royal Society supports science as an open enterprise and is committed to ensuring that data outputs from research supported by the Society are made publicly available in a managed and responsible manner, with as few restrictions as possible. Data outputs should be deposited in an appropriate, recognised, publicly available repository, so that others can verify and build upon the data, which is of public interest. To fully realise the benefits of publicly available data they should be made intelligently open by fulfilling the requirements of being discoverable, accessible, intelligible, assessable and reusable.

The Royal Society does not dictate a set format for data management and sharing plans. Where they are required, applicants should structure their plan in a manner most appropriate to the proposed research. The information submitted in plans should focus specifically on how the data outputs will be managed and shared, detailing the repositories where data will be deposited. In considering your approach for data management and sharing, applicants should consider the following:

- What data outputs will be generated by the research that are of value to the public?
- Where and when will you make the data available?
- How will others be able to access the data?
- If the data is of high public interest, how will it be made accessible not only for those in the same or linked field, but also to a wider public audience?
- Specify whether any limits will be placed on the data to be shared, for example, for the purposes of safeguarding commercial interests, personal information, safety or security of the data.
- How will datasets be preserved to ensure they are of long-term benefit?

Outline of data management and data sharing plan *	If the proposed research will generate data that is of significant value to the research community, then please provide details of your data management and sharing plan. *(*Maximum 200 words*)*
Fieldwork *	Will you be conducting fieldwork as part of your research? Yes/No *
Fieldwork	Please provide all details of any proposed fieldwork to be carried out. Please ensure you provide details of location, duration and justification for the fieldwork.
Fieldwork (Upload only)	Please upload documents related to the following (if applicable): 1. Permission Any mandatory documents that show local support has been assured by way of permission from the government concerned to travel to and work in the country. 2. Collection of specimens Any mandatory documents that show: - Specific permission has been obtained from the host country to collect and to export specimens and material. - The director of the museum or other decision makers where these specimens will be deposited has indicated his/her desire or willingness to have such specimens and material.

Use of Animals in Research *

The Royal Society is committed to supporting the development of alternative methods to reduce and/or replace the use of animals in research. Applicants proposing to use animals in their research must ensure that the use of animals complies with the relevant position of the Health Products Regulatory Authority (https://www.hpra.ie/homepage/veterinary/scientific-animal-protection). Additionally, applicants should continually be aware of developments in best practice and adopt the principles of the 3Rs when designing and conducting experiments on animals.

As a funder of research, the Society takes its responsibilities towards the Health Products Regulatory Authority guidelines seriously and requires applicants to consider the questions below when preparing grant applications that include the use of animals.	
Does your proposal involve the use of animals or animal tissue? *	Select 'Yes' or 'No'. If you have selected 'Yes' it is mandatory to complete all of the relevant questions on the Use of Animals in Research page.

Experimental Design Assistant

The Royal Society recommends that applicants use the Experimental Design Assistant (EDA), which is a free resource from the NC3Rs to support researchers in the planning of animal experiments. This will help to facilitate robust study design and reliable and reproducible findings.

The EDA helps applicants build a machine-readable diagram representing their experimental plan, following capture of their methodology, and allows the applicant to then generate a PDF report which provides a transparent description of the experimental design in a standardised format, which can be uploaded to the application form.

Please note: Applicants who choose to use the EDA, and subsequently uploads the EDA report to the application form, are advised to enter **see report** or **n/a** into any question fields within this section of the application form that have already been captured in the EDA report, to avoid any duplication.

Use of Human Participants and Tissue	
Any application for a research proposal involving human participants, patients or tissue and therefore requiring local ethical committee approval will be considered only when accompanied by the necessary permission certificate or proof that ethical permission will be sought, which must be provided in English.	
Does your proposal involve the use of human participants, patients or tissue? *	Select 'Yes' or 'No'. If you have selected 'Yes' it is mandatory to provide either a certificate or letter, as proof that ethical permission has been, or will be, obtained. Please upload the file as a PDF in portrait orientation.

Financial Details	
Host Organisation Type*	Different funding rates are applicable to Higher Education Institutions, Research Council Institutes and Independent Research Organisations. Please select your organisation type from the drop-down list.
General information	Science Foundation Ireland will fund a contribution to a Research Fellow's salary (including PRSI and employer pension contribution), research expenses and indirect costs. SFI will make an indirect or overhead contribution to the host research body, which is reflected as 30% of the direct costs (excluding equipment).
	SFI provides a contribution to team members in SFI awards. Please ensure all team member salaries align with the SFI Team Member Salary Scales and ensure the inclusion of each team member at that level is appropriately justified. Please see the Grant Budget Policy for full details.
	When completing the budget table in Flexi-Grant® please ensure to provide 100% contribution values.
	The full duration of the award is 8 years, with years 6-8 subject to a mid-fellowship review. The values should be inputted in the appropriate fellowship year. Note that year 1 = first year of fellowship from 1 October 2024.

	This should be done in collaboration with your Host Organisation's Research/Finance Office.

Costs should be entered in Euros (€). |
| **Budget Table*** | Please enter the values applied for under the budget table headings. **Applicants must consult with the appropriate financial administrators before completing these details.**

The input values should refer to the maximum total contribution that can be requested and should consider the correct funder contribution for each budget heading.

- Basic salary (at 100% contribution)

State your required basic salary for each year of the research fellowship.

The aim of the Fellowship is to support researchers at intermediate/senior research career stage. It is therefore expected that starting salaries should be at a level commensurate with your skills, responsibilities, expertise and experience. The maximum contribution to the Research Fellow's salary will be made at the SFI Team Member budgeting Research Fellow scale (Level 3 Points 1 to 4) in years 1 to 5, and Senior Research Fellow scale (Level 4 Points 1 to 3) in years 6 to 8, subject to successful mid-term review.

Please apply single point annual increments to the salary each year. These may be applied until an individual reaches the top of the scale, after which no further increments will be applied.

- On costs (at 100% contribution)

Science Foundation Ireland will contribute towards pay-related social insurance (PRSI) and employer's pension contributions, at the levels detailed in the SFI Team Member Salary Scales document.

- Equipment

Funding may be requested for the purchase of specialised equipment (including the cost of delivery, installation, spares or software procurement and the annual cost of maintenance or relocation charges specifically related to the newly purchased equipment). Funding may be requested for highly specialised computer hardware.

Equipment under €12,000 will be funded at 100%.

Any equipment costing more than €12,000 will require additional justification and a 50% contribution from the host organisation. Applicants should clarify the VAT position on purchases before seeking a grant. Any contribution offered by the Host Institution must not be conditional e.g., predicated on the success of other grant applications, and must not be from other Royal Society funded grants.

For all equipment and services costing more than €25,000 (excluding VAT), professionally qualified procurement staff must be consulted at the beginning of the procurement process and must approve the order before it is placed with the supplier.

- Other Research Expenses (Other **Directly Incurred Costs**, at 100% contribution)

Science Foundation Ireland will fund 100% of other research expenses (Other Directly Incurred costs). Funding for animal purchases and maintenance may be requested but should be fully justified in section 5 of the application form.

Other research expenses may include: |

- Travel and subsistence. Includes costs to attend Royal Society Training & Development Opportunities. The cost of these courses, accommodation and catering is covered by Science Foundation Ireland, you only need to include the cost of your travel to the opportunities you want to take up.

Travel costs should be based on the most suitable and economical form of travel. Costs for attendance at conferences may be included, where attendance will be of direct benefit to the research. Travel costs for research collaborators may also be claimed, if sufficiently justified.

- Consumables
- Open Access
- Relocation expenses
- Visa costs for yourself and your dependants (e.g., partner and children).
- Software, software licences and other recurring computing costs dedicated only to the project.
- Specialist publications (not expected in institutional libraries)
- Fieldwork fees/subjects/informants
- Contribution to technical and non-technical training costs for the fellow and team supported on the grant. Also, up to €8,000 towards their own career/professional development.
- Consultancy fees
- Public engagement costs. Up to €1000/year to support public engagement activity. Ideally this could link to your research, involve specific public groups from outside your organisation and aim to produce benefits for both you and the participants.
- Research Data management
- Recruitment and advertising costs for staff directly employed on the project
- Purchase/hire/running costs of vehicles if necessary for the project
- Summer students
- Access charges to facilities and services which are not recoverable through other sources.
- Animal and Plant Licence Fees

- PhD stipend and fees (contribution to a 4-year PhD studentship)

Please include cost of PhD stipend (fixed value) of €19,000 per year.
University fees of up to €5,500 can also be requested.

- Postdoctoral Researcher costs

Please provide basic salary and on costs. If awarded, all associated PDRA costs will be covered at the appropriate scale as per the SFI Team Member Salary Scales.

The point on the scale requested should be determined by qualifications and experience, and the rationale for appointment at that level should be explained in the Budget Justification.

A contribution of up to €90,000 per annum is allowable for all research expenses (Equipment, Other Directly Incurred Costs, PhD Studentship and Postdoctoral Researcher Costs). For a list of eligible research expenses, see page 3 of the scheme notes.

All expenses must be fully justified.

- Overhead costs

Please input this value in the "Indirect Costs" budget heading. This will cover the institutional overhead (e.g., costs of administration, such as personnel, finance,

	library and some departmental services). The SFI agreed rate for overheads is 30% of the value of the award excluding equipment. For more information, please refer to SFI's Grant Budget Policy.
Justification for Salary *	Please include grade and salary point as per the SFI Team Member Salary Scales and host organisation salary structure. A justification of annual increment should be included.
Justification for Relocation and Visa Expenses*	Please include the number of dependants (partner and children only allowed), which visa type you are applying for, its cost, and an estimation of other relocation expenses.
Justification for Research Expenses *	Please fully justify all requested costs (Other Directly Incurred Costs) by referring to each budget heading. Funding will not be awarded without justification.
Justification for Inflation rate applied *	Please write "N/A".
Justification for PhD Studentship	Please confirm the total value requested for the PhD studentship (if any) and provide a full justification for the PhD studentship explaining how the proposal is suitable and outlining any training that will be offered.

Applicant Declaration *
Please declare that: • You have read the Terms and Conditions of Award under which Royal Society grants are awarded and, if a grant offer is made, you agree to abide by them. The Terms and Conditions for Royal Society applications can be found at https://royalsociety.org/grants-schemes-awards/grants/university-research/. • You have access to the necessary facilities to enable you to deliver the research proposed and will continue to have access to the facilities for the duration of the project. • You have agreed with your Head(s) of Department that you will be afforded sufficient time and resources to deliver the research project as described in this application.
Nominated Referee* You should invite one referee who can provide a confidential reference for your application, by following the instructions under the 'Participants' tab on the application form summary page. Please check with them that they are happy to provide the reference, and inform them that they will be contacted by email and asked to provide reference via the Flexi-Grant® system by **Thursday, 07 September 2023 at 3:00PM UK Time**. You will not be able to submit your application for approval from your institution until the reference has been completed. The primary consideration for a referee is that they are able to comment independently and authoritatively on your application. The referee should be someone who has worked closely with you and is familiar with your research (for example, a PhD or postdoctoral supervisor, mentor). You should make sure they are able to provide a reference before adding them to your application. Nominated referees **must not** be: • A named collaborator in your application; • A member on the assessment Panel for this scheme; or • A member of the Royal Society's Council.

References must be submitted in English. If a reference is not submitted in English, it will not be accepted and may render the application ineligible.

Institutional and Departmental Support *	
Head of department *	You should invite the Head of Department at your host organisation to provide a statement of support by following the instructions under the 'Participants' tab on the application form summary page. Please check that they are able to supply their statement in advance of **Thursday, 07 September 2023 at 3:00PM UK Time**. You will not be able to submit your application for approval from your institution until the references have been completed.
	Please check which email address your Head of Department would like to use, as they may already be registered on Flexi-Grant® and mistakes may lead to a delay in processing your application.
	The Head of Department is required to summarise as part of their statement and organisation's commitment to the candidate:
	- The suitability of the candidate for the fellowship and department - Set out how the host department/institution will provide the support, mentorship and guidance to enable the candidate to thrive in their career and research. And provide assurance that the fellow would have the same status and benefits as other academic staff of similar seniority. - The effective and transparent arrangements that led to the applicant being supported to apply for the Royal Society fellowship. **If the applicant is requesting research expenses towards a PhD student or PDRA, please outline any further support covered by the host organisation and clarify the feasibility of the appointment**
	Research Fellows are expected to devote their time to research. The Society is willing to grant permission to its research fellows to do some limited teaching, demonstrating or any administrative work up to a maximum of six hours a week (in this case teaching also includes related support of undergraduates and Master's students). This is with the expectation that it will enhance the Research Fellow's career progression towards a permanent post

Diversity Monitoring	
Diversity Monitoring	The Royal Society is committed to promoting diversity in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) by seeking to increase participation from under-represented groups. Please help us to monitor how effectively we are doing this by providing the requested information. All questions are mandatory. The information provided will form a confidential statistical record in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and will not be used for any purpose other than analysis of the Society's activities. This information will be kept separately from the rest of your application and will not be seen by those involved in the selection process, including referees etc. You must either complete the form or tick the boxes stating that you 'prefer not to say'. If you do not select a box for each question, the system will regard your application as incomplete and will not allow you to submit it.

Appendix 1: Application and Review Process

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