



North-South Research Programme 2021

Frequently Asked Questions

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

Last updated: 4 November 2021

New questions highlighted

Note: In this updated version of the FAQs, questions Q2bb, Q3k and Q3eee have been modified in response to institutional feedback (18/10/21).*

Note: Please be aware that FAQs will be accepted up until 13:00 on 2 November 2021. Final updates to FAQs will be issued on 5 November 2021 prior to the call closing on 4 pm 8 November 2021.*

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Host Institutions and Partnerships

Q1a: Are applications to Strands I, II & III made by individuals or institutions?

The programme is open to applications led by individuals and teams located at the higher education and research institutions as listed in Appendix 1 of the call document, as well as the institutions themselves. All applications must be submitted under the auspices of and with the approval of these host institutions and include an administrative lead in Ireland as set out in 1.1 of the appendix (Institutions in Ireland eligible as lead institutions). Applications must include at least one lead (individual (Strand I), team (Strand II) or institution (Strand III)) from the North and the South.

Q1b: From the North-South Research Programme document it looks like some institutions can be a partner but not the lead and that two leads (one from the North and one from the South/as listed in Appendix 1: the eligible as leads lists) is required. Is this correct?

The programme is open to all higher education and research institutions as listed in Appendix 1 of the call document.

While there is no limit on the number of lead institutions, there must be at least one lead from the North (appendix 1.3) and one from the South (appendix 1.1). An administrative lead (appendix 1.1) must also be clearly identified (for HEA communication and grant management purposes). The higher education and research partners, as listed in appendix 1.2, can be included, as partners or co-leads.

Other partners, alongside those listed in appendix 1.2, such as partners from further education, civic society, cross community, enterprise and innovation from Ireland and Northern Ireland are also welcome, however the proposed costs to be assigned to such partners should not exceed 10% of the total cost of the proposal.

Q1c: Can a HEI from the Northern Ireland Institutions eligible as lead institutions list lead and a HECA member HEI be a partner?

The programme is open to all higher education and research institutions as listed in Appendix 1 of the call document. While there is no limit on the number of lead institutions, there must be at least one lead from the North (appendix 1.3) and one from the South (appendix 1.1). An administrative lead (appendix 1.1) must also be clearly identified (for HEA communication and grant management purposes). Other higher education and research partners, as listed in appendix 1.2, can be included, as partners or co-leads.



Q1d: Could you please distinguish between ‘non-higher education partners’ and ‘additional partners’ in relation to allowable expenditure?

The programme is open to all higher education and research institutions as listed in Appendix 1 of the call document. The inclusion of ‘**non-higher education partners**’ from further education, civic society, cross community, enterprise and innovation from Ireland and Northern Ireland will be welcome. The proposed costs to be assigned to such partners should not exceed 10% of the total cost of the proposal.

‘**Additional partners**’ are higher education partners or research partners or non-higher education partners from outside of Ireland and outside of Northern Ireland, may also be included in a proposal. Costs incurred by additional partners may not be included in the funding proposal.

Q1e: Could I have more clarification on point 24 of the general guidelines which states that “the host institutions will accept full responsibility for the management, monitoring and control of all research funded by this award and all those persons involved, including but not limited to employees, whether full or part-time, permanent, or temporary, students and others employed or involved in any research funded by this award”?

Should an application be successful, any funding awarded will be paid to the lead (admin/governance) institution in Ireland which will be responsible for the disbursement of funds in accordance with the terms and conditions of the award and the collaborative research agreement that must be agreed and signed by the partners involved.

Host institutions must manage and monitor the funding received in accordance with the same. The lead admin in Ireland will manage all reporting to the Higher Education Authority. Each host institution will be responsible for their involvement in the award, including staff and research students in accordance with the terms and conditions of the award and institutional norms.

Q1f: Could I have more clarification on point 25 of the general guidelines, which states that "The host institutions accept responsibility for any litigation or liability that may arise out of research funded by this award and is responsible for ensuring appropriate insurance coverage in this regard"?

Should an application be successful, any funding awarded will be paid to the lead (admin/governance) institution in Ireland which will be responsible for the disbursement of funds in accordance with the terms and conditions of the award and the collaborative research agreement that must be agreed and signed by the partners involved.



Host institutions must manage and monitor the funding received in accordance with the same. The lead/governance admin in Ireland will manage all reporting to the Higher Education Authority. Each host institution will be responsible for their involvement in the award, including indemnity, etc., in accordance with the terms and conditions of the award and institutional norms.

Q1g: For Strand I, is it intended that the funding is strictly on a one-to-one basis, or can collaborators be included? The call document says, "This strand will support individual researchers based in an Irish higher education institution (HEI) to collaborate with a researcher in an HEI in Northern Ireland and vice versa on an identified research project.". However, on page 5, it states, "There must be a minimum of one lead institution/lead investigator/team lead from both Ireland and Northern Ireland associated with each proposal". It goes on to say, "While proposals will be led by host higher education institutions, the inclusion of partners from further education, civic society, cross community, enterprise and innovation from Ireland and Northern Ireland will be welcome. Research Performing Organisations and other government agencies may also be included as partners."

The programme is open to applications led by individuals and teams located at the higher education and research institutions as listed in Appendix 1 of the call document, as well as the institutions themselves. All applications must be submitted under the auspices of and with the approval of these host institutions and include an administrative lead in Ireland as set out in 1.1 of the appendix (Institutions in Ireland eligible as lead institutions). Applications must include at least one lead (individual (Strand I), team (Strand II) or institution (Strand III) from the North and the South.

Strand I provides funding to facilitate collaboration between individual researchers on a one to one basis. The application must be supported by the institutions involved with a lead admin institution identified in Ireland. There is no limit on the number of partners that can be involved on a proposal submitted to any of the three strands, and other individual researchers may be added to the proposal provided their necessity to the completion of the project is clearly justified in the proposal. Partners from outside higher education and research institutions are welcome, with their costs being capped at 10% of a proposal's total budget.

Q1h: Can a non-higher education/ non-research partner such as an NGO be involved in more than one application?

A non-higher education/non-research partner such as an NGO may be involved in more than one application. Where more than one of the applications is recommended for funding assurance that the



commitment required from the organisation in meeting each project's requirements can be met by that organisation will be required by the Higher Education Authority prior to any offer of funding being made.

Q1i: Are both monetary and non-monetary forms of support permissible?

No financial contribution is required from any HEI or other partner involved in a proposal. However, monetary and non-monetary forms of support from partners aligned with the programme's key principles and its aims and objectives are permissible. Such support should be identified and detailed in the project proposal.

Proposals that might lead to a longer-term commercial application should have appropriate arrangements in place to manage this in accordance with the national protocol and institutional norms. External support for such proposals is permissible provided the need for that support is justified in the application and that the source of the support is aligned with and in agreement with the aims and objectives of the scheme.

Q1j: In 'Section 5.2: Team Composition' in the Indicative Application Form when listing the details of each role in the team, is there any flexibility post-award to changes in the team composition (e.g. the number of PhDs/Postdocs per institution)?

The 'Team Composition' provided in an application should reflect the resource requirements necessary to the completion of the project and, where relevant, projections for the number of research students that may need to be recruited onto a project to meet the aims and objectives of the project proposal. Costs for the 'Team Composition' should be correlated with budget costs.

Any change, expansion, augmentation of the team at post award stage would not normally be permitted if it deviates from the proposed research proposal. Should difficulties surrounding recruitment or other unusual difficulties impacting on team composition arise post award initiation such difficulties should be reported in annual progress reports and/or interim reports when requests for a change in team composition may be considered. Please see Q6b regarding recruitment of postgraduates.

Eligibility

Q2a: It is stated that the lead individual investigators and team lead/s must be, at a minimum, two years post PhD. Is the two years minimum from VIVA and acceptance or graduation?



The lead investigators and/or team lead/s must be, at a minimum, two years post PhD. They must have been awarded their doctoral degrees no later than 31st December 2019. For this condition, the date of graduation (conferral) should be taken into account. If the lead has not yet graduated, all the requirements for the award of a doctoral degree, including the submission of the hardbound corrected thesis, must be complete within the required timeline.

Q2b: Could you provide some clarity around the statement given in the call document (Section: Eligibility, pt. 12 (pg. 6): “In line with the objectives of the scheme, the programme will not support proposals which can reasonably be expected to lead to commercial applications and exploitation in the short term, however for particular proposals collaboration and/or support from commercial sources is permissible. This is at the discretion of the applicant(s), but such interactions must clearly be in the context of added value from a research quality perspective. Where the feasibility of a project proposal is dependent on external support from commercial sources, details of the support should be included in the proposal and clearly justified”. We would appreciate further guidance on what particular proposals collaboration and/or support from commercial sources is permissible?

Proposals that clearly set out how they address the key principles of the scheme and the specific programme criteria, and which might include support or involvement of commercial or enterprise partners, may be submitted to the scheme. Such proposals which might lead to longer term commercial application should have appropriate arrangements in place to manage this in accordance with national protocol and institutional norms. External support for such proposals is permissible provided the need for that support is clearly justified in the applications and that the source of the support is aligned with and in agreement with the aims and objectives of the scheme.

Q2c: Can I be part of two different research grants as a lead investigator from Northern Ireland is different from a lead investigator from the Republic of Ireland?

A lead investigator may be involved in more than one application across any of the three strands. Where more than one of the applications is recommended for funding assurance that the commitment required from the researcher in meeting each project’s requirements can be met by that researcher will be required by the Higher Education Authority prior to any offer of funding being made.

Q2d: In general, will the North-/South programme support research have related to education programmes, including medical education?

Yes, research proposals will be accepted from all disciplines. See also question 4d.



Q2e: The FAQs makes a general statement that there is no limit on the number of lead institutions, however, is there any further guidance in this regard with respect to Strand III which is to support institution to institution strategic research engagement?

The number of partners included in a Strand III proposal is at the discretion of the proposers, provided the application includes at least one lead institution from the North and the South.

Q2f: The call doc states: ‘Projects with a shorter timeframe will also be considered.’ Does this apply to any of the three Strands? Is there a minimum and maximum duration for Strand II projects?

Yes, projects with a shorter time frame will be considered for any strand as long as the justification for requesting a shorter time frame is provided in the project proposal. For example, proposals on Strands II & III can be no shorter than 42 months and no longer than 48 months.

Q2g: Is there an estimate of how many proposals from each strand will be funded?

See question 3h.

Q2h: Can you define commercial applications and exploitation?

In line with the objectives of the scheme, the programme will not support proposals which can reasonably be expected to lead to commercial applications and exploitation in the short term, however for particular proposals collaboration and/or support from commercial sources is permissible. This is at the discretion of the applicant(s), but such interactions must clearly be in the context of added value from a research quality perspective. Where the feasibility of a project proposal is dependent on external support from commercial sources, details of the support should be included in the proposal and clearly justified.

For the purposes of an application to this programme:

- Commercial Application: means the exercise, assignment, or license of any rights to make, have made, use, copy, sublicense, sell, or otherwise exploit an invention or work for short term economic or commercial gain.
- Exploitation: means the action of making use of and benefiting from project outputs and outcomes for economic or commercial gain such as in accordance with National Intellectual Property Protocol.

As per the call, ownership of any intellectual property arising from collaborative projects shall be dealt with and ascertained through appropriate host and institutional partner structures, in line with the



National Intellectual Property Protocol. Collaborative research agreements must be established between all institutions and organisations involved in a project. Where a project receives outside financial support, the source of that support should be included in the collaborative research agreement.

All applications must be in keeping with the key principles of the programme.

Q2i: Can a Project Manager role be included in a Strand II application, as these projects can be the same scale as a Strand III project (i.e. up to €4M)?

Yes, costs for up to €60,000 may be sought for a Project Manager on Strand II proposals.

Q2j: Can an 'academic research team' be made up of individual academics from a number of eligible HEI institutions and other RPOs (i.e. other eligible partners)?

Yes, academic research teams participating in a proposal to Strand II may consist of a number of individual academics/ researchers from eligible HEIs and organisations listed in Appendix 1.1 and 1.2. Other partners may also be involved in the proposal.

Q2k: Is there a minimum and maximum number of partners for an emerging hub of excellence in Strand II?

While there is no minimum and maximum number of partners for Strand II, please see question 1b and 2j.

Q2l: The call guidelines state that “at the time of the initiation of an award the lead individual investigator/ team lead in the lead institution in Ireland must be employed by the lead institution in Ireland with a contract of sufficient duration to cover the complete time scale of a funded project”.

- **Would it be acceptable for an institution to confirm that a successful applicant, who may not have a contract that spans the duration of a potential application at the time of submission, will be offered a contract to cover the duration of their project should they be successful?**
- **If an applicant is not currently a permanent member of staff, are they eligible to apply?**

The call requires that *“at the time of the initiation of an award the lead individual investigator/ team lead in the lead institution in Ireland must be employed by the lead institution in Ireland with a contract*



of sufficient duration to cover the complete time scale of a funded project". These contractual matters are an issue for resolution between the prospective lead individual investigator/ team lead and their proposed host institution, should an offer of funding be made.

Q2m: Can a permanent staff member apply to this scheme and if successful employ a research fellow for a duration of 1 or 2 years?

See Q1A, Q1b and Q2l. As per the call, the programme is open to applications led by individuals and teams located at the higher education and research institutions as listed in Appendix 1 of the call document, as well as the institutions themselves. All applications must be submitted under the auspices of and with the approval of these host institutions and include an administrative lead in Ireland as set out in 1.1 of the appendix (Institutions in Ireland eligible as lead institutions). Applications must include at least one lead (individual (Strand I), team (Strand II) or institution (Strand III) from the North and the South.

Q2n: In relation to the HEA North-South Research Programme, could you provide more clarity please on how "Demonstration of mechanisms which will assist in the understanding of cultural diversities" will be assessed? Could some context be provided here? What types of cultural diversities are being referred to?

The origins and source of funding comes from the [Shared Island Fund](#).

The Shared Island unit examines the political, social, economic and cultural considerations for a shared future in which all traditions are mutually respected. Operationally, the unit is focusing its work in three areas:

- building a Shared Island
- fostering constructive and inclusive dialogue, including the Shared Island Dialogue series
- commissioning research

The work of the Shared Island unit is guided by the principles of the Good Friday Agreement.

Key objectives for the unit are:

- delivery of the commitments on Shared Island in the Programme for Government
- strengthening social, economic and political links on the island
- the promotion of all-island approaches to the strategic challenges facing Ireland, North and South



Mechanisms identified in a project proposal that will assist in the understanding of cultural diversities should speak to the key principles of the call, its aims and objectives as set out in the 'Call Document'. Proposals should support the achievement of, and deliver outputs relating to, the goals and objectives of national and institutional research strategy; the objectives of the Shared Island initiative; national alignment with Horizon Europe's mission-based approach and/or one or more of the United Nation's SDGs. Where cultural diversity is identified as a goal or strategy in one of the aforementioned policies/strategies, project proposals and the cultural mechanisms contained therein may map onto those goals and/or strategies.

The HEA promotes equality of access to higher education for people with disabilities, mature students who previously had not had the opportunity to access higher education, those facing social and economic barriers and minority groups, including the Traveller community. Where relevant, project proposals should consider equality of access in relation to project design, outcomes, and outputs.

Applicants must demonstrate that they have given full consideration to whether there is a potential sex and/or gender dimension in their proposed research. Applicants who have indicated that there is no sex/gender dimension to their research will be asked to justify this assertion. As far as possible, the gender balance of a research team should also be balanced, and reporting requirements will include reflections on that balance.

Q2o: Is it mandatory for PhD students (and Masters students if applicable) to spend 12 months outside their host institution?

No, it is not mandatory for research students to spend 12 months outside their host institution.

Q2p: Can Healthcare and Epidemiology disciplines apply for funding under this programme?

See q2D.

When applying to the North-South Research Funding Programme use the Primary and Secondary Research Areas in the 'Indicative Form' to position the discipline and provide relevant keywords to further contextualise the specific discipline.

Q2q: Is there any PhD equivalence that would allow researchers from other backgrounds to qualify for the lead roles?

The lead investigators and/or team lead/s applying to North-South research Funding Programme must be, at a minimum, two years post PhD (see q2a).



It is recognised that in certain fields some other doctoral titles have the same status and represent variants of the PhD. Such qualified researchers from other backgrounds may be proposed to a lead role, so long as they meet all the other requirements of this scheme.

Q2r: If an applicant holds an adjunct/emeritus contract within a HEI would that qualify for eligibility under this call once the applicant is allowed to submit funding applications under the HEI policy?

Applications must be endorsed by the lead admin HEI. Internal HEI eligibility policies are a matter for the HEI and the potential applicant.

See q2l.

Q2s: Where an individual holds a lectureship based on their professional experience relevant to their discipline (e.g. writer, filmmaker), but does not have a PhD, are they eligible to be a lead in applications to this call?

As per q2a and q2q, to be eligible, lead investigators and/or team lead/s must be, at a minimum, two years post PhD.

Q2t. Suppose an applicant is involved in a discipline that is not listed and the respective sub-areas are not listed in the Call Document or other information. How does one proceed in the application, outlining the primary and secondary areas?

Applicants must use Appendix 2 to identify their discipline and provide this information in the application form. Appendix 2 is not a complete list. Where a discipline is not listed, an applicant may use a free text box in the online system to specify the discipline involved in their proposal.

Q2u: Would applicants who have Honorary Appointments be eligible for this funding call?

The lead investigators and/or team lead/s applying to the North-South research Funding Programme must be, at a minimum, two years post PhD (see q2a).

See q2l. See q2r.

Q2v: Is it possible to submit the same (or a very similar) application to Strand I and Strand II, but with the latter involving a larger scale project with a bigger group of contributors, more project staff, a larger sample size, etc. than the latter?

Similar proposals may be submitted to more than one Strand provided neither scaling a project up nor down impacts on the feasibility of a proposal. However, should both proposals be ranked highly by



the assessment panel an offer of funding may be made to carry out both or to one of the proposals taking into account any potential for double funding and/or the duplication of research and effort.

Q2w: Would applicants be permitted to resubmit an unsuccessful proposal under this call to the proposed second call that will be issued as part of this initiative. As part of the above, if unsuccessful, would an idea/proposal be required to undergo any revision if it was deemed fundable in the first call?

If unsuccessful, applicants may resubmit once to any future North-South Research Programme funding calls. Where a project is deemed fundable but lies outside the budget threshold, any changes the applicant wishes to make while preparing the application for resubmission will be at the discretion of the applicant/consortium.

Q2x: Would a project on clinical medicine including a definitive trial be eligible for this scheme?

Applications from all disciplines are eligible to apply to the call. Proposals submitted may be in the areas of basic or strategic research. All proposals submitted must address the key principles and objectives of the Programme. Proposals that involve elements of and/or clinical trials as part of the overall project will be considered under this Programme.

The lead admin HEI in Ireland and the lead admin institution are responsible for ensuring proper management and governance of applications awarded funding, including securing the ethical approvals and licenses necessary to the completion of the project. Where a project involves clinical trials, all lead investigators/team leads are responsible for ensuring Irish, and EU regulations regarding clinical trials are adhered to. If the competent authority or a research ethics committee requires an amendment that substantially affects the proposed project, the awardee must inform the HEA, and the project may need to be resubmitted to the HEA for reassessment.

Q2y: What is the difference between Basic and Strategic Research?

All applications submitted to the North-South Programme must address the key principles of the Programme as set out in the 'Call Document'. For the purposes of the North-South Research Programme Basic Research can be taken to mean 'bottom up' research that seeks to advance the frontiers of scientific knowledge and understanding. In the context of the Programme, Strategic Research is taken to mean research that has a delineated pathway to application and is building on pre-existent knowledge.



Q2z: What is the distinction between ‘investigator’ and ‘lead investigator’? Can an individual be classified as a “lead investigator” if they are employed by a research institution identified in appendix 1.2 which is “Co-Lead” on an application? Is there a maximum number of individuals who can be identified as “lead investigators” on a proposal?

Investigator is a Lead Investigator. Yes, a lead investigator/team lead may be identified in a partnering lead institution from Appendix 1.2 provided the institution is identified on the online system as a lead partner. One lead investigator/team lead per partnering lead institution may be identified with the exception of proposals involving separate interdisciplinary teams from within a single institution, where more than one lead investigator/team lead may be identified.

Q2aa: While two-years post PhD is a requirement for named team-leads, does the same requirement apply for academic collaborators/partners that are non-lead partners, i.e. do they need to be two years post PhD to be eligible to be part of an application and to be eligible for funding?

Where lead partners, other than the lead admin HEI in Ireland and the lead HEI in Northern Ireland, are added to a proposal from Appendices 1.1, 1.2, 1.3 and these lead partners identify a lead investigator/team lead, the leads must be, at a minimum, two years post PhD. They must have been awarded their doctoral degrees no later than 31st December 2019. For this condition, the date of graduation (conferral) should be taken into account. If the lead has not yet graduated, all the requirements for the award of a doctoral degree, including the submission of the hardbound corrected thesis, must be complete within the required timeline.

Where other individual researchers from the lead admin HEI in Ireland, the Lead HEI in Northern Ireland or from any of the other lead partners from Appendices 1.1, 1.2, 1.3 are added to the project it is not necessary for those researchers to meet the PhD eligibility requirement as they are not lead investigators/team leads. The responsibilities afforded to these researchers however, must reflect the fact that they are not identified as lead investigators/team leads on the project.

Q2bb: Is an MD considered a PhD equivalent?

Subsequent to requests for further clarification, and while the HEA does not have an academic mandate, nor a system for recognition of PhD equivalence, in respect of an MD qualification, applications may be put forward by applicants where the host institution is satisfied that an equivalence exists for the purposes of an application to this scheme. The HEA may seek to confirm this acceptance of equivalence by the host institution should an application be successful. See Q2q.



Q2cc: If someone is employed by a Northern Irish HEI but is living elsewhere, are they eligible to be part of a team or consortium under this funding call.

The place of residence of any member of staff on a research project is a matter of usual institutional convention. The HEA does not have a view concerning residence and eligibility, providing researchers and institutions are complying with their institutional obligations. See FAQ Q3xx regarding funding travelling outside of Northern Ireland and Ireland.

Q2dd: If a lead investigator or team lead has a fractional appointment at one of the proposed participant universities in the programme and is not formally a full-time resident in either Ireland or Northern Ireland. Would this impact on eligibility?

The place of residence of any member of staff on a research project is a matter of usual institutional convention. The HEA does not have a view concerning residence and eligibility, providing researchers and institutions are complying with their institutional obligations. See FAQ Q3xx regarding funding travelling outside of Northern Ireland and Ireland.

As per the Call Document, at the time of the initiation of an award the lead individual investigator/team lead in the lead institution in Ireland must be employed by the lead institution in Ireland with a contract of sufficient duration to cover the complete time scale of a funded project.

Q2ee: Is there a limit to the number of PhDs that can be included in Strand II and III proposals?

No, there is no limit to the number of PhDs that can be included in Strand II or in Strand III proposals. Project feasibility, the capacity of involved institutions to provide supervision, appropriate training and guidance should be demonstrated in the proposal.

Q2ff: We would like to put aside a seed fund and to host 2-3 calls for small interdisciplinary/cross border proposals over the duration of the project, would this be possible?

Requests for funding costs cannot be used as seed funding to support further funding calls or subprojects.

Q2gg: Is it possible to apply for funding under the North South Research Programme, with the intention of then leveraging any funding that may be awarded to apply for another grant award?

All applications must address the key principles of the North-South Research Programme as set out in the Call Document and applications should demonstrate how proposals will act on the key principles.



Where a project proposal submitted to the North-South Research Programme requires future funding to maintain the sustainability of project outcomes, the North-South project proposal may include elements of the actions necessary to preparing an application and/or building a consortium aimed at leveraging such future funding. The proposal being submitted to this Call should identify the aforementioned elements and outline their necessity to the project's sustainability. The intention of applying to future funding calls should also build on the North-South Collaborations developed under this programme and continue to build on its shared strategic research aims.

As per the call document co-funding from other research funding agencies for related or complimentary projects is permissible but parallel funding for the same project work is not allowed.

Q2hh: Would developing an undergraduate research internship programme be suitable for this programme?

This programme is aimed at building basic and strategic research capacity at postgraduate level and above in line with the programme objectives as set out in the Call Document.

Q2ii: Where an institution deems a lead investigator/team lead with an MD and appropriate experience eligible for the call will the HEA review the equivalency? If a review is carried out and the lead investigator/team lead is found to be ineligible, can he/she be replaced post-submission?

Decisions made by host institutions regarding the eligibility of researchers holding an MD and experience which are together considered equivalent to a PhD are a matter for host institutions.

Where a host institution is satisfied that a team lead/lead investigator with an MD is eligible to apply to this scheme, reference to this equivalency should be made in application, ideally in the 'Consolidated CV' section of the application form.

Should an application be successful, the HEA may seek to confirm this acceptance of equivalence by the host institution, as a technical eligibility check, this will not be a review of equivalency as this will have been determined by the host institution.

Salaries and Budgets

Q3a: In circumstances where a proposed project would include funding for a postgraduate research studentship, could the proposed student be a named individual on the bid, or would the studentship need to be advertised as an open competition?



The recruitment of postgraduate research students should be in line with usual institutional conventions and is a matter for the institutions involved.

Q3b: The first bullet point on page 10 states the following: "Costs may include buy-out or salary costs for research team leads and/or lead investigators. Consumables and travel may be included in the proposal for team leads and/or lead Investigators and for any post-doctoral researcher recruited onto the project. These costs are capped at a maximum of €10,000 per person, per year." Does the last sentence mean that the cost of buy-out or salary costs for research team leads and/or lead investigators capped at €10,000 per person per year? Or is it that consumables and travel for those costs are capped at €10k per person, per year?

In this case, the costs capped at a maximum of €10,000 per person per year refer to consumables and travel.

Q3c: Is including an overhead contribution, and the amount of that overhead, at the discretion of individual HEIs, or will the HEA provide more definite guidance?

Yes, the inclusion of an overhead contribution is at the discretion of the individual HEIs. An overhead contribution of up to 25% may be included in proposals.

Q3d: Would a requested overhead contribution be above and distinct from the maximal allowed request?

The inclusion of an overhead contribution of up to 25% is at the discretion of the individual HEIs. It should be included in the overall funding allocation sought and should not exceed the maximum project allocations as set out in the call document.

Q3e: What do the HEA envisage is the exact difference between a strand II and strand III application, since both are of the same scale and also apparently scored using the same metrics? Could a project management/operations team be funded under Strand III to help implement the research programme in the various institutions?

Strand II: Emerging hubs of excellence will provide funding for academic research teams to collaborate on an agreed programme of research. This might, for example, be several departments or faculties in



similar (or related) disciplines working collaboratively across a range of institutions and partners (north and south).

Proximal and distal interdisciplinary collaborations will be encouraged. The agreed work programme may address basic or strategic research, and the programmes' objectives must align with the programme's key principles and specific programme criteria.

Strand III: Partnerships of scale. This strand will support institution to institution strategic research engagement: Higher education institutions will be supported to collaborate with each other based on their respective institutional strategic research priorities, aligned with the objectives of the scheme as set out in the call document.

The collaboration may address basic or strategic research and/or research strategies or design policies and/or programmes/ networks that will build research capacity through collaboration on an institutional, national, all-island basis.

Proposals must include a research agenda, including research that reflects on the policies/programmes being designed and/or implemented. A Project Manager may be included in strand III, and research staff, including research students, may be recruited onto the team with a view to supporting the project on an operational basis provided any training requirements are provided for, and the roles allow contribution to the proposed research agenda where relevant.

Outcomes that on balance benefit all institutions involved and demonstration of the sustainability of any policies, programmes or other capacity-building mechanisms put in place as part of a project should be included in the proposal.

Q3f: It is mentioned that €10,000 per year per person consumable costs are allowed. Can we add our lab manager to the project? If yes, can we ask additional €10K for lab manager under consumable budget?

On Strand III: Partnerships of Scale up to 60,000 per annum pro rata may be sought for a project manager. Costs for consumables and travel cannot be sought for this person. Where a lab manager is also a researcher and their contribution to the project team and to the project as a researcher is clearly



justified in the application, the lab manager/researcher may also be added to the team and consumables once clearly justified may be requested for that lab manager/researcher.

Q3g: Can an existing post-doc be hired part-time to work on the project, or can an existing PhD student work on the project?

The recruitment of postgraduate research students, postdoctoral researchers and all staff recruited onto the project should be in line with usual institutional conventions and is a matter for the institutions involved.

Q3h: Is there a certain percentage of the overall funding already assigned for the three different strands?

No. The percentage of funding to be awarded to each strand will be in accordance with the number of proposals received, the quality of those proposals, and the recommendations of the assessment panel.

Q3i: Could you clarify a point re postdocs/graduate students and research costs. In the call, it states: Costs may include buy-out or salary costs for research team leads and/or lead investigators. Consumables and travel may be included in the proposal for team leads and/or lead Investigators and for any post-doctoral researcher recruited onto the project. These costs are capped at a maximum of €10,000 per person per year. Does this mean that all research costs (i.e., consumables plus travel) of postdoctoral researchers and graduate students must be to a maximum of €10,000 per researcher/student per year?

In this case, the costs capped at a maximum of €10,000 per person per year refer to consumables and travel for team leads and/or lead investigators and postdoctoral researchers recruited onto the project.

Costs including a stipend of up to €30,000 per annum, plus fees may be sought for research students for up to a maximum of four years to include at least 12 months to be spent outside of their host institution, such as at the lead partner institution. Where research students spend time outside of their host institution up to an additional €5,000 may be sought for costs incurred.



Q3j: Is there any additional guidance regarding the scale of the consortium needed for Strand II?

Please see Q1g and Q3e above.

Q3k: “Provision should be made for contingency costs at up to 10% of the overall budget”, does this mean that Strand I applicants calculate 10% contingency on €200k budget (total €220k) or is 10% contingency included in the €200k total.

Contingency costs of up to 10% may be included in the total budget, in this case in the €200k total. Please note that in any case, no additional funding, over and above agreed allocations to successful projects, will be made available by the HEA.

Q3l: For Strand II (Emerging hubs of excellence) and Strand III (Partnerships of scale), is there a minimum budget to be exceeded?

There is no minimum budget to be exceeded, the maximum value of the award for Strand II and Strand III partnerships is €4,000,000. Where the budget being requested in a proposal is significantly lower than the maximum allowable amount, clear justification for the request should be included in the proposal.

Q3m: Is pension at 20% to be included when calculating employment costs? Is there a specific method for calculating teaching buyout? Can staff employment costs include increments and cost of living increases (e.g. 1% p.a.)?

Proposals can include costs associated with establishing partnerships that improve researcher exchanges and interactions with each other and with external stakeholders. The employment and or buy out costs should be in accordance with institutional norms.

Q3n: Can Research Assistants be employed on a project?

Yes, a research assistant may be recruited for a project. Where a research assistant is employed, training costs for the development of the research assistant may be sought for the duration of their employment.

Q3o: Is there a minimum/maximum stipend allowable?

Stipends can be no lower than €18,500 per annum. There is no maximum allowable stipend, but stipend plus costs per research student cannot exceed €30,000 per research student per annum. Fees may also be requested in addition to the €30,000 per student per annum. Furthermore, where



research students spend time outside of their host institution, up to an additional €5,000 may be sought for costs incurred.

Q3p: Can the funding cover the costs of Research Masters students?

Yes, the costs of up to €30,000, including stipend and research costs per annum plus fees, may be sought for research students. Fees may also be requested in addition to the €30,000 per student per annum. Where research students spend time outside of their host institution up to an additional €5,000 may be sought for costs incurred.

Q3q: Is student stipend included as pay for the purposes of the overhead calculation?

The cost of institutional overheads may be included at a cost of up to 25% of pay costs (full-time personnel). Research student/s' stipends should not be included as Pay for the purpose of overhead calculation.

Q3r: What types of costs can be included for further education, civic society, cross community, enterprise and innovation partners?

Costs for further education, civic society, cross community, enterprise and innovation partners, (such as small equipment (e.g., laptops), software licensing, training, travel, networking events including speaker costs), may be included but justification must be provided illustrating that the costs are absolutely necessary to carry out the project.

Q3s: Can you give an e.g., of how the 10% contingency cost should be calculated?

See Question 3K.

Q3t: 'Costs may include up to €60,000 per annum pro rata for a Project Manager on Partnerships of scale' – does the €60,000 include salary, PRSI + pension costs?

Yes, costs of up to €60,000 per annum pro rata for a Project Manager. This should include provision for salary, PRSI and pension costs.

Q3u: Does the 10% limit on costs apply to all organisations listed in appendix 1.2?

Higher education and research partners, as listed in appendix 1.2, can be included, as partners or co-leads. The breakdown of funding requested between lead partners is at the discretion of the partners participating in the project proposal. Up to 50% of funding may go to partners in Northern Ireland.



Q3v: Is there a minimum budget for Strand II?

There is no minimum budget for Strand II, however a Strand II proposal should be no less than 42 months duration.

Q3w: Is investigator time allowable as a cost or is it only buyout cost that are allowed for lead investigators?

No, only buy out costs are allowed for lead investigators.

Q3x: Would the allocation of summer (undergraduate) internships be an allowable expense?

No, internships are not an allowable expense under the North-South Research Programme.

Q3y: Is it possible for buy-out costs of an academic staff member to be included in a budget, notwithstanding that such a person does not meet the 2-year rule in order to be a team lead?

All research team leads/ lead investigators must at a minimum be two years post PhD as specified in the 'Call Document' and in Question 2a above.

Q3z: Could you please provide more information regarding staff costs for example:

- **what proportion can be sought?**
- **Are salary costs and teaching buy out for core paid academic staff eligible?**
- **Are salary costs only eligible if the team leads and/or lead investigators are not core members of the applying institutes, i.e. the team leads and/or lead investigators are not permanent members of the academic staff?**
- **Can I include the salary of an academic member of staff who will be working on the project 0.1 FTE. If allowed is the above cost eligible for overhead allocation?**

As per the call, allowable expenditure, costs may include buy-out or salary costs for research team leads and/or lead investigators. In addition, consumables and travel may be included in the proposal for team leads and/or lead Investigators and for any post-doctoral researcher recruited onto the project. These costs are capped at a maximum of €10,000 per person per year.

As with Strand I (see Q1g), other individual researchers may also be added to a proposal for Strands II, and III provided their necessity to the completion of the project is clearly justified in the proposal.



Costs for such individuals may include buy-out or salary costs and a maximum of €10,000 per person for consumables and travel.

The proportion or share of buy-out or salary costs is a matter for the consortia to agree. This may include buy-out or salary costs of core academic and/or contract academic/research staff. The allocation of these costs within projects is not limited to team leads only.

The cost of institutional overheads may be included at the cost of up to 25% of pay costs (full-time personnel). Therefore, research student/s' stipends should not be included as Pay for the purpose of overhead calculation.

Q3aa: Can you include administrative support in your application if you are not the admin lead institution as per Appendix 1.1?

Strands II and III allow costs of up to €60,000 per annum for a Project Manager. The Project Manager may be based at the lead admin institution or in one or more of the other lead partner institutions. The costs may be split across more than one Project Manager based in any of the lead partners. Breakdown of the costs and the Project Manager's location is subject to the agreement of all partners involved in the project proposal.

Q3bb: Q1d of the FAQs outlines that proposed costs to be assigned to 'non-higher education partners' "should not exceed 10% of the total cost of the proposal". Is this 10% per non-HEI partner, or 10% across all non-HEI partners?

This is across all non-higher education partners and means that the total costs of all non-higher education partners involved do not exceed 10% of the proposal's total cost.

Q3cc: Can staff costs be funded for both lead applicants and named partners and is there a maximum number of lead investigators on a project i.e. one per participating institution or a maximum number of team leads?

Each project must, at a minimum, identify a lead HEI partner in Ireland and Northern Ireland as specified in the 'Call Document' and as addressed in Q1b. Applications must include at least one lead (individual (Strand I), team (Strand II) or institution (Strand III)) from the North and the South. With the exception of Strand I (see Q1g), there is no limit on the number of lead investigators who may



participate in a project across institutions/organisations provided that there is a research team lead/lead investigator in the lead admin HEI in Ireland and the lead HEI in Northern Ireland.

See Q3z regarding costs for research team leads/ lead investigators.

See Q3r regarding costs that may be requested for non-higher education and non-research partners.

Q3dd: Is the maximum funding available across each of the three strands inclusive of the direct costs overhead?

Yes, the maximum funding available for each strand is inclusive of the direct costs overhead.

Q3ee: Can a research student who already has funding (Stipend and fees) be added to a project and can we request to include consumables for that student?

Research students recruited onto a project funded from the North-South Research Programme should work on or be working on a PhD project that reflects the programme's key principles and criteria. It is envisaged that such students would be full-time students whose main source of funding is from the North-South Research funding programme.

Where a research student is already in receipt of funding from another source and is working on a project compatible with the key principles of the North-South research programme and with the programme's criteria, requests for consumables for that student are permissible.

The host institutions will take full responsibility for providing full supervision and training of any PhD students recruited onto projects, with reference to the [National Framework for Doctoral Education](#).

Q3ff: What is the difference between:

- **The lead investigator/team lead and the primary contact?**
- **The primary contact and the lead admin representative?**

An administrative/governance lead institution in Ireland must be identified for the purposes of the administration of the project. This administrative lead will be the primary point of contact and will be responsible for all communication with the Higher Education Authority. Each research proposal must identify a primary point of contact in the lead institution in Ireland.

The primary point of contact may be the lead investigator, a project manager or another suitably appointed representative in the institution in Ireland.



The lead admin representative referred to the endorsement template is the President/VP/Director of Research or the appropriate office holder in this regard within the lead admin institution that agrees to endorse an application.

Q3gg: Is there a difference between Consumables and Research Consumables?

Consumables refers to research consumables.

Q3hh: Is there the following:

- **Max budget for travel?**
- **Max budget for consumables?**

No, there is no maximum budget for travel and consumables for a whole proposal. However, consumables and travel costs are capped at a maximum of €10,000 per person per year for team leads/lead investigators. Specific costs for postdoctoral researchers and research students are addressed in the following FAQs: Q3f, Q3i, Q3z and Q3ee.

Q3ii: Could funds be requested for 4 year PhDs (which will require a No Cost extension), or should the project go for 3.5 or 3 year PhDs to ensure the PhD projects stay within the allowable lifetime of the project?

Where the duration of a proposed project on Strands II and III is the maximum of 48 months, costs for a research student recruited onto the project for a maximum of 48 months may be sought.

Q3jj: Does the lead applicant (ROI institution) and partner (NI institution) have to submit two separate budgets?

One consolidated budget will be submitted per application.

Q3kk: Should the costs for the NI partner be in EUR or GBP?

All costs should be submitted in Euros.

Q3ll: Who bears the foreign exchange risk for the NI partner costs during the course of the award? Are they intended to be included in the 10% contingency? Is this a cost that the HEA - upon application - will approve?

The foreign exchange risk is to be borne by the project. Within reason, contingency costs can be used to absorb downward changes in foreign exchange. Details of such risk mitigation should be included



in Section 4.1 of the application form and the submitted budget. Funding beyond what is requested in an application will not be provided. Should any project awarded funding be impacted by severe changes in foreign exchange rates, either negatively or positively, the impacts must be reported in annual progress an interim report. Should foreign exchange impact the feasibility of a project, the HEA will work with the consortium to consider potential solutions such as changes in project aims, objectives, outputs, and outcomes to reinstate project feasibility.

Q3mm: For NI partners' academic and research salary costs, are they at the relevant NI rate or should they be based on the IUA rates?

For NI partners, they should be relevant to the NI rate. For Irish HEI partners, they should be based on rates as per their institution.

Postdoctoral salary must begin no lower than at the first point on the Irish Universities' Association salary scale or an equivalent.

Q3nn: The call document refers to a "contract" issued to the lead applicant and NI partner if successful in the application. Would like to confirm that it is intended that this is a research grant and therefore falls outside the scope of VAT and that the funder will not own any IP arising from it - it will remain with the lead partner / NI partner.

Awards made will be issued as research grants. Any taxation matters that may arise are to be addressed at an institutional/consortia level. As per the 'Call Document', ownership of any intellectual property arising from collaborative projects shall be dealt with and ascertained through appropriate host and partner institutional structures, in line with the National Intellectual Property Protocol. Collaborative research agreements must be established between all institutions and organisations involved in a project.

Q3oo: Are the following costs acceptable under the North-South Research Programme concerning equipment

- Access charges/fees to use equipment
- Costs related to repairs of equipment
- Equipment service contracts
- Equipment replacement parts



Access charges to services and/or infrastructures necessary to the completion of the project may be sought. Should the project's sustainability or completion depend on the maintenance of equipment purchased as part of the project, anticipated costs may be included in the 10% costs contingency to be sought in the submitted budget. Where sustainability of a project is dependent on such costs approved budget may be used for a limited time after the completion of the project. Budgets submitted at the time of application are final unless changes are requested by the assessment panel or approved by the HEA after reviewing annual and/or interim reports.

All requests for costs must be clearly justified.

Q3pp: Is there a fixed exchange rate for calculating the Northern Irish partner budgets?

There is no fixed exchange rate for calculating Northern Irish budgets. The date and exchange rate used in calculating budgets must be provided in the budget template to be provided. If using an exchange rate, please use [InforEuro](#) website.

Q3qq: The call document states that institutional overheads may be included at 25% of pay costs. The appendix suggests that we will need to itemise them. However, itemising the included overheads would be a great administrative burden. Could the HEA confirm whether it is a flat rate?

Institutions may submit a flat rate for overheads at the time of application. An itemisation of that rate may be requested in any Letter of Offer issued.

Q3rr: Does the project manager role have to be included in a pension scheme if it is not in line with institutional norms as it is not a graded position?

This is a matter for the institution in question in terms of their norms (please see Q3m).

Q3ss: If overheads are included in the budget request, are these overheads exclusively allocated to the lead administrative Institute or can each named lead partner (Irish and Northern Ireland) request a share of the requested 25% overhead.

Overheads will be paid into the administrative lead (see Appendix 1.1). The issue of overheads and their division between the HEIs is subject to the consortium's agreement and the institutions involved.

Q3tt: Are the costs allowed if associated with equipment already available within an institution and not purchased as part of the project?

Costs associated with equipment not purchased as part of a North-South Research Programme funded project are not permitted. However, where a project requires access to equipment and/or to purchase



materials required to use equipment, requests for such costs may be included in the budget once clearly justified.

Please see Q3oo.

Q3uu: Concerning the additional €5,000 that may be sought for costs incurred in the situation of research students spending 12 months outside of their host institution, would there be an entitlement to this €5,000 if a research student was to spend less than 12 months outside their host institution (including secondments).

Where justified in the application, a research student may spend less than 12 months outside their host institution, and €5,000 pro-rata may be requested. A student may also spend in a number of different locations outside of their host institution. Time spent in this way may be counted accumulatively provided time spent outside of the organisation is in keeping with the funded project's aims and objectives to be counted accumulatively, and a pro-rata request for an additional payment of up to €5,000 may be sought for that research student.

Please see Q2o and Q3i.

Q3vv: If a project runs successfully without overspending, is the contingency returned to the grant holder team?

Budget spend will be monitored through annual progress reports, interim reports. Where the budget allocated to contingency costs is unused, the consortium may request to use the allocation for activities related to the award that will build on project impact and/or contribute to reinforcing the sustainability of the project beyond the duration of the award. In such circumstances, no further extension to the award will be granted.

Q3ww: Under what circumstances are salary costs rather than buy out costs eligible for lead investigators/team leads?

Salary costs may be sought for researchers recruited onto a project. In addition, buy out costs may be sought for core staff already employed in the institution hosting the project.

Q3xx: Can money be transferred to a third country outside the EU?

Additional partners from outside of Ireland and outside of Northern Ireland may be involved in a project, but no costs may be requested for these partners.



Q3yy: The answer to Question Q3w states that “only buy out costs are allowed for lead investigators”, while Q3z states that “costs may include buy-out or salary costs for research team leads and/or lead investigators”, and other individual researchers may also be added to a proposal for Strands II, and III provided their necessity to the completion of the project is clearly justified in the proposal. Costs for such individuals may include buy-out or salary costs”. Could you please clarify which individuals are eligible to include salary costs in the budget (i.e. time spent on project by existing staff)?

Question Q3w is specific to investigator ‘time’ versus ‘buy out’ costs. Buy out is intended to support existing staff participation in a project through buy out of teaching or other duties. In addition, new staff may be added to a project, in this case the use of salary costs is appropriate, as per the answer to Q3z. See Q3ww.

Q3zz: Does full-time personnel refer to staff that are costed for 100% of the time for the purposes of overhead calculations.

As per the call document, overheads may be sought at up to 25% of the overall staff costs sought. Such staff costs may be calculated on a full-time or full-time equivalency basis.

Q3aaa: Is it possible to include provision in the budget for employment costs for a researcher and public engagement practitioner to be recruited by and based in these organisations?

All staff recruited onto a project must be employed by the lead or host HEIs. Where a certain project is dependent on working with individuals whose skills are crucial to the completion of the research i.e. a digital archivist, lab manager participating in research, public engagement practitioner and this is demonstrated in the application, requests for employment and consumable costs may be sought. Such staff can be added to the application Team Composition form on the online application system using the categories ‘Individual Research’/‘Other’ in the dropdown menu as appropriate to the project proposal.

See Q3f.

Q3bbb: Could you clarify on Contingency Costs, in terms of up to how much can be claimed for and what types of costs and justifications should/could be included?

Provision should be made for contingency costs at up to 10% of the overall budget. Use of this contingency fund, should it arise, will require prior approval by the HEA.



See Q3k, Q3ll, Q3oo and Q3vv.

Q3ccc: Would funds drawn down by a non-HEI partner (an industrial partner based in Northern Ireland) fall under the state aid de minimis regulation? Also is there any difference between how an Irish non-HEI partner will be treated v/s a NI non-HEI partner in this regard?

Each project, host institution and the lead admin HEI must ensure compliance with State Aid regulations in their jurisdiction. For example, where a lead admin HEI in Ireland is disbursing funds from a project to a partner in Ireland or in Northern Ireland, the lead admin HEI must ensure compliance. Payments to all partners should be agreed in the financial schedule of the collaborative research agreement between all partners on a project where funding is awarded.

Q3ddd: If a project needed a significant budget for equipment (in excess of 10,000), is this permissible under this funding call?

No single item of equipment may exceed €10,000.

Q3eee: Are registration fees for PhD students included in the stipends (max: 30,000 per annum)?

Costs including stipend, of up to €30,000 per annum, plus fees may be sought for research students for up to a maximum of four years. Registration fees must come out of the stipend payments or be provided for elsewhere. Where a research student spends 12 months or more outside of their host institution and as a result incurs an increase in registration fees, the research student may use some of the additional payment of up to €5,000 pro rata to cover the increase in registration fees. Under this Scheme, registration fees are understood to mean fees other than tuition fees, such as for student centres or sports facilities.

Q3fff: What costs are eligible under 'collaboration costs'?

With the exception of costs for 'additional partners', the recurrent cost of collaboration sought by non-higher education partners may be included in the proposal once clearly justified and not exceeding 10% of the total cost of the proposal. Any capital costs incurred by such non-higher education partners will not be covered by this provision.

See Q3r in relation to costs for further education, civic society, cross community, enterprise and innovation partners.



Q3ggg: How much detail is need on the budget breakdown, for example, on travel costs is it enough to include “transportation” and “accommodation” and justify with something like “attend international conference”?

An itemised breakdown of travel costs is not required as part of a submitted budget provided clear justification for travel is provided and value for money is demonstrated. An itemised breakdown may be requested at the point of Letter of Offer.

Q3hhh: We see that PI salary costs are eligible expenses but were wondering about things like extended sick leave or maternity leave. Would the process in these instances be to apply for a no-cost extension with the cost of the leave being covered by the School?

Where extended sick pay or maternity leave costs are incurred a No Cost Extension may be sought from the HEA. In some cases, contingency costs may be used to cover the costs incurred and this will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Q3iii: Can we include employer's PRSI and pension costs in the application under salary costs?

Inclusion of pension and PRSI costs depends on the role which costs are being sought for and see

Q3jjj: The guidelines state that applicable overhead should be calculated on full-time staff costs – is that correct? I would have expected overhead would be covering full and part-time staff costs?

See Q3z and Q3zz.

Q3kkk: Are subcontracting costs for data generation allowable, and if so to what maximum level?

Subcontracting costs are allowed providing they are essential to the outcome of the research and are justified in the application.

Q3lll: Could a non-HEI partner provide a contribution in kind (i.e. staff time in a consultation style role). How would this be recorded financially?

Yes, contribution in kind should be recorded in terms of the provision made by a partner on the project. While not a financial transaction, the contribution made, and how it contributes to the outcome of the research, should be identified and briefly outline in the project proposal.



Q3mmm: Are research costs per lead investigator/team lead/postdoc capped at €10K per annum in total?

Yes, research costs are capped at €10k per annum per team lead/lead investigator and any other eligible researcher.

Q3nnn: Are contingency costs calculated as a percentage of the direct costs only?

No, contingency costs are not calculated as a percentage of direct costs but of the total budget including overheads.

Q3ooo: Should the total number of months across the whole research team equal 24 months if the project is 24 months long? For example, if a lead investigator/team lead requests teaching buyout for one semester as part of a 24-month project, should 3 months be inserted in Column E or 24 months?

Where a lead investigator/ team lead is seeking buy out for a specific length of time such as 3 months the specific length of time should be entered into the budget template.

Q3ppp: Concerning the resourcing of International PhDs and the recovery of the associated registration / tuition fees from a Northern Irish perspective, is it permitted to charge them to the project?

In this scenario, it depends on the institution's definition and policy on international students. Fees can be sought under this funding call.

Please see Q3i, Q3o, Q3ee, Q3eee.

Q3qqq: Is it the case that up to 10% contingency can be added on top of the project costs from the maximum amount of funding available or that contingency costs can be up to 10% of the total amount requested?

Contingency costs of up to 10% may be included in the total budget. For example, a Strand 1 application seeking the maximum budget of €200k may include contingency of up to €20,000 and a project seeking €100,000 may include contingency costs of €10,000.

Q3rrr: Are Principal Investigator and Team Lead pay costs eligible to be included as part of overhead calculation? The call guidance states overheads may be claimed as a cost of up to" 25% of pay costs (full-time personnel)". Team Leads / Principal Investigators may have teaching commitments



outside of this project, are their salary costs (pro-rata) eligible to be included in the overhead calculation?

Overheads of up to 25% may be sought for full time personnel or full-time equivalents. Where a staff member is not working full time on the project overheads may be calculated on a pro rata basis.

Q3sss: Within Strand II bids, is the contingency amount attributed towards the lead admin Institute. i.e., does it 'count' towards the minimum 50% share of the total budget to Irish Institutes, or is it apportioned to Institutes in the strand II bid in some other way?

Contingency provision is a mechanism to mitigate potential risk to the project and should be apportioned to institutions involved in a proposal in accordance with the consortium agreement. Up to 50% of a proposal budget may be allocated to partners in Northern Ireland. Where contingency costs are being sought in a project proposal it is a percentage of the overall total budget of the project. Contingency can be utilised as need arises and are subject to the agreement of the consortium.

Q3ttt: For the overheads on Strand II bids, is this amount attributed towards the lead admin Institute?

Overheads are calculated as a percentage of the total budget taking exemptions into account i.e., pay for research students and equipment may not be included in the calculation of overheads. The proportion of overheads allocated to institutions in Ireland and in Northern Ireland is a matter for the consortium to agree.

Q3uuu: Is it possible to request a fraction of the FTE for the lead academic applicants (permanent staff) under this scheme?

Yes, it is possible to request a fraction of the FTE for the lead applicants. See FAQ Q3z, Q3zz.

Q3vvv: If a staff member working 50% of the time, is it possible to request overheads on their salary?

Please see Q3rrr above.

Q3www: Is there any specific guidance in terms of filling out the HEA North-South budget template?

An updated budget template has been issued and circulated to institutions. The updated budget template may be found on the HEA website [here](#).

Staff costs: In Column B please provide a description of what is being sought i.e. buy out costs will indicate costs for a lead investigator. Column F requests the 'Rate'. The total for a staff member may



be inputted here. Rates should be calculated as set out in the 'Call Document' and an itemised breakdown may be requested at the time of a Letter of Offer being issued. Costs for 'Other Staff' should be entered into the appropriate columns. Column E requests duration in months. Please input the number of months for which the costs being sought is cover i.e. if costs for teaching buyout for a lead investigator are being sought for 3 months please input 3 months.

Research students: In column F where the rate per annum is being sought for a research student the average rate may be entered. i.e. if a PhD student is to be recruited onto the project for four years but the costs etc per year may vary, an average per year may be entered. The total supplied in column K must include the total costs being sought for the full duration of that PhD students course of research. **This means the formula on this row must be amended by the applicant to ensure that Column K reflects costs for the total duration of time being sought with each cost being sought counted once only.** In Column B please provide a description of what is being sought i.e. 'full costs for a PhD student for the maximum of 4 years'. Other examples may include 'travel costs' which will indicate travel costs only are being sought and so on.

Research Costs: Research costs for a lead investigator/team lead/post doc are €10k per annum per staff member (See FAQ Q 3bb.) Where 'Other Staff' and 'Individual researchers' are to join the team research costs may be sought at a cap of €10k per annum per researcher. All requests for research costs must be clearly justified. Costs for consumables should go in Colum G, travel in column H, other costs in column I and equipment costs in column J. Please see below for instructions regarding laptops.

Laptops: Costs for laptops may be included in column I or J noting that equipment is excluded from calculations for overheads.

Consumables: Eligible costs for consumables for staff and research students should go in column G.

Travel costs: Eligible travel costs should go into column H. A total amount may be entered per trip. Applicants should be able to demonstrate value for money. An itemised breakdown may be sought at the time of a Letter of Offer being issued.

Overhead costs: A flat rate may be included here. An itemised breakdown may be sought at the time of a Letter of Offer being issued. Where overheads are being divided between institutions an extra line per institution may be entered into the spread sheet.



Contingency costs: A flat rate may be included here. An itemised breakdown may be sought at the time of a Letter of Offer being issued. Where contingency costs are being divided between institutions an extra line per institution may be entered into the spread sheet.

Collaboration costs: See FAQs 3fff and 3r.

Q3xxx: One aspect of our proposal under strand II involves capacity building and a masters programme where students spend time on three campuses (one in Northern Ireland and two in Ireland). Can costs associated with the rollout and delivery of this program be built into the project budget.

Yes, where a new research programme is being rolled out with the objective of building research capacity in Ireland and in Northern Ireland costs for the development of academic content, visiting researchers, guest speakers, workshops and seminars may be sought. Balanced development and impact in Ireland and in Northern Ireland should be demonstrated.

Q3yyy: We wish to build apprenticeship style training into our project, can funding of apprentices be covered under this programme?

No, funding for apprenticeship style training cannot be sought under this call. However, costs required for the development of specific modules around transferable skills and academic context for research students and/or training necessary to the project for researchers may be sought under this Call.

Q3zzz: In terms of community participants in participatory research processes, what costs are allowable? Envisaged costs are a per-diem to cover travel/time/phone use, and potentially organising events to cover the opportunity cost of participation, such as events for children or adults that participants need to care for.

Requests for costs for community participants should align with institutional norms. It is anticipated that the costs outlined above would be allowable in relation to this Call.

Q3aaaa: On PhD student funding, if a project proposed to recruit a clinician to complete a PhD, can an appropriate salary be offered rather than a stipend? The funding call research costs allowances would be insufficient to attract a clinician to a PhD



Requests for costs for research students must align with what is set out in the Call Document for this programme. Should an institution wish to provide a top-up to a research student's stipend and/or research costs, this top-up must come from sources other than funding awarded under this programme.

Research students may supplement their stipend/ research costs/ travel costs through funding awarded from other sources provided the terms and conditions of that other source do not inhibit or prevent the student from achieving the aims and objectives of their research as funded by the North-South research programme. (See Q3o for minimum/maximum stipend and costs allowable for research).

Q3bbbb: Is it possible to engage the services of a Project Management company to assist with the management of the proposal, and if so, can costs be included in the budget proposal?

On Strands II and III costs of up to €60,000 may be sought for a Project Manager. All staff recruited onto a project must be employed by a lead institution. See FAQs Q2i,3e,3f,3aa,3t,3rr.

Costs for sub-contracting (as outlined in Q3kkk) and consultancy are eligible provided they are clearly justified in the proposal.

Q3cccc: While costs for training are provided for in the funding call, are recruitment costs for training personnel allowable?

While the funding call only envisaged costs for training, it is also permissible to recruit training personnel. All staff recruited onto a project must be employed by a lead institution. The manner in which personnel are recruited must be in line with institutional norms. However, it is imperative that their contribution to the overall project be justified in the application.

Q3dddd: In terms of the Budget Template, could you explain the difference concerning equipment on Column J and on row 18?

Applicants can input equipment cost requests for staff/ research students in column J of the 'Budget Template'. Costs for laptops may be included in column I or J.



Projects may seek costs for equipment that are not associated with a specific staff member/student but with the work of the project/project team. Such requests for equipment costs can be entered into row 18 of the Budget Template. See Q3ddd.

Q3eeee: Could you explain the difference on the Budget Template between Other Costs and what goes into row 28?

In the 'Budget Template' applicants can input requests for staff into the following columns:

- Research Costs (consumables) to go into column G
- Travel to go into column H
- Other costs (i.e. access to infrastructure, libraries, conference registration costs) into column I
- Equipment to go into column J

A project may need to seek other costs associated with the project on the whole or which could be attached to an institution. These costs can be inputted into row 28.

Q3ffff: In submitting costs on the Budget Template, where would one add outreach costs, annual meetings, and training programmes?

Such costs may be entered into row 28 of the 'Budget Template'. Costs being sought for collaboration with third-party partners should be entered into the 'Collaboration Costs' section of the 'Budget Template'.

Q3gggg: Can an existing admin staff member be costed into the project as long as the costs don't exceed the €60K per annum pro rata limit?

Yes, an existing admin staff member may be recruited onto a project. On Strands II and III costs of up to €60,000 may be sought for a Project Manager. All staff recruited onto a project must be employed by a lead institution. See FAQs Q2i,3e,3f,3aa,3t,3rr.



Q3hhhh: Can hyperlinks be included in the application form?

Hyperlinks to publication references and DOIs may be included noting that assessors may only review information included in the application form. Other supplementary links and information should not be added to applications.

Q3iii: Can pay for research assistants be included in the calculation of overheads?

Yes, pay for research assistants may be included in the calculation of overheads. The cost of institutional overheads may be included at a cost of up to 25% of pay costs (full-time personnel/full-time equivalents).

See Q3zz; Q3rrr; Q3ttt and Q3www.

Q3jjjj: Can non-HEI Research Partners employ staff or is it only HEIs that are allowed to apply for buy-out costs or request salary?

Only host institutions are allowed to apply for buy-out costs or request salary costs under this scheme. See Q3bbbb, Q3kkk and Q3lll concerning subcontracting, consultancy, and contribution in kind.

Q3kkkk: Can an institution listed in Appendices 1.2 and 1.3 of the call document participate as a co-lead partner and apply for buy-out costs or request salary?

Institutions listed under Appendix 1.2 of the Call Document can participate in a project proposal as a lead partner. Institutions listed under Appendix 1.3 can participate in a project proposal as a lead HEI in Northern Ireland. Institutions listed on any of the three appendices (1.1, 1.2 and 1.3) can seek staff buy-out costs or request salary costs for eligible researchers/personnel. (Please refer to Q3z for more information).

Q3llll: If the project runs for 3 years, can we request funds for 4 years for the PhD students?

Projects requesting a duration of 3 years can only receive funding for the duration of the project, that is 3 years. Where a research student is involved in a proposal and the programme of work necessary to them fulfilling requirements for their qualification goes beyond 3 years, the project duration sought should cover the duration of the student's work. The maximum duration of a project is four years.

Q3mmmm: Can you add €10,000 for consumables for staff who are not included in the personnel costs to the budget or is there a requirement to have buy-out/salary added to the budget in order to include €10,000 for consumables/travel per year for researchers eligible for costs?



No, buy out/salary costs for researchers eligible for such costs are not necessary to the budget requests. Where buy out is not being sought for a researcher who is eligible for such costs, but consumables/travel are necessary to the work that researcher will do to ensure the project is completed, costs for consumables/travel may be sought. Such costs cannot be transferred to another researcher on the project or to any other project. As with all requests for costs, such budget requests must be clearly justified.

(Please refer to Q3b, Q3f, Q3i, Q3ee, Q3hh, Q3www, Q3eeee).

Q3nnnn: In a scenario where the costs of a project are over the limit for consumables, can an application for other costs be permitted?

Row 28 of the budget template allows for requests for 'Other Costs'. Such 'Other Costs' are allowed where a project requires costs associated with the project on the whole or costs which could be attached to an institution, and it was not intended that these 'Other Costs' would include requests for consumables to supplement the allowable €10k per eligible researcher per annum.

(Please refer to Q3eeee).

Q3oooo: Can the contingency budget be used for sequencing, or does it have to be for costs like salary/sick pay? Could it be used for lab work?

Contingency for research projects under this funding call is intended to mitigate against risk and to provide for a future event or circumstance, such as sick leave, which is possible but cannot be predicted. Contingency is not to be used for research activity essential to the project which should be calculated in the budget.

Q3pppp: Can a visiting researcher request costs for consumable (€10,000 - expenses for consumables and travel)?

Yes, a visiting researcher may seek research costs at a pro rata rate.

Q3qqqq: In recruiting and incentivising participants, could vouchers be used, and would they be an allowable expense?

The use of incentives/vouchers to recruit and incentivise participants/participation in a project will be a matter for the institutions and the consortium involved to agree, in accordance with usual institutional convention and ethical oversight. The decision on their use is to be made by the relevant



host institution. Any potential for skewing research participation and/or results should be taken into consideration when deciding to include the use of incentives in a project. The type of incentives/vouchers being used, the stage of research at which they are being offered and the benefit they provide to the participant must be clearly stated in the project proposal.

Should costs for incentives be included in a proposal budget, HEA approval for this cost will be subject to evidence of approval for their use from relevant research/ethics committees being submitted to the HEA.

Q3rrrr: Is it possible to include overheads for an eligible partner listed in Appendix 1.2? In this instance, it includes the cost of employing staff in their portion of the budget.

Overheads are calculated on the project's eligible pay budget including requests for eligible pay costs for researchers employed by or to be employed by host institutions/organisations listed on Appendix 1.2.

The division of overheads between the HEIs is subject to the consortium's agreement and the institutions involved.

See Q3ss.

Q3ssss: Can consumables be requested for Leads/Academics if they are not going to be laboratories-based, with the justification that this would increase the overall consumables funding pot available to the consortium members (post-doctoral fellows, graduate students) who are laboratory-based?

Requests for consumables can only be submitted for use by eligible researchers as set out in the call document and such costs may not be transferred between or to other researchers or to the project as a whole.

Q3tttt: Will the North-South Research Programme funding call run again, after 2021?

Yes, another funding call is anticipated to take place after awards for the 2021 programme have been announced.

Q3uuuu: Can you advise if we can offer a part time (half time) contract for research assistants on the project?

Yes, part time research assistants may be engaged under this scheme in line with usual institutional conventions.



Application Process

Q4a: Can more information be offered in relation to the institutional endorsement for applications for the North-South Research Programme Call, e.g., is an institutional Letter of Support and/or a signed & stamped Cover Sheet required?

An endorsement template will be provided. Once completed, signed, and stamped by the lead admin institution in Ireland, the endorsement template must be uploaded to the online application system, which will open on September 6th and close at the deadline of 4 pm on October 18th, 2021.

Q4b: Will further guidelines be published for host institutions about the application process?

An indicative application form along with a guidance document will be issued in late August.

Q4c: Can a PI from an eligible institution submit more than one application to this programme, given that each application will have a different research aspect and each application will be different and unique?

As with the answer provided for question 2c above, a lead investigator may be involved in more than one application across any of the three strands. Where more than one of the applications is recommended for funding assurance that the commitment required from the researcher in meeting each project's requirements can be met by that researcher will be required by the Higher Education Authority prior to any offer of funding being made.

Q4d: In the call document, it is stated that "proposals must have a demonstrable impact on the education sectors with regard to a) quality of research work and outputs, b) illustration of the feedback into the teaching and learning domain and c) the building up of research capabilities in specific research areas on the island as a whole;" Does this mean the research must directly feed into research areas of interest to higher education academies, and directly impact on teaching and learning (i.e. research about teaching methods/approaches/topics etc.)? Or is the scope wider than this, however, findings must have some relevance to HEAs?

Proposals must set out how the project will have a demonstrable impact on the higher education and research sectors north and/or south and contribute to enhanced teaching and learning. This may be achieved in relation to teaching and learning at an institutional/national/ all-island level in one or more of the following ways, amongst others:



- by individuals involved in a proposal through the teaching and learning, they carry out in their institutional roles or through their input to programme and policy design,
- by addressing institutional and/or national strategies relating to teaching and learning through input to policy design and implementation,
- by a direct contribution to curricular reform or content, skills development and enterprise or societal engagement.

Q4e: Are Letters of Support required as part of the application?

No, Letters of Support are not required. An endorsement form for each proposal must be completed by the lead admin institution and submitted to the online application system before the call deadline.

Q4f: Should details of support from commercial sources be included in Letters of Support?

Letters of support are not required as part of the application process.

Q4g: Is it possible for applicants to apply for more than one strand simultaneously?

Applicants can apply for more than one strand. Each application will require a separate submission.

Q4h: Can appendices be added to an application submission on the online system (e.g., letters of support, PhD supervisor CVs)? If yes, how many appendices/pages are allowed?

Appendices and additional materials, other than those requested, should not be included. These will not be considered and may invalidate an application to this scheme.

Q4i: Are references included in 3000-word count for section 3.2: Design, methodology and implementation. Can any related figures be included within this section? If so is there any limit on size and number of figures?

All text in uploaded PDFs should be provided in Calibri font or similar, with minimum font size of 11, and at least single line spacing as well as a minimum margin size of 2.5cm. Figures/diagrams may be included. Text in diagrams may be in any clearly legible font. The number of pages/words in uploads must not exceed the specifications for any given section.

Responses to Section 3.2 of the application form must not exceed 3000 words. Any references included go towards the 3000-word count. Figures may be included in this section provided the total number of pages uploaded to the online system in response to section 3.2 does not exceed 6 pages



and is within the 3000-word cap. Applications that do not comply with these requirements may be deemed ineligible and will be returned without review.

Q4j: With the delay in the Online Application process, will there be an extension of the submission date deadline?

An extension to the deadline will be facilitated to accommodate the deferred opening of the online system. The timelines between system launch to scheme close will be equivalent to those earlier advised, in that way, no applicant will be disadvantaged. In the meantime, the Indicative Application Form is available on the funding call webpage.

Q4k: Can multiple lead applicants have access to, and input into, the online portal?

No, the online system does not allow multiple lead applicants to have access to or to input data to the submission portal.

Q4l: Will there be a CV template for upload by each partner or is the consolidated CV section to be used to provide selected CV details for all lead partners?

No, a CV template will not be made available. Instead, the consolidated section should be used to provide selected CV details for all lead partners.

Q4m: Is there a corresponding NI endorsement page for upload?

No, a corresponding Northern Ireland endorsement page will not be required. However, as per the endorsement template available through the indicative form before the submission of the endorsement form by the lead admin institution in Ireland, each lead investigator/team lead identified on the application must provide the lead admin institution with confirmation that their host institution agrees to the submission of the project proposal and the collaborative management of the project if successful.

Q4n: Will there be an excel upload for the budget in addition to the narrative /total costs sections as per the indicative form?

An excel template will be made available in conjunction with the opening of the online system.

Q4o: Will the data management plan be evaluated by reviewers?

A high-level description of the data management plan is a required section of the application form. The plan may be considered as part of the assessment process.



Q4p: Can an application be conducted in the Irish language?

The application form will be available in English through the online portal. Answers may be provided in the Irish language. All uploads may be provided through Irish. Since assessors involved with the call will be international, assigning Irish language speakers to the assessment of the application may be difficult. Applicants may upload an English language translation of their application to the online portal. If the HEA cannot identify suitable assessors to review the application through Irish, the English language translation will be made available to assessors in the area. If the applicant does not upload an English language translation and no suitable assessors to assess the application through the Irish language, the HEA will seek a translation of the proposal from external services in order to assign assessors.

Q4q: If a consortium has multiple researchers/lecturers (who will be supervising PhDs) in the same institution, should each individual researcher/lecturer be named as a Lead Partner on the application form?

Where a researcher/lecturer is involved in an application as the supervisor of a research student recruited onto the project, the individual researcher/lecturer may be added to the consortium using the 'Team Composite Form' on the online system where the applicant can outline the contribution the 'Individual researcher' will make to the project.

Q4r: Is it necessary to list the resources that will be hired through the funding e.g. PhDs, PDs, project manager. Does this supplement the budget in justifying the roles?

Yes, it is essential to outline the resources envisaged to be hired in the project. This is completed in the Team Composition form of the online application system. Where a large cohort of Research students or Post-Doctoral Fellows are being hired a single entry into the Team Composition form per role type will suffice provided the number of research students and/or Post-Doctoral Fellows is specified in the text box. Masters and PhD students should be entered separately.

Q4s: In the indicative application form, it says a data management plan of 100 words should be provided however in the online application system, it is looking for a 1000-word document. Which is correct?

A high-level data management plan is required. The word count has been increased on the online system to facilitate projects with more complex data management needs. Plans of up to a maximum of 1000 words will be accepted.



Q4t: Is the consortium statement in and of itself the consolidated team CV, or does a separate consolidated/ individual CV/s have to be uploaded?

In section 5, applicants must provide the consolidated CVs of the lead investigator/s/team lead/s as they pertain to the proposal within the text box on the online system. No further upload is required.

Q4u: With the extensions on dates, will the start date of January 2021 be extended?

Arising from the extended opening of the online system an extension to project start dates will be facilitated. However, projects are expected to begin in early 2022.

Q4v: In terms of applying, can a Gantt Chart or other diagrams/figures be added in addition to the 3000-word and 6-page limit for Section 3.2?

Responses to Section 3.2 of the application form must not exceed 3000 words. Any references included go towards the 3000-word count. Figures may be included in this section provided the total number of pages uploaded to the online system in response to section 3.2 does not exceed 6 pages and is within the 3000-word cap. Applications that do not comply with these requirements may be deemed ineligible and will be returned without review. See Q4i.

A Gantt chart illustrating timelines, project milestones etc relating to the project plan may be uploaded using the file upload facility in section 3. The Gantt chart will not be counted towards the 3,000-word cap implemented in the section, but it should not contain figures, illustrations, or text pertaining to the content of the project proposal outside of the project plan.

Q4w: Is text in tables charts/diagrams/figures considered part of the overall word limit applied in section?

Where a word limit has been applied to a section of the application form the text included in references/tables/charts/diagrams/figures go towards measuring the word count for that section. In the case of section 3.2 the pdf upload should not exceed 6 pages regardless of word count. See Q4v in relation to uploading a Gantt chart.

Q4y: If a number of co-leads are to be included from one institution as part of a multidisciplinary team, does the applicant add a new table for each lead investigator/team lead and state the same institution for each, with the different details for each co-lead?

It is essential that the staff resources being sought under this funding call are entered into the 'Team Composition Table' on the online application form. Where multi-disciplinary projects involve



combinations of lead and co-leads within an institution each researcher must be entered into the table. The online system requires that each researcher/staff member be entered into a new table.

See Q4r regarding the entry of cohorts of research students into the 'Team Composition Table'.

Q4z: Concerning the Endorsement Template, is it possible to use digital signatures (e.g.: Docusign/Adobe Sign) in lieu of an institutional stamp when submitting the Endorsement Form into the online application system? Is it acceptable for the signature of a member of staff of the Research Office, authorised to sign on behalf of the HEIs Head of Research and accompany with a research office stamp?

The endorsement template may be signed by the VP/Director of Research/Institution President of the lead admin institution and electronic signatures (DocuSign/Adobe sign) may be used for this purpose.

In the event of the above signees being unavailable to sign the endorsement template either physically or using electronic signatures, their deputy or nominated person may sign on their behalf.

Review Process

Q5a: Would a financial contribution from the applying HEI towards the costs of the project be seen as a positive in terms of overall score?

No financial contribution is required from any HEI or other partner involved in a proposal. All proposals will be assessed and ranked according to their merit and in line with the specific criteria for the programme set out in the call document. While financial commitment from an HEI is not prohibited, a proposal that includes such a commitment will not be placed at an advantage or disadvantage in terms of overall scores awarded.

Q5b: Is there an advantage in terms of score to including more than one HEI from the South and the North?

The programme is open to all higher education and research institutions as listed in Appendix 1 of the call document. While there is no limit on the number of lead institutions, there must be at least one lead from the North (appendix 1.3) and one from the South (appendix 1.1). An administrative lead (appendix 1.1) must also be clearly identified (for HEA communication and grant management



purposes). Other higher education and research partners, as listed in appendix 1.2, can be included, as partners or co-leads.

Where a proposal includes more than one HEI from Ireland and/or more than one HEI from Northern Ireland, the proposal will not be at any advantage or disadvantage in terms of scoring. All proposals will be assessed and ranked according to their merit and in line with the specific criteria for the programme set out in the call document.

Q5c: Could you provide some more detail on the review process including prioritisation between *ex aequo*/equally scoring proposals?

All eligible applications will be referred to an independent Panel for review. The Panel will be asked to review the proposals received, come to a judgment of standard in accordance with the principles of the programme as stated in the call, and make a recommendation to the HEA in the form of a ranked list. The HEA will seek to support as many proposals as possible within the funding available.

Q5d: Can you provide more detail on the panel composition who will assess the applications and other activities?

The panel will be made up of international experts in relevant fields and with experience in strategic engagement. Work will be completed remotely, and panel meetings will be carried out as virtual meetings. Still, they may be revised considering the implications of COVID and climate change on global travel. Each reviewer will assess a number of applications.

Q5e: Would the absence/presence of match funding have any bearing on the scoring of proposals?

The absence / presence of match funding will have no bearing on the scoring of proposals.

See Q1i and Q5a.

Q5f: Might reviewers be receiving a mixture of Strand I, II and III proposals to evaluate at the same time? or will they be assigned to specific strands?

Reviewers will be assigned to applications from across all three strands.

Q5g: Since there is potential overlap at the interface of Strand II and III proposals – Could a high-quality proposal submitted as Strand III be deemed as a better fit for Strand II and processed accordingly? i.e. reviewed and funded where appropriate.



Applications will be assessed under the strand to which they were submitted by the applicant. Should the assessment panel recommend that an application be assessed under a different strand this recommendation will be noted and any advantage or disadvantage that may arise from moving the application will be taken into consideration before actioning the move. Any such move will be subject to the agreement of the assessment panel.

Q5h: In terms of pitching an application (technical language), will reviewers be experts in the area of the proposals they are reviewing, or will they have a broader expertise in the area of projects they are reviewing without being experts?

Assessors will have significant experience research experience, and /or will be engaged in institutional, research and policy development at a high strategic level.

Awards

Q6a: Must all successful awards begin on the 4th of January, or could we begin in June 2022? Can projects run for 42 months?

Projects on strands II and III may run to a maximum of 48 months. Where the project duration is 42 months or less, reasons for the shorter duration and justification of the project's feasibility in that time frame should be provided in the project proposal. Projects are expected to begin in January 2022.

Q6b: Will a No Cost Extension (NCE) be available for HEA North-South projects to facilitate the timely recruitment of PhD students and post docs and to ensure the completion of their studies/contracts within the requested duration of the project?

Projects are expected to begin in January 2022 and will be monitored by the HEA on an annual basis. Projects with a duration of more than two years will be required to submit a midterm report, at which point clearly justified requests for a No Cost Extension may be considered if deemed necessary to facilitate any PhD student recruited onto a project with time to complete their studies. Recruitment of PhD students onto a project and their registrations should be completed no later than 1st October 2022.

The duration of contracts of employment offered to Postdoctoral researchers recruited onto a project must take the project's duration into account. Therefore, where the recruitment of a Postdoctoral researcher is delayed, this delay should be detailed in the project's annual reporting and midterm review, at which point a justified request for a No Cost Extension may be considered.



Any No Cost Extension granted to facilitate the extension of an employment contract or the extension of time to allow for a course of study to be completed will be subject to agreement with the host institution.

Q6c: As outlined in the funding call document, the Research Ethics Committee (REC) approval must be evidenced within the first six months. Can a proposed programme include a series of work packages and other activities? Thus, REC approval may take longer than six months to obtain for a project.

REC approval needs to be evidenced within six months of the funding award as per the guidelines outlined. However, where certain parts/ work packages of a proposed project depend on the completion of foregrounding project parts/work packages before a full submission to the relevant ethics committee can be made incremental approval may be accepted. Where relevant such acceptance will be detailed in any letter of offer issued to proposed projects.

Monitoring

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