



GOVERNMENT OF IRELAND INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIPS 2026

CALL DOCUMENT

1. Overview

The Government of Ireland International Education Scholarship (GOI-IES) programme supports high-calibre international students who wish to study at [NFQ levels 9 or 10](#) (master's, postgraduate diploma or PhD) in Ireland. The programme was established under the Government's [International Education Strategy 2010–2015: Investing in Global Relationships](#) and expanded under the successor strategy [Irish Educated, Globally Connected \(2016-2020\)](#). It is also linked to [Global Citizens 2030 - Ireland's Talent and Innovation Strategy](#), [Ireland's National Skills Strategy 2025 – Ireland's Future](#) and [Global Ireland: Ireland's Global Footprint to 2025](#). The programme is funded by the Government of Ireland in partnership with Irish higher education institutions (HEIs) and managed by the Higher Education Authority (HEA).

The GOI-IES is aimed at top-level international students. It is a highly competitive scheme, for which a large number of applications are received each year. Applications are assessed by a panel of independent reviewers and scholarships are awarded to the highest scoring candidates.

2. Details of the scholarship

GOI-IES are awarded to **high-calibre international students to study full-time in Ireland for a period of one year**. Following a competitive process based on an annual call for proposals from individual applicants, the HEA will approve a defined number of scholarships under the programme. It is expected that a total of **60** scholarships will be funded under the GOI-IES programme for the 2026/27 academic year.

The scholarships will be for one year of full-time, in-person study at NFQ levels 9 or 10 (master's, postgraduate diploma or PhD) in Ireland. Scholarships will be awarded for study across all disciplines, subject to the availability of places.



The scholarships amount to **€10,000 for one year of study** and are awarded by the HEA to the successful applicants through the HEIs that they are attending. This funding is intended as a contribution towards student costs and living expenses. In addition, the awardee's host HEI will be required to give a **full fee waiver** to the awardee for the scholarship year (i.e. tuition fee and registration charge are waived). This is the minimum matched funding requirement that institutions will be required to make to the scholarship scheme.

The scholarships will not be extended beyond one academic year. However, host HEIs may decide to extend the fee waiver for courses that are three semesters long, to cover the entire duration of the course. This decision rests with the HEIs and the €10,000 amount of the stipend will remain the same.

GOI-IES scholars will be expected to commence their studies in either September or October 2026. They must also live in Ireland for the duration of their studies. An official awarding event for GOI-IES scholars will be held in spring 2027.

3. Eligibility criteria

It is the candidates' responsibility to check that they meet the eligibility criteria detailed in this call document and in the 2026 GOI-IES FAQs, and that they do not submit ineligible applications.

To be eligible to apply for GOI-IES, candidates must meet all four conditions below:

- 1) Have a domiciliary of origin outside the EU/EEA, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.
- 2) Have received an offer of a place as an international, fee-paying student in a full-time, in-person course at an eligible Irish HEI for either:
 - a. a taught master's degree programme which is at least one year long.
 - b. a postgraduate diploma at NFQ level 9 which is at least one year long.
 - c. a research programme (i.e. research master's or PhD) which is at least one year long.
- 3) Not have previously held a GOI-IES scholarship.
- 4) Not be a Russian or Belarusian citizen.

To be eligible for the GOI-IES, candidates must already have an offer of admission to a full-time, in-person master's, postgraduate diploma or PhD programme at an eligible HEI. A list of eligible HEIs is included in Appendix 1, "Eligible Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)".



Blended courses are eligible only on condition that GOI-IES awardees attend all the in-person classes included in these courses and live in Ireland for the entire duration of their scholarship.

Before submitting a GOI-IES application on the online system, applicants should make enquiries directly to the relevant HEI about the eligibility of their course for GOI-IES. Where available, the relevant HEI contact details are included in Appendix 1, “Eligible Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)”.

To secure an offer of admission, candidates need to apply for admission to an eligible HEI, as per that institution’s admission procedures. Applying for admission is independent of the GOI-IES process and is not done through the GOI-IES application form. Information about admission requirements and procedures is usually available on the HEIs’ websites and any related queries must be directed to the HEIs.

A candidate must have received an offer of admission **before** they submit their GOI-IES application. Proof of admission, i.e. an offer document, must be submitted with the GOI-IES application, in the relevant section of the GOI-IES application form. Acceptable offer documents are:

- an offer letter issued by the HEI where the candidate has been accepted. An offer letter is an official document whereby the HEI confirms that they have offered the candidate a place on one of their programmes. The offer must be for the 2026/27 academic year.
- an offer email from the HEI, instead of an offer letter. This form of offer is only acceptable if the email comes from the relevant Admissions Office and if it confirms that the candidate has been offered a place on an eligible course for the 2026/27 academic year.
- a screenshot from the candidate’s applicant portal on the HEI’s website. This form of offer is only acceptable if it confirms that the candidate has been offered a place on an eligible course for the 2026-27 academic year.

Both conditional and final offers are acceptable for a GOI-IES application. Since some institutions prioritise holders of final offers during the GOI-IES shortlisting process, it is advisable to contact the institutions directly to enquire about their approaches to this matter.

The offer documents must specify that the offer was made for the 2026/27 academic year. Candidates who have deferred their admission to 2026/27 must submit, with their GOI-IES application, a document issued by their HEIs that confirms the deferral. Candidates who are



already studying at eligible institutions, for example, as PhD students or master's students in two-year programmes, must submit, with their GOI-IES application, a document issued by their HEIs which confirms that they will continue their studies in the 2026/27 academic year.

A maximum of **one** application per candidate can be submitted in the 2026 cycle of the GOI-IES programme¹. Only one offer document can be submitted with an application. Should a candidate not abide by this requirement and submit more than one application, all their applications will be disqualified (deemed ineligible).

A preliminary eligibility check is included at the beginning of the application form. Candidates will be required to answer the following questions regarding the GOI-IES eligibility criteria:

1. Is your domiciliary of origin outside the EU/EEA, UK and Switzerland?
2. Do you have a conditional or final offer from an eligible Irish higher education institution, as a full-time, non-EU paying student?
3. Have you already received a Government of Ireland International Education Scholarship?

After submission of the candidates' answers to these questions, their eligibility will be automatically assessed in the system. Ineligible candidates will not be able to proceed to the rest of the application. Eligible candidates will have access to the rest of the application form. They will be able to fill in the remaining sections and submit their complete applications. After the application deadline, these applications will be screened for eligibility by the HEA and then shared with the relevant HEIs, who will conduct further eligibility checks.

4. Candidate profile

Applicants are expected to demonstrate:

- a record of outstanding academic achievement;
- excellent communication skills;
- participation in extracurricular activities, for example, humanitarian work, politics, arts or sport;
- a strong rationale for pursuing their study in Ireland that indicates how a GOI-IES would align with their longer-term goals.

¹ This limit refers to applications that were deemed eligible based on the preliminary eligibility check described on this page. Please see question 38 in the 2026 GOI-IES FAQs for more details.



5. Evaluation criteria

Eligible candidates are invited to submit applications via the online application portal. Applicants are advised to familiarise themselves fully with the evaluation criteria prior to making an application. The marking scheme is outlined below. An application must cover the following:

- Academic qualifications, achievements and work experience **(40 marks)**.
- Personal statement **(45 marks)**, where applicants will be required to demonstrate:
 - the benefit of becoming a GOI-IES scholar: to themselves (personally and professionally), to the HEI, to Ireland (economically and societally), as well as to their country of origin **(15 marks)**.
 - how they will extend themselves beyond their project/studies to become actively involved in Irish society, in order to maximise their academic and cultural exchange experience and to raise awareness of the GOI-IES programme in Ireland and beyond **(15 marks)**.
 - the extent to which they have a long-term interest in Ireland and how they will promote links with Ireland during their time as scholars and alumni **(15 marks)**.
- Two references uploaded via the online application portal. **(15 marks)**

The HEA will not accept references submitted outside of the online application portal. Guidance for referees is available in Appendix 2, "Referee Guide".

The references must be recent enough to allow for an accurate assessment of the candidate's suitability for a GOI-IES scholarship. They must be dated at most a year prior to the 2026 call closing date (12 March 2026).

Vague or generic statements should be avoided in the personal statement and in the descriptions of academic achievements and work experience. Any such statements are likely to result in lower assessment scores. The application must be the applicant's own work. It is prohibited to have the application drafted by third persons or to include AI-generated content.



6. Assessment and award process

Applications that passed the preliminary eligibility check detailed in section 3 will first be screened for eligibility by the HEA. They will then be shared with the relevant HEIs, who will conduct further eligibility checks and shortlist them based on alignment with institutional international strategic objectives², for example:

- country of origin of applicants
- proposed study cycle of applicants (i.e., master's, postgraduate diploma or PhD)
- institutional capacity
- field of study of applicants

The HEA will establish an independent panel of assessors to evaluate the applications shortlisted by the HEIs. The assessment panel will consider the extent to which the applications meet the criteria of the call as outlined above and will allocate scores in accordance with these criteria. Applications will be assessed solely based on the material provided to the HEA at the time of submission. The assessment panel will submit their independent evaluations before meeting to discuss the assessment process and the final ranking list.

Only applications that meet a minimum threshold (60 marks) will be considered for a scholarship. While there is an upper limit of five awards per HEI, the number of awards per HEI can vary, depending on the institutions' availability to accept GOI-IES scholars on their programmes. The top 12 ranked applications will be automatically funded on the basis of excellence, as they represent the top 20% of the 60 awards to be funded.

The HEA's decision on whether to award a scholarship is final. Due to the very large number of applications received, it is not possible to give feedback to unsuccessful candidates.

Each HEI that has been named in a successful application will be contacted to confirm that they are in a position to provide the required matched funding. Confirmation of this by the HEI constitutes its agreement to, and acceptance of, the terms of this call document, including Appendix 3, "Important Information".

² Please contact the relevant HEI for information relating to its international education strategy. HEIs' contact details for GOI-IES queries can be found in Appendix 1, "Eligible Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)".



Final GOI-IES award offers will be subject to admission to the relevant HEI. Should a candidate hold a conditional study offer and fail to meet the conditions specified in this offer, the GOI-IES award offer will be rescinded.

Awarded scholarships cannot be transferred to other courses or HEIs, since each application is assessed on its own merits and the scholarship is given exclusively for the application that was successful. Exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis, with prior approval of the HEA and of the host HEI, if the successful candidate's course is cancelled due to low student numbers and the HEI can offer them a place on a similar course.

An official GOI-IES award letter will be issued to successful applicants by the HEA. Successful applicants are advised to refer to Appendix 4, "Recommendations for Successful Candidates".

7. Submission of Applications

Potential applicants should read the call documentation carefully to ascertain whether they are eligible to apply. All participants must create and submit their applications via the online system. Detailed guidance about signing up for an account, filling in the application form and submitting the application is available in the 2026 GOI-IES Help document³ on the [GOI-IES webpage](#).

No alterations whatsoever can be made to an application once it has been submitted. Therefore, candidates are advised to check the application form thoroughly, until they are fully satisfied with all sections before submitting.

The deadline for GOI-IES 2026 applications is 5pm (Irish time) on 12 March 2026. Applications will not be accepted after this deadline. It is strongly recommended that candidates submit their applications well before the deadline, to avoid technical issues due to heavy server traffic on the day.

Any questions regarding the call for applications should be submitted to goi-ies@hea.ie no later than 05 March 2026. Telephone queries cannot be accommodated.

³ The 2026 GOI-IES Help document will become available on the GOI-IES webpage after the opening of the 2026 call.



The HEA expects to release the results of GOI-IES 2026 in early June 2026. Candidates may also be updated about the status of their applications after certain stages of the assessment, for example, after the HEIs have shortlisted applications.

8. Use of personal data

The HEA will process personal data received as part of this process in line with GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018. Please see further details in Appendix 5, “HEA Data Collection Notice – Government of Ireland International Scholarship (GOI-IES)”. For more information about how the HEA manages personal data, please see our [Data Privacy Notice](#).



APPENDIX 1

Eligible Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)

For the most up-to-date version of Appendix 1, please see the document titled “2026 GOI-IES Appendix 1_Updated_[date]” on the [GOI-IES webpage](#).



APPENDIX 2

Referee Guide

References are required to help assessors evaluate a candidate's suitability for a Government of Ireland International Education Scholarship (GOI-IES). They are one of the assessment criteria for the programme and are worth 15% of the total marks available. To increase the applicants' chances of success, references should clearly demonstrate how the applicants match the candidate profile in the call document, quoted below. Vague, generic or irrelevant content will decrease the candidates' chances of success. If you think that you do not know the candidate well enough, or you cannot adequately support their application, please inform them as soon as possible, so that they may find an alternative referee.

Candidate profile (Section 4 in the Call document)

Applicants are expected to demonstrate:

- *a record of outstanding academic achievement;*
- *excellent communication skills;*
- *participation in extracurricular activities, for example, humanitarian work, politics, arts or sport; and*
- *a strong rationale for pursuing their study in Ireland that indicates how a GOI-IES would align with their longer-term goals.*

References should be between 500 and 700 words and contain enough specific information to support the candidate's application.

It is recommended that your reference should answer the following questions:

- How long have you known the applicant, and in what capacity?
- What are your professional background and qualifications?
- What makes the applicant particularly suitable for a GOI-IES, in light of the candidate profile described in the call document?
- What other information about the candidate is relevant for their GOI-IES application?

References must be written in English. If you are more comfortable writing in another language, your reference must be translated, and the translation notarised. You must also



review the translated reference and send it to the candidate yourself. Please note that currently the GOI-IES application portal does not have a feature whereby referees can upload the references themselves. It is the candidates who upload the references you have provided to them.

Your contact details must include an organisational postal address and email address. Should this not be possible, for example, if you have retired and no longer have a work email address, please provide your personal contact details and briefly explain why a work email address is not available.

The reference document must have an official header; if this is not possible, a very brief explanation can be included about the reason for this.

It is expected that referees have no familial, financial or close personal relationship with the applicant which could compromise the impartiality of the reference they provide.



APPENDIX 3

Important Information

The HEA is making this document available to applicants submitting an application under the Government of Ireland International Education Scholarship Programme 2026 call for applications. The document must not be used for any other purpose.

The HEA has taken all reasonable care to ensure the material set out in this call is true and accurate in all material respects as at the time of publication. However, no warranty or representation is given as to the accuracy or completeness of this material. The HEA does not accept any liability or responsibility for the accuracy, adequacy or completeness of the information set out herein.

The HEA will not be liable or responsible for any opinion, statement, or conclusion contained in, or any omission from this document or for any other written or oral communication made available during the course of the call process. No representation or warranty is made in respect of such statements, opinions or conclusions.

The HEA reserves the right to amend these documents and any information contained herein at any time by notice published on the online application portal or on the [HEA GOIES webpage](#).

None of the information set out herein will constitute an agreement, or part of an agreement, or an offer to enter an agreement, between the HEA and any HEI. Nothing in these documents is, nor shall be relied upon as, a promise or representation as to the HEA's ultimate decision in relation to the approval of scholarships.

The HEA reserves the right to take such steps as it considers appropriate, including but not limited to: changing the basis of, or the procedures (including the timetable) relating to the call process; rejecting any, or all, of the proposals; abandoning the competition (or any part of it) at any time prior to the formal approval of scholarships.

No legal relationship or other obligation shall arise between any HEI and the HEA until a scholarship approval has been made by the HEA and accepted by the HEI.



Under no circumstances will the HEA be liable for any costs, charges or expenses incurred by applicants as a result of participating in this call process, however caused. Any costs associated with the submission of a proposal are the sole responsibility of the candidate and will not be reimbursed.

Payment of the scholarship fund is wholly subject to the continued receipt of funding by the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS). In the event of such funding being reduced or discontinued neither the DFHERIS, nor the HEA will be under any liability to provide funding or to compensate a scholar for any reduction or cessation of funding.



APPENDIX 4

Recommendations for Successful Candidates

Once you have confirmed your acceptance of a GOI-IES award, you will need to make the necessary preparations for your time in Ireland.

Visa applications

Information about visas can be found on the website of the Irish Immigration Service, at <https://www.irishimmigration.ie/>. In particular, see <https://www.irishimmigration.ie/coming-to-study-in-ireland/> and <https://www.irishimmigration.ie/coming-to-study-in-ireland/what-are-my-study-visa-options/how-to-apply-for-long-term-study-visa/>.

If you require a visa to enter the country, it is strongly recommended that you familiarise yourself with visa requirements well before applying for the scholarship, and that you prepare the necessary documents in advance. It is advisable to apply for a visa as soon as you receive your award letter. Visa applications are a lengthy process and delays can occur that might prevent you from arriving at your host HEI in time. Many HEIs do not accept late arrivals and you might lose your scholarship. Furthermore, it is possible that visas will not be approved for your family members, who will not be able to accompany you.

Accommodation and living costs

The cost of living in Ireland can be considerably higher than in other countries. The €10,000 stipend will assist with living costs, but it is unlikely to cover them completely. It is advisable to secure other sources of funding, if possible, to avoid additional concerns and to be able to focus on your studies.

Accommodation is likely to be expensive and difficult to find, especially in Dublin. The sooner you start searching for suitable accommodation, the better. Staying in hotels while looking for more permanent accommodation might exhaust your finances; it is better to search before arriving in Ireland.

Your stipend will be transferred to your host HEI in two €5,000 instalments, one in semester 1 and one in semester 2. The HEI will then transfer the stipend to you, either in the same two instalments or in smaller, monthly payments. It is highly advisable that you have enough funds of your own to secure accommodation and support yourself during the first weeks of your stay in Ireland.



APPENDIX 5

HEA Data Collection Notice – Government of Ireland International Scholarship (GOI-IES)

What is personal data and what is a personal data processing operation?

Personal data shall mean any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person ('data subject'). An identifiable natural person is one who can be identified, directly or indirectly, in particular by reference to an identifier such as a name, an identification number, location data, an online identifier or to one or more factors specific to the physical, physiological, genetic, mental, economic, cultural or social identity of that natural person.

Personal data processing operations can be any operation or set of operations which is performed on personal data or on sets of personal data, whether or not by automated means, such as collection, recording, organisation, structuring, storage, adaptation or alteration, retrieval, consultation, use, disclosure by transmission, dissemination or otherwise making available, alignment or combination, restriction, erasure or destruction.

Short description of the processing activity

The management of the scheme - a competitive process based on an annual call for proposals from individual applicants.

Who is the Data Controller?

The Higher Education Authority (HEA).

What personal data is collected?

Personal data including name, address, nationality, contact details, gender, academic details (including those in the applicants' HEI study offers), employment history and other information pertaining to candidates' academic suitability for the scholarship.

Personal data including name, address, contact details, name of employer, position, work history and qualifications of the candidates' referees.

Who has access to the personal data of data subjects and to whom can they be disclosed?

HEA, the applicant's HEI, external assessors appointed on behalf of HEA and Submittable Holdings, Inc., the providers of the grant management system that the HEA uses.



Where did we get your personal data?

The data was supplied as part of application to GOI-IES.

What is the purpose and legal basis for processing your personal data?

The purpose is the administration of the scheme. The legal basis is Article 6(1)(e) GDPR, arising from the Higher Education Authority Act, 2022.

How long will we retain your data?

Your personal data will be retained for 7 years from date of application.

What are your rights regarding your data?

You have the right to access your personal data and to request your personal data to be rectified, if the data is inaccurate or incomplete; where applicable, you have the right to request restriction or to object to processing, to request a copy or erasure of your personal data held by the data controller. If processing is based on your consent, you have the right to withdraw your consent at any time, without affecting the lawfulness of the processing based on your consent before its withdrawal. Your request to exercise one of the above rights will be dealt with without undue delay and in any case within one month.

We will never use automated decision making on your personal data.

Further information regarding the processing of personal data

Further information is available [here](#).

You have the right to lodge a complaint with the [Data Protection Commission](#).