



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

FUTURE JOBS
IRELAND 2019
Preparing Now for Tomorrow's Economy

HUMAN CAPITAL INITIATIVE

PILLAR 3

INNOVATION AND AGILITY

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS





Frequently Asked Questions

***** Please note, this document may be updated during the call process *****

1. Must the enterprise partner be Irish?

No, the enterprise partner can be based anywhere.

2. Is this a single call?

Yes, it is anticipated that this is a single call. However, the HEA reserves the right to issue further calls based on the outcome of this call.

3. Are applications possible in more than one format?

Only a single format is possible. All applications must occur through the online submission portal.

4. Can funding go to international partners?

Funding can be requested to facilitate collaborative engagement with international partners. This funding cannot move outside of the state to an international partner but must be retained and spent by the HEI in the state. For example, international collaborative partner costs such as hosting meetings and activities with international partners in the state can be funded.

5. Can you clarify the role of additional places?

If your proposal will create additional places, then you should provide information about these additional places. Proposals will not get funded for existing places, only additional places.

6. Do International Partners have to be Educational Partners?

No, a partner could be any international organization or enterprise.

7. If we were to make an individual proposal for funding under Blended Learning Development, can we then submit 6 different Work Packages e.g. develop a MOOC for Artificial Intelligence;



develop an online module in Crowd Surfing; plus four other work packages as part of this single individual submission?

Each institution can only make one individual application with enterprise collaboration. Within that application multiple work packages can be included however they must be cohesive in their approach and show an overall benefit to the institution as a whole.

8. Will non accredited courses be considered?

No. Courses should be accredited.

9. What is the deadline for queries and clarifications?

The closing date for queries and clarifications is January 30, 2020.

10. The agility steam is aimed at increasing institutions' ongoing capacity to anticipate, understand and respond to emerging skills needs of enterprise. In this regard, what is meant by increasing an institution's capacity to anticipate?

This is in terms of increasing their ability to be ready to respond to the emerging needs of enterprise e.g. liaising with enterprise to conduct analysis of what is coming down the line, setting up a unit to conduct analysis and work with the institution, developing ways to incorporate research outcomes into taught provision, set up a micro credentialing unit.

11. Is the funding of a structured PhD eligible under this call?

No this call is for taught provision only.

12. What is the nature and scale of equipment costs which are likely to be considered eligible for funding?

Equipment relates to pieces of machinery required. It does not relate to the funding of buildings. Equipment costs must be specified and not exceed 20% of the total direct costs outlined in the submitted budget.

13. Can a partner in a collaborative proposal be an institution from further education such as an ETB?

For a collaborative proposal to be eligible at least 2 eligible institutions must be involved. E.g. a University and an IOT. This collaborative proposal can also involve an ETB. An individual proposal can also collaborate with an ETB.



14. Can a partner in a collaborative proposal be an enterprise and therefore receive an allocation of funding awarded, if a proposal is successful?

All proposals MUST have an enterprise collaboration to be eligible but as stated above a collaborative proposal must have at least 2 eligible institutions involved. Funding can flow to enterprise.

15. Can a proposal include participant organisations or individuals who are not partners but who will carry out work for the project and, if yes, can participant organisations or individuals of that nature receive funding from the project?

Yes.

16. Can more than one person on behalf of a HEI be given the authority to access the application portal?

No. You may only use one email for all applications - you can of course give the email to colleagues provided they are not working on it at the same time (However, it still remains the case that you may only have one application that is individual and then as many applications that are collaborative).

17. The Call documentation indicates 'soft infrastructure' may be funded. Will this funding cover, for example; the set-up and licensing fees for a third party, newly adopted, VLE / learning platform. Will this cover the instructional design, ed tech, online content development & delivery and / or helpdesk student support as provided by a third party edtech (or similar) provider? We understand that the HCI fund will fund internal staffing in these areas, however would like to know if we might also opt to work with third party to access this expertise.?

Yes.

18. We note the preference for innovation and risk within the HCI P3 Call, and plan to fulfil this brief. In this context, might the HEA opt to fund 'parts' of a proposal rather than the whole of a proposal?

Our preference is to fund full proposals; however as we are not sure about the content and number of proposals, we are not ruling this option out.



19. We have delivered numerous programmes for industry in collaboration with Skillnets, as part of their role in enhancing workplace skills. How should HEI's engage with Skillnets under the HCI call? Can you please describe in brief how Skillnets might enhance or collaborate with our proposal under the HCI remit?

It is not possible for a Skillnet network to be an enterprise partner, or otherwise endorse an application made by a HEI to Pillar 3. An industry group itself may participate in the Human Capital Initiative in its own right, but the Skillnet network cannot.

20. The Call doc indicates that proposals should partner with education providers at local, regional, national and international level. In the context of an individual bid, how should we interpret 'education providers'? Do these include international universities? Do these include edutech (or similar) companies?

This can include international institutions, Further education colleges or other non eligible education providers. They can include edutech or similar companies.

21. If individual proposals include partners at all levels (local, regional, national and international) will they achieve a higher scoring?

Collaboration is examined in the context of impact and sustainability.

22. The eligible cost categories include soft infrastructure (e.g. software/software licensing), can this include hardware, and if not what category does hardware fall into?

Hardware falls under equipment.

23. Would it be possible to get clarification on this part of the call document:

Institutions must provide evidence of ability to deliver within their existing capital infrastructure (note: institutional capacity includes items such as physical capacity, infrastructure, academic, technical and support staff and enterprise linkages).



Does this allow for the recruitment of additional academic and technical staff from HCI funding?

Yes the budget allows for the recruitment of staff (for public institutes this must be within the constraints of the ECF).

24. It is understood from the Guidelines for Collaboration that 'eligible institutions may make one individual submission'. For the avoidance of doubt should an individual submission be interpreted as a submission with no other 'national' HEI partners?

Yes this means with no other eligible institution but it is entirely up to the institution as to whether or not they wish to do this. It is the intention that we allowed institutions to make one non collaborative (eligible institution) application. An individual submission can collaborate with non-eligible institutions and international partners.

25. We note the funding restrictions for international partners but assume we can collaborate with them as part of an individual submission.

Yes that is correct.

26. We also understand that we can collaborate with both national and international private sector partners as part of an individual submission, can you please confirm?

Yes that is correct.

27. It is understood from the Guidelines for Collaboration that eligible institutions can be involved in an unlimited number of collaborative proposals. Is there a limit to the number of collaborations a HEI can lead?

There is no limit on the number of collaborations an institution can lead on.

28. Will the same score be assigned to a collaboration involving two HEI partners (one as lead) as would be awarded to a 3 partner collaboration, all other things being equal?

Applications will be scored on the evaluation criteria set out. It is the quality of the collaboration within the context of the proposal rather than the number of collaborators that will be evaluated.



29. In a scenario where a HEI is working with an online learning provider who utilises adaptive technology to feed the right learning, to the right person as the right time, will both the cost of retraining the algorithm and the costs of developing the personalised adaptive course for professional learners be covered under the HCI fund?

Yes, as long as funding does not leave the state, however funding for the project ends on 31 December 2024. No further funding will be provided.

30. In relation to a potential innovative undergraduate programme (coming through the CAO system) we plan to propose under HCI, can you please clarify the relationship between the HCI fund and the exchequer fund? Can you please confirm that the eligibility of the standard €5,000 per student remains unaffected by the €2,500 eligible under the HCI fund? In other words, we understand the €2,500 is in addition to the €5,000?

Yes, where courses are eligible for exchequer funding, the €2,500 is in addition to that funding.

31. Would there be any issue in using an international partner in the delivery of a programme?

In principle, an international partner can partner in the delivery of a programme. Funding can be requested to facilitate collaborative engagement with international partners. This funding cannot move outside of the State to an international partner but must be retained and spent by the HEI in the State. For example, international collaborative partner costs such as hosting meetings and activities with international partners in the State can be funded.

32. If, a particular School wanted to partner with the equivalent Schools in several other HEIs across Ireland, would this be submitted under one HEI's proposal? Or would a separate inter-institutional proposal be required for the grouping?

This would be a collaborative proposal. There is no limit on the number of collaborations an institution can lead on. However, a HEI can only lead on one individual proposal.

33. We received a number of queries on the stipulation that "10. Submissions whose focus is primarily for the benefit of the public sector are not eligible for funding". Do you have any guidelines on this? Some queried whether this meant industry partners cannot include public hospitals or Tusla, which we assumed but undertook to confirm with you. We were also asked to confirm



whether this means, for example, a private hospital would be an eligible industry partner?

The development of a new programme or the enhancement of an existing programme cannot provide graduates that are exclusively for employment in the public sector e.g. nurses, doctors, teachers.

34. Can you provide some additional detail around the funding which is available for additional places with respect to Undergraduate. It this only as set up in Pillar 2?

Pillar 3 funding differs from Pillar 2 in that it is not necessary for Pillar 3 additional places to be made available through the CAO

35. What intake years are allowable?

This will dependent on your proposal. For example, if a four-year full-time course commences in October 2022, additional places on this course can receive the full €2,500 additional payment for the three following academic years, completing in academic year 2024/25.

36. Can postgraduate programs be taught masters for 90 credits?

Yes

37. In the indicative template for Pillar 3, Section 9 Budget Tables includes a line that says "Equipment Item 1 (add extra lines for each item) must not exceed 20% of total direct costs". Could you please confirm this indicates the total cost of Equipment must not exceed 20% of total direct costs (i.e. not that each line must not exceed 20% of total direct costs)?

Yes total cost of equipment must not exceed 20% of total direct costs.

38. Can a private higher education institution lead a collaboration proposal?

Yes if it qualifies as an eligible institution (see appendix 1 of the call document). It must also have an industry partner and at least one other eligible higher education institution.

39. Can a private college be a partner in a collaborative proposal?



Yes.

40. Is there a limit to the number of collaborations?

No.

41. Can you be lead in a number of collaborative process?

Yes an eligible institution can lead on any number of collaborative processes.

42. HEI's must adhere to procurement guidelines in working with new suppliers. As such, our proposal may not be in a position to name a specific technology partner at the time of writing. However, we can describe the purpose and services to be provided more generally. Can you please confirm this will be sufficient?

Yes HEI's must adhere to procurement rules. If it is necessary to procure goods or services from a company, it is sufficient, for the purposes of the application, to describe the goods and/or services that a public procurement process would hope to secure.

43. Could you provide clarifications guideline 5.2 which states: 'Eligible institutions may make one individual submission. Eligible institutions can lead or partner in collaborative proposals. There is no limit on the number of collaborative proposals which may be submitted in addition to any individual submission. 'Does this mean that an institution can lead only one solo submission (containing numerous work packages) but can lead or partner on multiple additional submissions as long as they are collaborative? For example: Institution X submits one individual submission, and in addition leads a second collaborative submission with Institution Y, and also is a collaborating partner on a third submission led by Institution Z?

Yes. Also please note with respect to the individual application that each institution can only make one individual application with enterprise collaboration. Within that application multiple work packages can be included however they must be cohesive in their approach and show an overall benefit to the institution as a whole.

44. Can you provide additional information what is meant by "alongside an outline implementation plan" in appendix one on



page 13. Does this mean a document outside of the table which is provided in the appendix?

The outline implementation plan in appendix one p.13 of the indicative template refers to the information you must supply in 'Section 3. Proposal' (see page 5 of indicative template) for example, governance structure, and dispute resolution mechanisms, in addition to the table on page 13 - where heading (a) is only asking for the work package name.

45. Can I clarify what comes under collaboration costs?

There is no exhaustive list of such costs, and budget items will be considered on a case by case basis.

46. Legal agreements with industry partners regarding Governance and management can take time to sign off, particularly for large companies. Can we get 'approval in principle' at the submission stage with the intention of getting sign off prior to funding draw down?

Yes.

47. In terms of measuring impact can you measure it over the course of the four years, or do you have to wait till the final year?

Monitoring reports will allow for impacts to be reported in any year of a project, and such reports will play a part in decisions concerning the maintenance of ongoing funding. However, it is recognised that some projects may not have impact to report in the initial stages of the project.

48. Will proposals for less than 3 years degrees be considered by HEA and QQI?

Yes the HEA will consider proposals that include programmes that are less than 3 years; please refer to section 5.7 of the Call document for further information. Please contact QQI if you have a query for them.

49. What constitutes a work package in the context of an overall proposal? Would it include different applications of a proposal for different audiences?



Work packages can be different from each other, but they must be cohesive in their approach and show an overall benefit to the institution as a whole.

50. Is there a limit on the number of work packages which can form part of an overall individual proposal?

No, but they must be cohesive in their approach and show an overall benefit to the institution as a whole.

51. By whom or what institutions can courses be accredited? Does this include industry organisations, professional bodies and awarding bodies where awards are aligned to the European Framework of Qualifications?

Yes

52. Is it envisaged that micro-credentials be calibrated on the NFQ?

Yes

53. Regarding the Declaration of Honor, is it possible that the Enterprise sign off could be sought from industry partners after a decision is made re: the project winning funding for progressing?

Yes you don't have to have sign off at application stage; it is sufficient to provide the name of the partner or partners. However, please be aware that if the application is successful it will need sign off by the Enterprise Partner/s before funding is awarded.

54. Is academic time buy-out covered under the HCI call, where the HEI wishes to free up lecturer time (as subject matter expert) to develop a new course and put in place a replacement lecturer?

Publicly Funded Institutes operating under Employment Control Framework (HES designated Institutes, DDUH, RIAM and DIAS).

Appointments under the HCI Pillar 3 must be on the basis of fixed purpose contracts, whose term shall not exceed the scheme/award duration. Such contracts must also include a specific clause providing for early termination before the specified expiry date of the contract in the event of the envisaged funding stream being terminated or reduced. A specific reference to such a clause must be included in the acknowledgement of the terms and conditions attaching to the offer of the post to be signed by the potential employee. Under the



current terms of the ECF these appointments are specific purpose project contracts. In cases where the applicants are existing public servants, their current positions can only be backfilled if they are considered to be priority positions and then by way of fixed term or fixed purpose contracts only. All contracts should be appropriately managed by the relevant HEI to ensure that no contracts of indefinite duration arise or result in unintended entitlements to permanent status within the Public Service.

As these posts will be exchequer funded provision for pension liability is in accordance with the terms of the relevant pension scheme.

The rates of pay for the posts must not be in breach of public sector pay policy.

All other institutes

The terms and conditions of staff in non-publicly funded institutes (not designated under HEA or DES) are a matter for the relevant organisation and the Exchequer does not carry any obligation for those institutes beyond the funding secured under the HCI.

55. How will the call evaluation process ensure that public and private institutions are treated fairly and equitably, particularly in relation to constraints on public sector institutions subject to the ECF?

See question 54.

56. If an academic member of staff is partially seconded to a HCI funded project how is the cost calculated in the budget? Is it the FTE of their salary or would another approach apply?

See question 54.

57. If it is proposed that a lecturer's hours are being bought out, is it intended that the cost will be calculated on the basis of the % of total salary?

See question 54.

58. Would a submission with a primary focus that benefits a private hospital be eligible under Pillar 3?

This will depend on the proposal. A proposal that involved graduates such as doctors, nurses etc, would not be eligible – the fact that they are cooperating with a private hospital,



or that a proportion of the graduates could end up working in a private hospital, would not change this. A proposal that worked with a private hospital in relation to medtech or similar would be eligible.

Note of change to the Evaluation Process.

Please note changes to points 3-6 p.18 of the call document have been made. These can be found in the pdf Call Document Revisions Evaluation Process, which can be found at <https://hea.ie/skills-engagement/human-capital-initiative-pillar-3/>

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