

**2017 Government of Ireland Postgraduate Scholarship Scheme
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
Version 6 – 26 October 2016**

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

Similar questions have been grouped below in the following themes:

1. Eligibility
2. Applying to the scheme
3. Duration of funding
4. Application form
5. Conditions of award

1. Eligibility

****New**** A potential applicant now in the third year of a structured doctoral degree was awarded a Trinity Postgraduate Ussher Fellowship which covers fees and stipend for the first three years (2014-17). Can you confirm that this applicant is eligible to apply for funding for the final (unfunded) year 2017-18?

****New**** If the applicant registered for a structured doctoral degree in September 2014 and completed part of the degree on the basis of being in receipt of a HEI-funded bursary or scholarship, they are eligible to apply for 12 months of funding.

A student applied for GOIPG last year and was unsuccessful (in the area of Electronic Engineering applied to medical devices). Previously applied for IRCSET EMBARK scheme in 2009 in Biochemistry (unsuccessful). Given that application is completely different and in a different field, is the applicant eligible?

If the student has had two unsuccessful applications to the scheme (IRC or IRCSET) since 21 October 2009, they are not eligible to apply.

Would it be possible for a student with an ordinary degree and substantial work experience relevant to the proposed research, to apply for an MSc under the IRC GOI Postgrad Scholarship scheme?

It is a requirement for all applicants to possess a first class or upper second-class honours bachelor's, or the equivalent, degree. If the applicant does not possess a first class or upper second-class honours bachelor's, or the equivalent, degree, they must possess a master's degree in order to be eligible to apply to the scheme.

Could you please advise whether a student may apply the IRC GOI Postgrad Scholarship scheme if they have not transferred but if their PG1 was accepted in March 2015? Also, can you please advise if this PG1 date is considered to be the registration date for this scholars?

The student is eligible to apply if they fall within clauses 4.3.1 – 4.3.4 as detailed on page 4 of the [2017 Terms and Conditions](#). The date of first registration for this postgraduate degree should be included on the application form.

The student has a 2:2 for the BA, and also a 2:1 in a Higher Diploma. Can you confirm whether they are eligible to apply? Can the Higher Diploma be considered equivalent to BA/MA for the purposes of eligibility?

It is a requirement for all applicants to possess a first class or upper second-class honours bachelor's, or the equivalent, degree. Combining the above two qualifications does not meet the equivalence criterion as intended under the scheme. Therefore, the student in question is not eligible to apply.

A potential applicant wishes to apply to the scheme but they are a Final Year Undergraduate Students in an Indian University. Can you please confirm whether they are an eligible to be an Applicant or not as the guidance in the call documentation isn't explicit about the criteria for applicants under category two.

Applicants of any nationality may apply to the scheme. Applicants will fall under one of two categories based on nationality and residency. For category one, applicants must meet **BOTH** of the following criteria: (1) be a national of a member state of the European Economic Area (EEA) or Switzerland **AND** (2) have been ordinarily resident in an EEA member state or Switzerland for a continuous period of three of the five years preceding 1 October 2017. All other applicants will fall under category two. While the majority of scholarships will be awarded to applicants who fall under category one, a proportion of awards will also be made to exceptional applicants who fall under category two.

A potential applicant wishes to apply to the scheme this year but I just wanted to make sure he is eligible to apply as he received a grant for the sum of €7,500 last year for the academic year 2015/2016. He has confirmed that the funding source was the *Government of Ireland International Education Scholarship Programme - managed by the Higher Education Authority* and the scholarship is awarded to talented international students.

This area of scheme eligibility (currently set out in Clause 4.3) will be reviewed in advance of the 2018 scheme. In the interim, the Council will accept applications from holders of the Government of Ireland International Education Scholarship programme.

I am about to enter the third year of my PhD (in October 2016) and intend to apply for IRC funding for my final year. However I am currently in receipt of a Department of Education Scholarship under the Donogh O Malley Scholarship Scheme 2010. The scholarship covers a stipend for four years of undergraduate studies and also a maximum of four years of postgraduate studies. A stipend of 5770 per annum is awarded and fees are covered up to 6250. The student will continue to be in receipt of this fund for their fourth and final year (i.e. the year for which they are applying).

This area of scheme eligibility (currently set out in Clause 4.3) will be reviewed in advance of the 2018 scheme. In the interim, the Council will accept applications from holders of a Donogh O'Malley Scholarship.

In terms of the requirement 'for a first or 2nd honours grade 1, or an MA, requirement for applications to the IRC postgraduate scholarships? I have an exceptional candidate on the PhD programme who but has a second honours grade 2 in her primary degree and no MA. She has a huge amount of professional experience and a great publication record.

It is a requirement for all applicants to possess a first class or upper second-class honours bachelor's, or the equivalent, degree. If the applicant does not possess a first class or upper second-class honours bachelor's, or the equivalent, degree, they must possess a master's degree in order to be eligible to apply to the scheme.

An applicant registered for a PhD in May 2016. Is this applicant entitled to apply for a 32 month scholarship?

An applicant who registered for a traditional doctoral degree in May 2016 is eligible to apply for ***12 months** funding provided they fall within clauses 4.3.1 – 4.3.4 as detailed on page 4 of the [2017 Terms and Conditions](#).

2. Applying to the scheme

****New**** I have a query from an applicant on the review process for the IRC co-fund with EPA. Will these proposals be evaluated in a separate stream for separate funding and are the success rates different to the mainstream IRC applications

****New**** Applications are assessed in the same manner as those to the Government of Ireland Postgraduate Scholarship scheme. While applicants may apply for one scholarship theme only, those who choose to apply for a strategic funding partner scholarship will also be considered for a Government of Ireland Postgraduate Scholarship.

A non EU applicant has asked whether the IRC stipulates any English language requirement that an applicant must fulfil or whether it holds that this matter falls under the admission policies of the HEI's Postgraduate Research School?

The Council does not stipulate any English language requirement as part of the application process, this matter falls to the admission policies of individual higher education institutions.

I have a query from a PhD student, who registered part-time in 2014, and has just transferred to full-time this year. They are now registered as a full-time student for the current academic year. According to the documentation, students who registered for a PhD prior to 2015 are ineligible to apply, and there is no reference to part-time students. The student suggests that 2 years of part-time study should be counted as 1 year full-time. What is the student's situation under these circumstances, are they eligible to apply?

If the student initially registered for a traditional doctoral degree in September/October 2014, they are not eligible to apply to the scheme. Two years of part-time study will not be counted as one year of full-time study.

When assessing the number of years funding an applicant qualifies for, is this purely based on the applicant's initial date of registration? A continuing student has asked whether the 2 years she has spent registered as a part-time PhD student can somehow be counted as 1 year of full-time study thereby enabling her to apply for an extra year of funding?

The duration of funding the applicant is eligible to apply for is dependent on their date of first registration. Two years of part-time study will not be counted as one year of full-time study.

Further to the FAQ re applying for an IRC GOI PG scholarship and Employment Based Programme, which indicated the applicant may apply twice, can you clarify if they count as two applications and therefore rule out an applicant applying next year?

Applicants can apply twice independently to the Government of Ireland Postgraduate Scholarship scheme and the Employment-Based Postgraduate programme.

Can you clarify the issue of two applications; is it two applications per scheme, namely two applications to the GOI PG scheme and two applications to the Enterprise Scheme or just two applications in total to the IRC for PG funding.

Applicants can apply twice independently to the Government of Ireland Postgraduate Scholarship and Employment-Based Postgraduate schemes.

If access to archival material in private custodianship, or archival material with restricted access, is required for the research project, written evidence of appropriate permission to consult such material must be furnished to the Council.' Does this permission need to be uploaded as separate documentation when I make the application?

Written evidence of appropriate permission for access to archival material in private custodianship should be included as part of the application.
Are individuals who are affiliated with the University as part-time, adjunct or emeritus (i.e., retired) staff eligible to be supervisors of IRC-funded research projects?
Yes, where 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.
Is it allowable to be named as a supervisor on more than one application?
There is no limit to the number of applications a supervisor can be included on.
Can an applicant make two separate applications for two separate projects, from two different universities?
If an applicant submits more than one application to the 2017 call, both applications will be deemed ineligible and will not be considered for funding.
There is a student who is interested in applying under the targeted call with the Environmental Protection Agency. However, she is unsure about the thematic areas under the Sustainability Pillar. Can you please confirm if Sustainability Health & Wellbeing is a thematic area in itself, or do submissions under this strand have to address 'Research in support of the National Radon Control Strategy', 'Antimicrobial Resistance' and the Environment', 'Research in support of the Noise Directive'.
Proposals under the 'Sustainability Pillar: Health & Wellbeing', awards of which are funded by the Environmental Protection Agency, should address (1) research in support of the National Radon Control Strategy, (2) antimicrobial resistance and the environment or (3) research in support of the Noise Directive.
Please can you let me whether prior industrial and relevant experience is considered as part of the assessment of an application. A student has over 10 years of relevant industry experience with an overall 2.1 result in their degree. Is this taken into consideration to mitigate against the lower academic degree result or is there no point in applying without a first degree or first Masters' degree.
The applicant satisfies the requirement of possessing a first class or upper second-class honours bachelor's, or the equivalent, degree and is therefore eligible to apply to the scheme. The track record and research potential of the applicant will be taken into account during the assessment process as detailed in the evaluation criteria on page 30 of the Guide for Applicants .
There is a postgrad in my institution who is in their 3 rd year of a 4 year PhD and he wants to apply to the IRC Postgrad Scheme 2017/18. He first registered in 2013 but went off books due to medically certified reasons (fully documented in the college). Under Section 4.4. of the Guidelines for applicants he is eligible to apply, however, the application form provides no guidance on how or where this 'time off books' can be indicated. There is also no guidance on how the student can provide documentary evidence to support his medically certified absence. Can you please advise how a student with a medically certified break during PhD study proceed with an application? How can a year 'off books' be flagged in the application and what is the process to provide supporting documentation?
When the applicant selects 'no' to the question asking whether or not they will be a new entrant to the degree for which they are seeking Council funding, a free-text field appears relating to their current funding source which can be used to indicate any time off books. The applicant is not required to provide documentary evidence to support their medically certified absence.

A prospective applicant is currently in his 5th year of a 5 year Masters of Engineering degree. The structure of this degree is that the taught Masters course follows on immediately after the successful completion of all the necessary credits for the Bachelor of Engineering undergraduate degree but no separate graduation for the BE degree occurs. As such, he does not yet hold an undergraduate degree, but, all going well, will graduate with a Masters in Summer 2017. Is he eligible to apply for the GOI PostGrad scheme?

As detailed in the [2017 Terms and Conditions](#), if degree results are not known at the time of application, the Council may make a provisional offer of a scholarship on condition that the applicant meets the eligibility requirements as detailed in section 5.1.1 of the [2017 Terms and Conditions](#). Applicants on a combined bachelor/master's programme are also expected to achieve a first class or upper second-class honours in same. The applicant should indicate the final grade or grade point average they expect to achieve for the degree in question and these indicative results should be clearly labelled as such e.g. by including 'expected' in brackets after the expected result. The applicant should also make use of the 'additional information relating to this degree' section to justify why they expect to achieve the final grade or grade point average they have included in the application form. While the Council recognises that, in some instances, indicative results may not be achieved, the applicant will still be expected to meet the eligibility requirements as detailed in section 5.1.1 of the [2017 Terms and Conditions](#). Any offer of funding from the Council is conditional pending receipt of transcripts confirming the eligibility requirements have been met for any degree in progress at the time the application was submitted.

Could you please advise whether a student may apply to both the IRC GOI Postgrad Scholarship scheme and the upcoming Employment-Based Postgraduate Programme 2017?

Applicants may apply twice to both the Government of Ireland Postgraduate Scholarship scheme and the Employment-Based Postgraduate scheme, which opens on Friday 9 December 2016. Applicants to the Government of Ireland Postgraduate Scholarship scheme may also apply to the Employment-Based Postgraduate scheme. However, if they subsequently accept a Government of Ireland Postgraduate Scholarship, they will be required to withdraw their application to the Employment-Based Postgraduate scheme.

I know that, in the past, the Irish Research Council did not fund MD (Doctor of Medicine) applicants. Can you confirm that this is still the case?

If the applicant meets the criteria as detailed in section 5.1 of the [2017 Terms and Conditions](#), they are eligible to apply for a Government of Ireland Postgraduate Scholarship. All potential applicants should carefully ascertain whether or not they are eligible to apply by studying the questions and important application advice table on page 3 of the [Guide for Applicants](#).

Is it possible to apply for the government of Ireland postgraduate scholarship fund if you are under a combined bachelors degree and masters degree when the results of this course will not be known until June of 2017?

As detailed in the [2017 Terms and Conditions](#), if undergraduate examination results are not known at the time of application, the Council may make a provisional offer of a scholarship on condition that the applicant's bachelor's, or the equivalent, degree result is a first class or upper second-class honours.

The FAQ says you need to possess a Masters' degree [if the applicant does not satisfy the requirement of possessing a first class or upper second-class honours bachelor's, or the equivalent, degree]. Please can you clarify - does this mean a first class Masters' degree and is

it acceptable to access a conditional offer of an IRC if the applicant is a current Masters' student awaiting a Masters' final result in August/September 2017?

Applicants on a combined bachelor/master's programme are expected to achieve a first class, or upper second-class, honours in same. Any offer of funding from the Council is conditional pending receipt of transcripts confirming the eligibility requirements as detailed in section 5.1.1 of the [2017 Terms and Conditions](#) have been met for any degree in progress at the time the application was submitted.

A PhD student currently starting year 2 is funded by the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education. Funding for this award will finish in the current academic year and the student would like to know if it is possible to apply to the IRC GOI scheme for funding for a further 2 years.

As the applicant is not a new entrant to the degree for which they are seeking Council funding, they are not eligible to apply unless they fall within Clauses 4.3.1 – 4.3.4 as detailed in the [2017 Terms and Conditions](#).

If a potential applicant is currently registered as a part-time research student and are willing to go to full-time if they are successful - can they apply for a mid-PhD GOI postgraduate scholarship?

If the applicant is not a new entrant to the degree for which they are seeking Council funding, they are not eligible to apply unless they fall within Clauses 4.3.1 – 4.3.4 as detailed in the [2017 Terms and Conditions](#).

Can you clarify that under Clause 5.2 of the Ts and Cs for the GOI Postgraduate Scholarship Scheme 2017 that Category 2 applicants are (1) Applicants of any nationality; and (2) EEA/Swiss nationals who have been ordinarily resident outside the EEA/Switzerland for 3 out of 5 years preceding 1st October 2017? Can you also confirm that both types of Category 2 applicants as outlined above are eligible to apply to the scheme?

Applicants of any nationality may apply to the scheme. Applicants will fall under one of two categories based on nationality and residency. For category one, applicants must meet **BOTH** of the following criteria: (1) be a national of a member state of the European Economic Area (EEA) or Switzerland **AND** (2) have been ordinarily resident in an EEA member state or Switzerland for a continuous period of three of the five years preceding 1 October 2017. All other applicants will fall under category two. While the majority of scholarships will be awarded to applicants who fall under category one, a proportion of awards will also be made to exceptional applicants who fall under category two.

I have a query in relation to a potential non-EU applicant from Nigeria in terms of the extract from the T&C, it relates to section 5.2. Is there a definition of what constitutes category two?

Applicants who are **NOT** a national of a member state of the EEA or Switzerland **AND/OR** who have **NOT** been ordinarily resident in an EEA member state or Switzerland for a continuous period of three of the five years preceding 1 October 2017 will fall under category two.

3. Duration of funding

Students can register at this institution in either January or Sept of any year. If an applicant is planning on registering in January 2017, how should she answers the queries below? Will she be considered a new entrant? She understands that by registering in Jan '17 on the 48-month structured degree, she'll only be entitled to 3yrs funding. Is this correct?

If the applicant registers in January 2017 for a 48 month structured doctoral degree, they will be eligible for 36 months of funding provided they fall within clauses 4.3.1 – 4.3.4 as detailed on page 4 of the [2017 Terms and Conditions](#).

I have a query from a potential applicant who commenced their Masters by Research in Sept 2015. The student intends transferring to the PhD track by October 17. Can you advise how many years funding is the applicant eligible to apply for (two year for a Structured PhD?)

An applicant who registered for a traditional doctoral degree in January 2016 is eligible to apply for 24 months funding provided they fall within clauses 4.3.1 – 4.3.4 as detailed on page 4 of the [2017 Terms and Conditions](#).

A student registered as a part-time structured PhD student in January 2016, the student works full-time and is considering suspending her research in January 2017 to commence full-time research in September 2017. This would mean that she would have registered only for one year part-time study. She wishes to apply for a GOI scholarship for September 2017, is she only eligible for two years funding?

An applicant who registered for a structured doctoral degree in September 2015 is eligible to apply for 24 months funding provided they fall within clauses 4.3.1 – 4.3.4 as detailed on page 4 of the [2017 Terms and Conditions](#).

Could you please advise whether it is possible for a student currently registered as traditional PhD, to apply for a structured PhD?

An applicant who is already registered for one of the degrees listed on page 5 of the [2017 Terms and Conditions](#) is not eligible for funding unless they fall within Clauses 4.3.1 – 4.3.4. For scholars who have already completed part of the postgraduate degree for which they are seeking Council funding, the duration of funding to be awarded is dependent on the type of postgraduate degree being pursued and the date of first registration.

4. Application form

****New**** I have submitted two research papers for publication in peer-reviewed journals and I got replies that they will both be published. Should attach copies of the papers as part of the multiple files you can upload? Can a bibliography be included?

****New**** Supplementary material should only include essential information required for the interpretation and understanding of the proposed research, e.g. diagrams or bibliography rather than additional information about the research proposal or applicant.

****New**** An applicant wants to add a secondary supervisor who is based in another higher education institution. Is this allowed? If it is, how does that work through the system? i.e. how do they register and how does the student link them to their application, when they are outside their Institution?

****New**** 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 supervisor may **NOT** act as referees, however secondary academic supervisors **ARE** permitted to do so.

if I undertake a research trip abroad (e.g. for 1 month), could I include the costs of my accommodation for this time? I know that 'living costs e.g. rent' should not be included as they are not 'direct research costs', but my question is whether this is different where a trip is necessary for the project? And if not, would my travel costs at least be considered an eligible expense?

The applicant can include transport and accommodation costs to carry out necessary research activities outside of their home institution. These should be reasonably costed and fully justified as part of the application process.

If degree results are not known at the time of application, how should the applicant complete the 'final grade or grade point average' section of the application form?

The applicant should indicate the final grade or grade point average they expect to achieve for the degree in question and these indicative results should be clearly labelled as such e.g. by including 'expected' in brackets after the expected result. The applicant should also make use of the 'additional information relating to this degree' section to justify why they expect to achieve the final grade or grade point average they have included in the application form. While the Council recognises that, in some instances, indicative results may not be achieved, the applicant will still be expected to meet the eligibility requirements as detailed in section 5.1.1 of the [2017 Terms and Conditions](#). Any offer of funding from the Council is conditional pending receipt of transcripts confirming the eligibility requirements have been met for any degree in progress at the time the application was submitted.

In terms of co-supervisors acting as referees the FAQ for the 2016 stated: 'Co-supervisors, whether internal or external to the institution, cannot act as a referee for an application to the scheme'. Does this stipulation still apply to the GOI PG Scheme 2017? If an applicant with a primary supervisor and two or more co-supervisors, whether internal or external to the institution, can two of the co-supervisors act as the two referees?

A primary academic supervisor may not act as a referee, however secondary academic supervisor(s) are permitted to do so.

Are only academic references accepted? Is it possible to include a non-academic reference who can speak to the applicant's industry experience?

Referees do not have to be solely academic. A suitable referee is an individual who knows the applicant sufficiently well to provide a reference, e.g. a principal investigator or a mentor from any period in the applicant's career or education.

Could you please advise on whether applicants for the IRC GOI Postgrad Scholarship scheme require an ORCID ID in order to apply to the scheme?

The ORCID ID is a mandatory field on the application form and it is not possible to submit an application without providing it. The purpose of an ORCID ID is to provide a persistent digital identifier that distinguishes the applicant from every other researcher and, through integration in key research workflows such as manuscript and grant submission, supports automated linkages to ensure their work is recognised. If the applicant does not currently have an ORCID ID, they should register for one at www.orcid.org.

Applicants are asked to provide a 'lay abstract' of their proposal – can the Council provide more guidance on how this should differ to a 'normal' abstract

A 'normal' abstract should be a brief summary of the research proposal which does not necessarily need to be directed towards a general audience. This is in contrast to a 'lay' abstract which should be a brief summary of a research project that is used to explain complex ideas and technical or scientific terms to an audience who does not have prior knowledge of the subject. It should be free from jargon and written in an easily readable style.

The form asks for a schedule that includes 'milestones' and 'deliverables' for completion of the proposed research. As these project management terms will be new to applicants can the Council point to suitable definitions of 'milestones' and 'deliverables'?

A deliverable represents a distinct output of the project i.e. any disseminated product of the research. A milestone is a measurement of progress towards this deliverable and can therefore be used to assess progress of the project and, if necessary, implement correctional measures.

5. Conditions of award

Given 10.8 in the T+C “*The Council reserves the right to convene a review committee to evaluate the scholarship in accordance with the deliverables outlined in the original proposal, including the research plan, proposed outputs and the training and career development plan*”. Does this mean that all deliverables must be reproducible as pdfs/hard copies over the duration of the scholarship/award?

The Council expects that all deliverables are reproducible either in hard or soft copy if it makes the decision to convene a review committee to evaluate a scholarship in accordance with what was outlined in the original proposal.