SCIENCE FOUNDATION IRELAND

SFI Fellowship Programme 2024

Call for Submission of Proposals

KEY DATES	
Call announcement	3 April 2024
Deadline for submission of applications	15 May 2024, 13:00 Dublin, Ireland local time
Proposed Start Date	7 October 2024

Contents

1   Introduction

Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) is the Irish government's largest competitive funder of scientific and engineering research, supporting the development of Ireland's economy and society. As a dynamic and innovative organisation at the leading edge, the Foundation also promotes and supports STEM education and engagement to improve awareness and understanding of the value of research to society and to support the careers pipeline.

Our **Vision** is that *"Ireland will be a global innovation leader in scientific and engineering research for the advancement of Ireland's economy and society."*

Our **Mission** is that "*Science Foundation Ireland funds excellent and impactful research and talent and shapes the future of Ireland through anticipating what's next and widening engagement and collaboration."*

Our **Strategy,** S*haping Our Future*, aims to unlock the potential of Irish research to meet current challenges and seize future opportunities, with two core ambitions: Delivering Today and Preparing for Tomorrow.

The Future Skills theme within SFI's 2025 strategy, *Shaping Our Future[1]*, provides for the development of the world's most sought-after skilled workforce. In support of this, the SFI Fellowship Programme supports experiential learning and career development opportunities, also enabling knowledge exchange out of academia into industry and public service.

The SFI Fellowship Programme is a very exciting opportunity for successful applicants to develop their careers through experiencing, first-hand, the diversity of activities carried out by a funding agency, *through a placement in SFI*. SFI is keen to be part of a framework that enables researchers to seek and secure diverse career opportunities in areas such as industry, research funding and administration, public administration and government affairs. This Programme will provide an opportunity for Fellows to develop key skills that will assist them in securing roles such as these.

The Research and Innovation Bill 2024, provides for the establishment of a new National Research and Innovation Funding Agency through the amalgamation of Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) and the Irish Research Council (IRC). Subject to the completion of the legislative process, it is expected that Taighde Éireann - Research Ireland will be established in 2024. Additional opportunities for researchers across the STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) and AHSS (arts, humanities and social sciences) communities may arise, therefore, we welcome applications from researchers with a background in AHSS to this call of the SFI Fellowship programme to be placed in any of the Divisions outlined below and in Appendix 1.

The SFI Fellowship Programme 2024 Call provides opportunities for postdoctoral researchers of eligible Research Bodies[2] to undertake a placement in the following Divisions (for further details on each Division, please see Appendix 1: SFI Division Details):

- Challenge Research
- Corporate Communications

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[1] https://www.sfi.ie/strategy/
[2] https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/eligibility-related-information/

- Education & Public Engagement
- Enterprise Partnerships
- Individual-Led Research
- International
- Research Centres
- Research Policy
- Strategy

In light of the amalgamation with the Irish Research Council, a placement within this division of the new amalgamated organisation, Taighde Éireann - Research Ireland is also possible (see Section 8.5).

The specific objectives of the programme are to:

- Provide applicants interested in pursuing a career in research administration, for example in an Irish or international funding agency, with experience of the duties and activities involved in such organisations.
- Provide applicants considering a transition from academia to the private sector and/or the public sector with relevant experiences and skills.

- Provide applicants interested in pursuing a career in academic research with a holistic overview and understanding of a funding agency.
- Provide applicants with an interest in public and stakeholder engagement an opportunity to gain experience in education and public engagement within a funding agency.
- Provide applicants possessing the relevant skills with the opportunity to gain experience in research policy, strategic development and implementation.

- Enhance knowledge transfer between SFI and its partner organisations.

SFI seeks to create a flexible and knowledgeable workforce with a broad and deep skill base and is committed to building future skills and developing potential through its competency framework. SFI's competency framework is built around competency clusters, each aligned to our core values[3]: *Excellence, Passionate, Progressive, Integrity, Collaborative, Respect*. Through the SFI Fellowship Programme, candidates will have an opportunity to develop competencies aligned with SFI's competency framework as outlined below:

- Innovation and Change
  - Change
  - Fostering creativity
  - Agile learning
  - Continuous improvement
- Leading for Results
  - Engaging & energizing
  - Persuading & convincing
  - Resilience & wellbeing
  - Leading for results

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[3] https://www.sfi.ie/about-us/about-sfi/vision-mission/index.xml

- Working Together
  - Self-leadership
  - Supporting others
  - Team working
  - Coaching and developing others
- Respect and Integrity
  - Belonging
  - Trust
- Delivering Excellence
  - Pursuing goals
  - Organising
  - Accountability
  - Judgement

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy

The SFI Strategy: *Shaping Our Future* underscores SFI's commitment to building equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) within the Irish research and innovation sector.[4] SFI recognises that excellent research stems from diverse and inclusive teams, which reflect our society and the communities we serve. As such, SFI aspires to proactively lead in driving the EDI agenda forward through the research and research teams that it funds.

In SFI's External Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy 2023-2028[5], increasing the number of women and members of Historically Underserved Communities[6] amongst SFI's grant holders are key objectives. As such, women and members of Historically Underserved Communities are strongly encouraged to apply to this programme. Further details on SFI's data on application submission and success rates by gender (binary) can be found on the SFI website.[7]

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[4] https://www.sfi.ie/strategy/SFI-Strategy-2025.pdf

[5] https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/gender/SFI-External-Equality-Diversity-and-Inclusion-Strategy-2023-2028.pdf

[6] For the purposes of this Strategy, Historically Underserved Community encompasses a broad and diverse range of historically marginalised groups including but not limited to the nine protected grounds established in the Equal Status Acts 2000-2018 and socioeconomic status.

[7] https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/gender/

2   Programme Details

2.1   Programme Structure

The SFI Fellowship Programme is open to researchers with a PhD who are nearing the end of their current contract. Successful applicants must be able to commence the SFI Fellowship placement during October 2024.

A Fellowship placement will be offered for a period of up to 24 months. For successful applicants, the placement will be full-time *in SFI* for a continuous period. SFI endeavours to select and develop candidates who are open to taking on new projects outside their current experience and have ongoing flexibility and interest in career progression and development.

SFI Fellows will rotate within or across SFI Directorates to gain wide experience, spending approximately one year in a specific Division. Where possible, Fellows will be assigned to work in the SFI Division outlined within their application as the most appropriate fit for their skillset, however, this cannot be guaranteed as placements will be dependent on a number of factors (Fellow skills profile, organisation needs and capacity of an SFI Division to provide training.). Further details on the duties and responsibilities for the various Fellowship positions are outlined in Appendix 1. SFI Fellows will be provided with training both on commencement and throughout the duration of their Fellowship, internally and, where appropriate, externally. The Fellows will also be assigned to an SFI staff member (i.e., SFI Supervisor) who will provide support and guidance to the Fellow for the duration of the Fellowship Programme. A personal development plan will be agreed with the SFI Supervisor and will be reviewed periodically during the placement.

Successful Fellows will be recognised as an employee of their current Research Body for the duration of the Fellowship grant. The application must therefore be supported by the Research Body's Vice President for Research (or equivalent) and a Line Manager. Applicants are advised to discuss their application with their proposed Line Manager as they will take administrative responsibility for the Fellow if the application is successful (see Section 3 for more details).

Successful applicants will have a Specific Purpose Contract/Research Funded Contract with their Research Body and will be paid by their Research Body in accordance with their contract. All terms and conditions associated with the Fellow's Contract of Employment with their Research Body will apply. SFI will liaise directly with HR Departments within the relevant Research Bodies to inform them of applications received under the call.

2.2   Definitions

Fellow (applicant)	A researcher who holds a PhD at the time of application and who holds a temporary contract in an eligible Irish Research Body. The Fellow will be hosted by SFI.
Line Manager	The Line Manager based in the applicant's Research Body will take administrative responsibility for the Fellow if the applicant is successful. The Line Manager will carry responsibility for arranging salary, leave entitlements and other administrative duties for the Fellow within the Research Body while the Fellow is participating in the Fellowship Programme. Line Managers must be members of the academic staff of an eligible Research Body. Depending on the Research Body's internal HR processes, the Line Manager may be responsible for initiating the request for the Fellow's contract.

SFI Supervisor	Upon joining SFI, the Fellow will be assigned an SFI staff member who will be responsible for setting goals and objectives and assisting with on-the-job training.

2.3 Eligibility criteria of Applicant

Applicants must:

- Hold a doctoral degree.[8]
- Be on a research contract in an eligible Research Body <u>at the time of application</u>.
- Be in a position to take a period of 24 months (continuous and full-time) away from their current research activities within the Research Body, starting in October 2024.
- Have a right to work in Ireland with a work visa/permit (if applicable) for the duration of the SFI Fellowship placement.

One to two years Postdoctoral experience is an advantage.

Applicants must apply through and have the support of their *current* Research Body as described in Section 3.1.

Researchers who are employed under a Contract of Indefinite Duration are not permitted to apply.

Note: Previous successful applicants to the SFI Fellowship Programme are not eligible to apply. Applicants who have an application under review for another of SFI's Fellowship-type programmes (i.e., SFI Industry RD&I Fellowship) or the SFI-IRC Pathway Programme will not be permitted to accept both awards if both applications are successful.

2.4 Eligibility Criteria of Research Body

The Research Body is the body responsible for the overall financial and administrative co-ordination of research programmes supported by research grants from SFI. Fellows must be employed by the Research Body for the duration of the award. The Research Body will administer the funds of successful Fellowships and will remain as the Fellow's employer for the duration of the placement in SFI. The grant will be administered by the Research Body of the Applicant. Research Bodies must be situated in the Republic of Ireland and be eligible for SFI funding. A list of Eligible Research Bodies is available on the SFI website.[9]

It is essential that applicants wishing to apply to the SFI Fellowship programme have the support of their current Research Body. Please see Section 3.1 for further details on Research Body Approval.

2.5 Funding

The maximum SFI contribution to a Fellowship grant is €145,000 direct costs.

i. **Eligible Direct Costs**
- A **salary contribution** for the duration of the Fellowship Programme can be requested by applicants, details of which must be included on the SFI Fellowship application form.

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[8] http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/eligibility-related-information/PHD-equivalence-policy_September_2018.pdf

[9] https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/eligibility-related-information/

Requests must align with the appropriate point on the SFI Team Members Salary Scales (Level 2A Point 1 to Level 2B Point 4).[10] Salary contributions for successful candidates are subject to the maximum of Level 2B Point 4 on the SFI Team Members Salary Scale. Please note:

- the current salary of the applicant must be indicated on the Application Form (see Appendix 2) signed by the Research Body. Based on this information, successful applicants will be awarded a contribution to salary on the subsequent point on the SFI Team Member Salary scale.
- Applicants will be entitled to one increment increase for months 13-24 of the Fellowship Programme, subject to the maximum of point 6 for Level 2A and point 4 for Level 2B. [Please note that once individuals reach the top of the relevant scale, no further increments will be applied].

ii.   Eligible Indirect Costs:

SFI also makes an indirect or overhead contribution to the Research Body, which is reflected as a percentage of the direct costs. Overheads are payable as a contribution to the Research Body for the indirect costs of hosting or facilitating SFI-funded programmes and are intended to enable the Research Body to develop internationally competitive research infrastructure and support services. All awards are made directly to the Applicant's Research Body[11]. General overheads should not be included in the requested budget to cover costs incurred directly as a result of the Fellowship award.

2.6   State Aid and SFI Grant Funding

As per SFI's Grant Conditions (inclusive of SFI's General Terms & Conditions, Letters of Offer and SFI Policy documents), all SFI funding granted is subject to, and must be compliant with, State aid legislation based on Article 107(1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU)[12].

3   Application Procedure

To apply to the programme, the four documents listed below must be completed and submitted as a single pdf file online via https://api.occupop.com/shared/job/sfi-fellowship-programme-2024-4a8c0 by the submission deadline of 13:00 on 15 May 2024. Incomplete or late applications will not be considered.

1) **Completed Application Form.** See Appendix 2 for details. As part of our commitment to the standards of research integrity, the SFI Fellowship application form requires applicants to answer the following statement: *"At no time has an allegation of research misconduct been upheld against me, nor am I aware of any current allegation, investigation or enquiry in this regard."* For Applicants who answer "Incorrect", additional information on the details of the allegation/investigation/enquiry, and the outcome will be required. Failure to complete this self-declaration will result in the application being deemed ineligible.

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[10] https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/budget-finance-related-policies/SFI-Team-member-scales_October-2022-plus-future-pay-increases-March-and-October-2023-inc-er-prsi-0.1-Oct-2024.pdf
[11] https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/budget-finance-related-policies/
[12] Commission Notice on the notion of State aid as referred to in Article 107(1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union TABLE OF CONTENTS (europa.eu)

2) **CV (max. 2 pages)** Please keep the details of your research achievements to a minimum, communicating any relevant skills and administrative experience in support of your application. The use of a template is not mandatory for applicant CVs; however, applicants are advised that reference to metrics such as journal impact factor, h-index, and total number of publications are not permitted.[13]

3) **Personal Statement (max. 2 pages)**
   Applicants should provide a statement to demonstrate their interest in and suitability for the Fellowship. Applicants should indicate which Division(s) they see as the most appropriate fit for their skillset and why (see Appendix 1 for details of each division). This will be taken into consideration, alongside the expertise of the candidate, capacity/staffing status and needs of the organisation.

4) **Line Manager Letter of Support (max. 2 pages)**
   A letter of support from the proposed Line Manager is mandatory for the application and if not provided will render the application ineligible. The letter of support must not exceed two pages in length. The proposed Line Manager within the eligible Research Body must supply a letter of support that:
   - includes details of the applicant's current funding award, details of the funding body and details of the postdoctoral researcher's current remuneration level as aligned to the **SFI Grants Team Member Budgeting Scale.[14]**
   - confirms that they will take administrative responsibility for the Fellow if the applicant is successful.
   - references the applicant's current contract and its end date, and the applicant's availability to take up the SFI Fellowship.
   - if relevant, confirms the applicant's right to work in Ireland.

Once applications are received and reviewed, suitable candidates will be selected and invited for interview.

When applying for the SFI Fellowship Programme, applicants are asked to give due consideration to the start date for the Fellowship which will be October 2024.

3.1 Research Body Approval

A Research Body must demonstrate its support for an application to the SFI Fellowship Programme by providing the signature of the Vice President for Research or their representative on the Fellowship application form, and a letter of support from a Line Manager in which they confirm that that they will take administrative responsibility for the Fellow if the applicant is successful. For successful applicants, the costs associated with the Fellowship will be issued to the Research Body as a research grant and

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[13] SFI is a signatory of the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA) and is a member of the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA). To this end, all types of research output are recognised, and SFI is committed to assessing the quality and impact of research through means other than journal-based metrics and research performance-based metrics such as impact factors and H-index. For further information and resources, see www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/narrative-cv-dora/.

[14] https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/budget-finance-related-policies/SFI-Team-member-scales_October-2022-plus-future-pay-increases-March-and-October-2023-inc-er-prsi-0.1-Oct-2024.pdf

all aspects of the Fellowship, including employment contract and terms and conditions, will be managed by the Research Body. The Letter of Offer for the grant will be issued to the Vice-President/Dean for Research and it is anticipated that the nominated Line Manager will liaise with the Research Body's HR function in relation to the issuing of employment contracts etc.

Applicants should ensure that they give the signatory approver enough time prior to the SFI application deadline to review the application. Please note that many Host Institutions specify internal deadlines for this procedure. Prospective applicants are advised to contact the Research Office in their Research Body for guidance.

4 Selection Procedure

Following submission, all applications are checked for compliance with: non-technical mandatory criteria (e.g., all sections have been completed, page numbers have not been exceeded, and the required Letter of Support has been included); technical mandatory criteria (e.g. employment/qualification status, including need for, and right to work in Ireland for the duration of the SFI Fellowship Programme if needed, and that all other relevant eligibility criteria have been met); and any other requirements outlined in the call document. Applications identified as ineligible at this stage will be declined without review.

Following confirmation of eligibility, candidates will be shortlisted by SFI, and shortlisted applicants will be invited to attend an interview. SFI will convene an interview panel which will include representatives from SFI. Applicants will be interviewed to assess suitability based on their motivation for participating in the Fellowship and their relevant expertise and experience.

Applicants should be able to demonstrate the following attributes:

- Familiarity with technical tools (e.g., MS Office, in particular Excel and PowerPoint)
- Strong communication skills
- An interest and willingness to work in an office/administrative environment
- Strong attention to detail
- An interest/training in structured innovation processes and entrepreneurship
- A passion for Ireland to have an engaged and scientifically informed public
- An interest in research policy and information analysis
- Project management skills and experience
- Be a self-starter with the ability to work under pressure and multi-task

Candidates invited for interview will undergo a competency-based interview process where they will be asked to provide examples of how they have demonstrated experience across a range of competencies, as highlighted in Section 1. Interviews are likely to be held in-person but may be held remotely via the Zoom meeting platform. SFI expects that candidates who are invited for interview will have a high-level understanding of SFI's mission and purpose. Applicants who are successful at interview will be offered a Fellowship, subject to satisfactory reference checks and approval of the Fellowship award by the SFI Executive.

5 SFI's Policies and Positions

In addition to complying with the Grant Terms & Conditions, applicants are expected to be familiar and consult with SFI policies/positions and with all relevant national policies when preparing their

application to any SFI programme. All members involved in the funded research should be apprised of the following non-exhaustive list of relevant policies, which may be revised from time to time.

Applicants should note the SFI organisational policies when preparing their application. A select list of these policies is given below, but a full list of SFI policies can be found on the SFI website here: https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/

Maternity Supplement

SFI is committed to removing and mitigating any existing or perceived factors that may limit the participation of women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) careers. SFI invites its award holders to apply for a supplemental discretionary allowance to support their SFI-funded award when either an SFI Awardee or a team member, including PhD students funded on an SFI award, takes a period of maternity or adoptive leave.[15]

Intellectual Property Management

Intellectual Property (IP) should be managed according to the policies set out in the Government publication: **Ireland's National IP Protocol 2019** and must comply with State Aid Regulations.[16] Fellows acknowledge and agree that any Intellectual Property arising from the performance of his/her duties with SFI or provision of services to SFI shall belong to and be the absolute property of SFI and staff members undertake not to dispute SFI's ownership of such Intellectual Property.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

SFI's ambition is that Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2023-2028 will be a key driver of an inclusive, engaged research culture and, through this Strategy, SFI will be an agent of change. As such, the SFI EDI Strategy presents a vision and strategy for SFI, as a leading research funder, to help reduce systemic barriers to participating in the research endeavour.

SFI has already demonstrated leadership in improving the representation of women in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) research more broadly in the entire education talent pipeline. Whilst gender will remain a central tenet of the new EDI Strategy, SFI will now proactively consider other areas of inequality or disadvantage to support an intersectional approach, in keeping with our values and best practice.

In the SFI Strategy 2025 *Shaping Our Future*,[17] targets are set for 35% of SFI's funded leadership positions (PIs & Co-PIs) to be women and for research teams to be composed of at least 40% of the underrepresented gender by 2025. As such, applicants should consider and describe how these targets can be achieved at all levels of the research team.

Research should fully consider potential biological sex and socio-cultural gender dimensions as key analytical and explanatory variables. As articulated in the SFI EDI Strategy, applicants are

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[15] https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/gender/
[16] http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/national-policies-sfi-positions/
[17] https://www.sfi.ie/strategy/

advised to demonstrate that they have considered any potential sex/gender aspects in their proposed research programme.

Child Protection

Where relevant, applicants and Research Bodies are required to comply with the provisions of the **Children First Act 2015**[18], and the **National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017**.[19] It is the responsibility of the Research Body to ensure that they are compliant with all applicable law.

Data Protection Policy

The General Data Protection Regulation[20] is a legal framework that sets out guidelines for the collection and processing of personal information of individuals within the European Union.

SFI may collect, use and disclose personal data provided in the application and/or otherwise obtained under, or in connection with, the application for processing the submission, for the performance of its statutory powers and functions, and for the general activities of SFI. Further details regarding SFI's collection, use and disclosure of personal data, and the rights of individuals with respect to any personal data held by SFI, are available in the **SFI Privacy Statement.**[21]

During the application process or at any time thereafter, SFI may contact the Research Body, the Principal Investigator, or any member of the Research Team with regard to funding opportunities, activities or events organised by SFI or other relevant bodies, or for the purposes of monitoring and evaluation (including, but not limited to, the collection of scientific data or data relating to the application process). SFI may choose to authorise a third party to contact the Research Body, the Principal Investigator or any member of the Research Team on its behalf.

Conflict of Interest

SFI recognises that applicants may have a prior relationship with an academic or industry partner engaged in an application for funding to SFI. An actual or potential conflict of interest occurs when an SFI staff member is in a position to influence a decision that may result in a personal gain for that person or for a related person as a result of SFI's business dealings. For the purposes of this policy, a related person is any person who is related by blood or marriage, or whose relationship with the staff member is similar to that of persons who are related by blood or marriage. Where a potential conflict of interest exists, SFI requires that it is disclosed by the applicant to SFI as soon as they become aware of the actual or potential conflict(s).

Appeals Process

This policy establishes procedures and responsibilities for the appeal of the declination of a proposal by SFI.[22]

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[18] http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2015/act/36/enacted/en/pdf
[19] http://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Children_First_National_Guidance_2017.pdf
[20] https://www.dataprotection.ie/docs/GDPR/1623.htm
[21] http://www.sfi.ie/privacy/
[22] http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/review/

Additionally, there are a broad cross section of research policies which are relevant to the programme of work undertaken as part of an SFI Grant. As part of the Fellowship, successful applicants will receive training in, and be expected to become familiar with, the SFI research policies/positions relevant to performing their role within a given team. Further information on these policies is available on the SFI website.[23]

Current SFI policies and positions are reviewed on a regular basis; applicants are advised to consult the policy information in advance of submission of a proposal.

6 Placement Agreement

For successful applications, it is a requirement that a Placement Agreement be signed by the Research Body and Science Foundation Ireland prior to commencement of the placement. This agreement will clearly define the expectations, roles and responsibilities of each party (Fellows, SFI and the Research Body).

7 Further Information

Please read this call document thoroughly. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) are available on the SFI Fellowship Programme webpage.[24] For general queries, including eligibility queries, please contact the Research Office of the Research Body that you intend to submit your application through. For additional information or clarification, contact: fellowship@sfi.ie

Blended Working Policy

The role will be based in the SFI office located in Three Park Place, Hatch Street Upper, Dublin 2, Ireland, D02 FX65. SFI operates a blended/flexible working model.

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[23] https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/
[24] https://www.sfi.ie/funding/funding-calls/sfi-fellowship-programme/
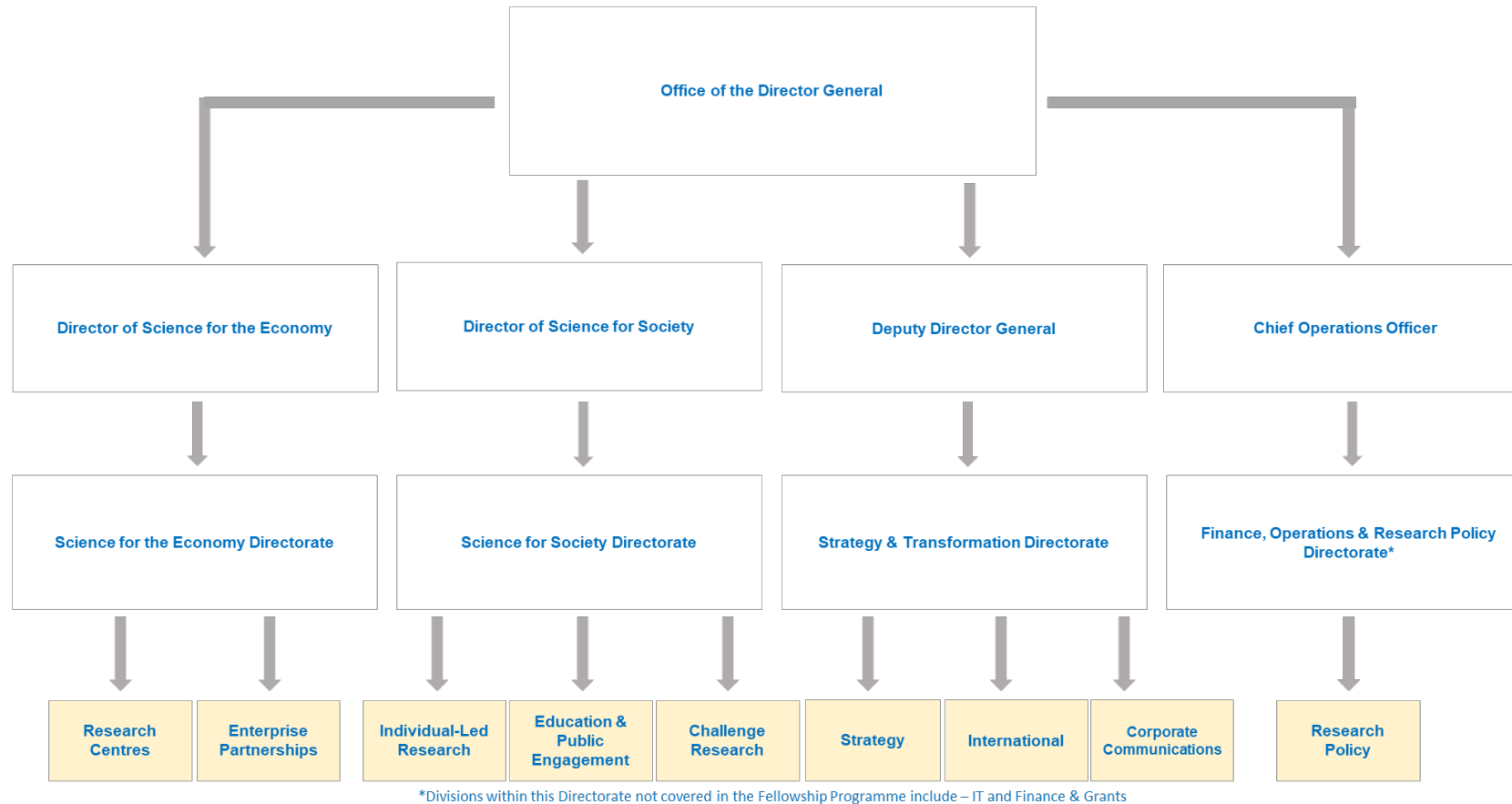
8   Appendix 1: SFI Division Details

Figure 1: SFI Organigramme showing SFI Directorates and Divisions for the Fellowship Programme (in yellow). Please note that the Irish Research Council, will also be available as a rotation division in the newly established organisation, Taighde Éireann-Research Ireland (see section 8.5).

8.1   Science for the Economy

Research Centres and Enterprise Partnerships are the two Divisions within the SFI Science for the Economy Directorate.

8.1.1   Research Centres

The Research Centres team is responsible for SFI's flagship programme which funds 15 world-leading SFI Research centres: multi-disciplinary, multi-institutional virtual centres of scientific excellence that work at the interface between academia, industry and society. The Research Centres team monitors and reports on the performance of the existing SFI Research Centres, including their ability to meet key performance indicators and cost-share targets, and to deliver impact for Ireland through conducting cutting edge science. The team also develops and operates programmes that will fund future Research Centres (e.g. 2023 SFI Research Centres programme) and we work with colleagues from across the research funding landscape on developing strategies and policies that underpin the work of the SFI Research Centres, allowing the network to adapt and expand to address key national and international challenges.

8.1.2   Enterprise Partnerships

The Enterprise Partnerships team drives engagement with stakeholders to facilitate opportunities for national and international funders, philanthropic organisations and enterprises to foster research and innovation in partnership with academic researchers. The team champions the development of strategic co-funded initiatives which support outstanding research that will assist industry to grow and flourish in Ireland, and underpins a strong, sustainable economy and better society in Ireland. The team is responsible for the management of key collaborative programmes including the SFI Spokes Programme, the SFI Strategic Partnerships Programme and the SFI Industry RD&I Fellowship Programme, as well as the new SFI Accelerating Research to Commercialisation (ARC) Hub programme.

A Fellow placed within the one of the Economy Directorate Divisions would typically have the opportunity to:

- Support Scientific Programme Managers on the development and management of novel programmes and initiatives

- Learn about best-in-class international peer review and performance management processes that enable SFI to drive maximum benefit from world leading research

- Harness data analytics and visualisation power to derive actionable knowledge from the data

- Improve communication and influencing skills by developing briefing documents for government departments as well as SFI's broader stakeholders on the impact of existing collaborations, as well as promotional content to raise awareness of research partnership opportunities

- Engage with government agencies and develop an extensive network of contacts

8.2   Science for Society

Individual-Led Research, Challenge Research and Education & Public Engagement are the three Divisions within the Science for Society Directorate.

8.2.1   <u>Individual-Led Research</u>

The individual-led research (ILR) Division manages a number of key programmes; the Frontiers for the Future, the SFI-IRC Pathway programme, the Research Infrastructure programme and the Research Professorship programme. Many of these programmes are focused on supporting excellent independent researchers and to build research capacity, expertise and reputation through funding excellent scientific research. The Research Professorship programme facilitates recruitment of world-leading researchers and rising stars to move to Ireland and has two preferential themes to encourage applications from female research professors and to facilitate joint appointments with Institutions in the United Kingdom. Support for the research community in building and sustaining the required infrastructural capacity to accomplish high-quality, high-impact and innovation research is the focus of the Research Infrastructure programme. The Pathway programme, run in partnership with the Irish Research Council, is focused on the development of early career researchers across all disciplines. The team is also responsible for the management of SFI's suite of international partnerships, including with the UK Royal Society, the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC)and the US-Ireland R&D Partnership programme with both the US National Science Foundation (NSF) and the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

In addition to the pre-award function of developing and delivering these programmes, monitoring of grant performance once the award is funded is a key activity for the ILR team with over 400 active awards in our portfolio. Progress site visits and annual reports are used to assess performance, develop impact case studies and to assess return on investment.

A Fellow placed within the Individual-Led Research Division would typically have the opportunity to:

- Support Programme Managers in the management and delivery of programmes that create a globally competitive research capacity for Ireland

- Implement world-leading, best-practice review processes for selecting research funding proposals with the highest potential for impact

- Develop innovative approaches for monitoring and optimising performance from individual schemes

- Generate data and evidence to develop knowledge insights on the portfolio of research funded and talent pipeline supported by SFI programmes

- Improve communication skills by developing summary documents to support the evaluation of funding proposals and reports for internal and external stakeholders

8.2.2 Challenge Research

The SFI Challenge Research Division is responsible for the development and delivery of **challenge-based funding**[25] opportunities for SFI. Challenge-based funding models are an increasingly prevalent tool used by governments, philanthropists and other funders to drive research, development and innovation activities toward addressing significant societal challenges with the aim of driving societal benefit. Challenge-based funding is used to bring interdisciplinary teams together and is focused on delivery of a solution, maximising the potential for societal impact. SFI works with co-funding partners in the scoping of challenge areas. The team engages closely with funded teams through regular meetings and organises training and other activities for teams as they progress through a number of stage-gates before competing for Prize Awards.

The team is also responsible for SFI's Public Service Fellowship and SFI's entrepreneurial training programme which provides training and support to researchers in evidence-based entrepreneurship.

A Fellow working within this team would have the opportunity to research and scope new challenge areas as part of the development of new challenge-based funding programmes. Part of this work would include the evaluation of international comparators and engagement with a range of external stakeholders as part of a team effort. Fellows would be required to use their expertise in the selection of international reviewers and would support all aspects of call initiation, promotion, application processing, evaluation and post-award monitoring. As part of this team, Fellows might also have the opportunity to assist in the organisation and delivery of briefing and training workshops. The team is also interested in exploring the possibilities for optimising approaches for policymakers and public engagement aligned with both the SFI Public Service Fellowship and Challenge portfolios.

As the organisation moves to an expanded remit under the upcoming amalgamation with the Irish Research Council (IRC), Fellowships that explore new opportunities in areas aligned with the goals of this team will be created.

8.2.3 Education & Public Engagement

Science Foundation Ireland promotes and supports the study of, education in, and engagement with STEM and promotes an awareness and understanding of the value of STEM to society and, in particular to the growth of the economy. With this purpose, SFI is passionate about Ireland having an engaged and scientifically informed public. We believe research is truly impactful when it is shaped and informed by the society it serves.

SFI Education and Public Engagement (EPE) initiatives support a range of activity including funding projects nationwide, through the SFI Discover Funding Programme, that support STEM public engagement. SFI also invests in growing capacity for education and public engagement within our research community, with a significant investment to date in SFI's Research Centres. SFI is also responsible for the delivery of Curious Minds (primaryscience.ie) and national Science Week (scienceweek.ie) which improve awareness and understanding of the value of STEM to society and support the STEM careers pipeline. The EPE team also manages the Irish European Space Education Resource Office programme (esero.ie), co-funded by the European Space Agency (ESA) and SFI.

The team is responsible for significant activity in the embedding of Education and Public Engagement in large scale research awards, including but not limited to the SFI Research Centres, as described in our EPE framework.

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25 https://www.sfi.ie/challenges/

A Fellow placed within this team will be passionate about Ireland having an engaged and scientifically informed public and about empowering broader participation in STEM research. Engagement with society in meaningful ways is becoming a major differentiator in STEM research, a rotation with the SFI EPE programme will help you build expertise in this area.

A Fellow placed within the Education & Public Engagement Division may have the opportunity to work on an EPE-focused project in areas such as the exploration of new and effective ways of reaching underrepresented groups, the scoping, design and development of interventions, horizon scanning and review of national and international comparators and in data analysis and evaluation of EPE activities.

As the organisation moves to an expanded remit under the upcoming amalgamation with the Irish Research Council (IRC), Fellowships that explore new opportunities in areas aligned with the goals of this team will be created.

A Fellow placed within the Education & Public Engagement Division will also have the opportunity to

- Assist in the management and delivery of initiatives to promote engagement of the Irish public with STEM e.g., Science Week
- Coordinate and support the development of collaborations and partnerships that enable the implementation of SFI's EPE activities
- Assist in the SFI funding programme calls, building experience of how and why these programmes work e.g., SFI Discover Funding
- Assist in the promotion of EPE activities through development of case studies and impact studies

8.3 Strategy & Transformation

Strategy, International and Corporate Communications are Divisions within the Strategy & Transformation Directorate.

8.3.1 Strategy

The Strategy Division supports the Director General in the development and implementation of SFI's strategy, *Shaping Our Future* and in overseeing and monitoring SFI's overall performance. This includes reporting against KPIs and metrics, gathering performance data, and evaluating the effectiveness of programmes. We also input to and report progress against national and departmental strategies such as *Impact 2030* and the *Climate Action Plan.* We support the Director General, the Executive Committee, and the Board with strategic insights about SFI's progress and evidence to inform SFI's key strategic decisions.

A Fellow placed within the Strategy Division will have the opportunity to:

- Research international best practice of new practices and processes for SFI e.g., new funding mechanisms, new review processes, new agency activities
- Trial and experiment with new funding agency activities, practices and processes
- Oversee and monitor SFI's progress against its new strategy, using advanced data analytics tools
- Liaise with national and international stakeholders to progress *Shaping Our Future*
- Support the Strategy team in ensuring the timely completion of SFI's annual Research Outputs census of all the achievements of SFI's funded research community

- Monitor progress of SFI actions in national plans such as the national science strategy *Innovation 2020*
- Analyse the Research Outputs data and agree policy recommendations
- Collaborate with the Department of Further & Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS), Department of Enterprise, Trade & Employment (DETE) and Department of Public Expenditure & Reform (DPER).

As SFI moves towards the upcoming amalgamation with the Irish Research Council (IRC), there may be the opportunity to support development of Research Ireland organisational strategy.

8.3.2 International

SFI International helps develop global research cooperation for Irish researchers to cooperate with the best from academia and industry across Europe and worldwide in addition to reinforcing Ireland's standing as a top-class research-performing nation. Team members have the opportunity to help implement the SFI International Strategy and engage with stakeholders from across Government and the consular network. Working with the International team on European and Global affairs will present Fellows with the opportunity to develop their networks. Fellows will work closely with the Irish Consular network and through engagement in EU-facing organisations, receive a solid understanding of the European Research Area.

A Fellow placed within the International Division will have the opportunity to:

- Improve communication skills, preparing briefing requests for internal and external stakeholders, including EU related and wider international updates, Departmental reporting requests and working with the Embassy network
- Act as the key liaison between the International team and Research Offices for the dissemination of important events and information
- Develop significant knowledge of the many facets of EU funding and the instruments available to the wider research community and industry
- Gain insights and experience in the management processes required for SFI's engagement with EU Partnerships across pre-award through post-award and assist in scoping the research landscape for upcoming partnership opportunities across a wide range of research disciplines
- Be a key support in the organisation of international events such as SFI's St Patrick's Day Medal and International Missions and play an important role supporting the International division in the promotion of events and opportunities to maximise the potential of researchers and research activities we fund
- Work with colleagues to update the internal and external websites with fundamental information and upcoming International activities and engagements.
  Generate data and evidence in support of EU funding leveraged by SFI teams through liaising with and supporting National Contact Points, National Delegates and SFI Research Centres in ongoing European activities

8.3.3 Corporate Communications

The Corporate Communications team has responsibility for the design, development, and delivery of SFI's marketing and communications strategy. It operates on a daily basis everything you would expect a very busy communications team to be doing - copywriting, design, website, social and

traditional media engagement, public affairs, event management, media announcements of awards, sponsorship/partnership, marketing, brand management, etc.

We would like a Fellow to join our team to assist us in telling our stories in an innovative way to our stakeholders, promoting the benefits that public research brings to our economy and society.

A Fellow placed within the Corporate Communications Division would typically have the opportunity to be involved in:

- Developing stories and features to explain the research work we support.

- Engage in planning events, announcements, photo-ops, etc.

- Draft press releases and case studies

- Support updating our website and social media engagement.

- Working with colleagues across SFI support key communications associated with our programmes and events such as Science Week.

- Engage with key stakeholders, including our parent Department of Further & Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science.

8.4   Finance, Operations and Research Policy

8.4.1   Research Policy

The Research Policy Division manages the development and implementation of evidence-based policy which supports strong research governance across all SFI programmes. The team's objectives are to ensure that a robust policy framework exists to support that the programmes of research underpinning the Grants awarded by SFI are undertaken with reference to SFI's Grant Conditions and Letters of Offer (which the team also manage) and associated policies. These include those aligned with national/international guidelines e.g., Research Integrity, in addition to those prescribed by law, such as State aid. The team regularly collaborates with international stakeholders and is at the forefront of developing a number of innovative policies and procedures in areas such as Open Science; Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion; Research Data Management; Research Integrity; and Responsible Research Assessment.

A Fellow placed within the Research Policy Division would typically have the opportunity to:

- Review international best practice regarding research policy and governance and integrate into existing SFI policies and procedures where relevant.

- Advise programme managers across all directorates on a number of pre- and post-award activities related to research policy.

- Work with the Information Systems team in improving business processes to support the implementation of policies and procedures at pre and post award level.

- Conduct data analysis to examine the impact of policy implementation.

- Consult with community stakeholders to inform policy development and implementation.

- Engage with a network of international collaborators to deliver policy objectives.

- Engage with SFI's legal and auditing advisors on policy development, implementation and review.

8.5 Irish Research Council

The activities of the IRC and its team will initially be established as a specific directorate within Research Ireland.

The IRC funds excellent research across all disciplines across STEM and AHSS. It is the primary funder of basic research in the arts, humanities and social sciences. Its focus is on ensuring that exceptional researchers are supported to develop their ideas across the key stages of their career.

- **Early Career Researchers**
  The early-career funding programmes provide the opportunity for individual researchers to propose their own research ideas and, if successful, win a scholarship or fellowship in their own name.

  At postgraduate level.

  - **Government of Ireland Postgraduate Scholarship Programme** – provides outstanding students with the opportunity to direct their own research at the early-career stage.
  - **Enterprise Partnership Scheme (Postgraduate)** – a unique national initiative linking excellent researchers to enterprise.
  - **Employment-Based Postgraduate Programme** – provides students in all disciplines an opportunity to bring great research ideas into an Irish employment partner.

  At postdoctoral level.

  - **Government of Ireland Postdoctoral Fellowship Programme** – supports suitably qualified applicants in any discipline to pursue a postdoctoral fellowship at an eligible higher education institution in Ireland.
  - **Enterprise Partnership Scheme (Postdoctoral)** – a unique national initiative linking excellent researchers to enterprise.

- **Principal Investigator-led research**
  Programmes supporting principal led researchers include, the Laureate Awards and COALESCE. These awards build on the excellent talent within the research landscape.

  - **Laureate awards** - Supporting exceptional researchers to conduct frontier basic research across all disciplines and career stages.
  - **COALESCE -** Supporting excellent research addressing national and global challenges.

- **Networking and engagement awards**
  These awards fund researchers to pursue actions and engagement to cultivate capacity building, research actions, transnational collaboration through travel grants, conference and workshop development, along with a range of other outputs.

  Some of the awards are funded in partnership with government departments and agencies, enabling researchers to focus on areas of policy, including global development.

- **New Foundations** - Supporting eligible researchers intending to pursue research, networking or dissemination activities within and across the diversity of disciplines.
- **Ulysses** - Supporting collaborations between Irish- and French-based researchers in areas important for both economies by providing seed funding for reciprocal travel visits.

- **European partnerships and support**
  The IRC develop and maintains Irish links within European research networks and supports large scale research infrastructures in the arts and social sciences.

  - **Infrastructures**
  - **ERA-Nets such as HERA, GenderNet, CHIST-ERA**
  - **DOROTHY MSCA COFUND**
  - **Horizon Europe (including IMSCO**

A Fellow placed within the Irish Research Council Portfolio Directorate would typically have the opportunity to:

- The opportunity to develop your knowledge and skills in a research assessment and management setting.
- Support programme managers through pre and post award cycles of funding programmes.
- Contribute to communications of excellent research funding by contributing to briefings, communications campaigns, and engagement with research community.
- The opportunity to interact with diverse national and international stakeholders.

9   Appendix 2: SFI Fellowship Application Form

Name of Applicant	
Research Body	
Do you have a right to work in Ireland, with a work visa/permit (if applicable), for the full duration of the Fellowship? (Y/N)	
Should you be successful, are you in a position to start the Fellowship during October 2024? (Y/N)[26]	

Please outline any actual or potential conflict of interest that may arise if successful in being appointed to a Fellowship position within SFI.

Please answer the following statement by placing an X in the appropriate box: *"At no time has an allegation of research misconduct been upheld against me, nor am I aware of any current allegation, investigation or enquiry in this regard."*[27]

Correct	
Incorrect	

If you have answered "Incorrect", please provide details in writing of the allegation / investigation / enquiry, and the outcome.

Current Salary: €			
Requested Salary[28]:€ Please indicate the point requested on the SFI Team Member Scale (e.g., Level 2A point 2):			
	Year 1	**Year 2**	**Total**
Gross Salary	€	€	€
Employee PRSI	€	€	€
20% Pension Charge	€	€	€
Total	€	€	€

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[26] Please note that the proposed start date for the Fellowship is October 2024

[27] Failure to complete this self-declaration will result in the application being deemed ineligible.

[28] Requests must align with the appropriate point on the SFI Team Members Salary Scales (Level 2A Point 1 to Level 2B Point 4) https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/budget-finance-related-policies/SFI-Team-member-scales_October-2022-plus-future-pay-increases-March-and-October-2023-inc-er-prsi-0.1-Oct-2024.pdf

Line Manager	
Name of Line Manager	
Position	
Email	

Signatures for Acceptance and Agreement	
Signature below confirms acceptance and agreement with the SFI grants and awards Terms and Conditions, that the Research Body ensures the applicant meets eligibility requirements and is supportive of the candidate's application to be considered for a SFI Fellowship position and that the applicant will upon receipt of the grant be recognised as an employee of the Research Body for the duration of the grant.	
Institutional Signatory Authority (VP Research or representative):	
Name	
Position	
Research Body	
Signature	
Date	
Email	

SFI Fellowship Applicant:	
Signature	
Date	

10 Appendix 3: Application Checklist

Description	Requirements
Application Form	All sections fully completed including Institutional Signatory
CV	**Maximum two pages**
Personal Statement	Provide details on your motivation for applying to the Fellowship Programme. Communicate skills and experience relevance to the organisation and specific SFI Divisions of interest. **Maximum two pages**
Line Manager Letter of Support	Confirming that they will take administrative responsibility for the Fellow if the applicant is successful (see section 3 for more details). **Maximum two pages**

Please submit your completed application (application form, CV, Personal Statement and Letter of Support) as a single pdf file via https://api.occupop.com/shared/job/sfi-fellowship-programme-2024-4a8c0

For all queries contact fellowship@sfi.ie.