



Industry Fellowship Programme 2019 FAQs

Q1. If I am successful in the Industry Fellowship 2019 call, when can I expect to start my fellowship?

SFI expects that the Fellowship applications submitted for the 28th August 2019 deadline will commence in January 2020 at the very earliest. SFI will update applicants on precise details of the earliest start date as the review process concludes. Please note that fellowships are expected to commence within 6 months of the notification of the award.

Q2. Is the programme open to Irish Research Bodies only?

Yes. A list of eligible research bodies can be found [here](#).

Q3. Can the host location be anywhere in the world?

Where the direction of the Fellowship is Academia-to-Industry and the applicant is currently based in Ireland, the host location may be anywhere in the world (including Ireland). Where the direction of the Fellowship is Academia-to-Industry and the applicant is currently based outside of Ireland, the host location must be in Ireland. Where the direction of the Fellowship is Industry-to-Academia, the host location must be an SFI Eligible Research Body located in Ireland.

Q4. What is the maximum award duration?

The award duration must be between 1 month and 12 months if full-time, or 2 months and 24 months if part-time. The duration referred to here is the total 'award duration' as distinct from the 'placement duration'. The maximum cumulative *in-situ* 'placement duration' that a Fellow may spend at a host location is 12 months. For part-time Fellowships, this *in-situ* duration may be spread over a period of up to 24 months.

Q5. Do candidates have to spend the entire *in-situ* duration of Fellowship at the host location?

Yes, candidates should spend the entire placement duration of the Fellowship at the host location. SFI acknowledges however that for some collaborative projects travel between industry locations will be required – such travel should be referred to in proposals submitted to the programme.

Q6. Does the award have to be continuous, or can it be split into several periods of time?

Part-time Fellowships can be split into several periods of time. Applicants are required to demonstrate that the duration, frequency and number of visits associated with a part-time Fellowship is appropriate in the context of developing or enhancing linkages between Academia and Industry, and for meeting the objectives of the Industry Fellowship Programme. Multiple visits are not permitted

for full-time Fellowships as the Fellow is expected to be located at the premises of the host on a full-time basis for the duration of the award.

Q7. Who are eligible Industry Partners?

An eligible Industry Partner must be a research-active, private for-profit company and can be located in Ireland or abroad. Industry Partners must also possess the appropriate independent infrastructure, revenue and staffing to provide appropriate working conditions and training to prospective fellows. Although collaborations with government exchequer funded entities such as publicly funded research institutes, funding agencies, government departments or other agencies of the state are encouraged, these are not eligible as Industry Partners for the Industry Fellowship Programme. Likewise, charities and not-for-profit organisations are not eligible Industry Partners. Commercial semi-state companies such as the group of companies under CIE, EirGrid, ESB, and their similar counterparts worldwide are eligible Industry Partners. If you require clarification as to the eligibility of a potential Industry Partner, please refer to the Industry Fellowship Call document or email industry.fellowship@sfi.ie in advance of proposal submission.

Q8. Are start-up companies eligible?

Yes, start-up companies are eligible to apply as Industry Partners provided they fulfil the eligibility criteria of the Industry Partner outlined in Section 2 of the Industry Fellowship Call document. However, please note that proposals are not accepted from Applicants who wish to be hosted in, or receive Fellows from, an organisation in which they have a financial interest or hold a decision-making role. All parties to the application must disclose any potential conflict of interest in their proposal. Conflicts of interest must be managed by the applicant's Research Body.

Q9. Is the programme suitable for building relationships with industry partners for future submissions to other SFI Programmes?

Yes, the programme is suitable for building collaborative relationships with Industry Partners who may subsequently be involved in applications to other SFI programmes including, but not limited to, the SFI Strategic Partnership and Spokes Programmes.

Q10. In an Industry-to-Academic fellowship, does the industry fellow have to go on the payroll to avail of the grant?

No, this is not a requirement of the Industry Fellowship programme. However, the Fellow *may* be engaged by the Academic Partner as a Research Body employee for the duration of award if both parties agree that this would enable enhanced outcomes. If a Research Body intends for an Industry Fellow to become an employee of the Research Body this should be noted in the proposal to the programme.

Q11. How should IP be handled in an SFI Industry Fellowship award?

IP agreements entered into between the Research Body named on the Letter of Offer and the Industry Partner are the responsibility of the Research Body and should comply with [Inspiring Partnership –](#)

[the National IP Protocol \(2019\)](#). Please consult with the Technology Transfer Office of the Research Body for further information.

Q12. Can a company be involved in more than one Fellowship application?

Yes, there is no limit to the number of Fellowships a company can be involved in. However, please note that only one 'Fellow' per proposal to the Programme is permitted, and therefore a separate application and hence research project must be submitted for each fellowship.

Q13. How do I find an Academic Partner?

Several resources are available to help Industry Partners find potential Academic Partners. Please see the [Industry Fellowship Programme webpage](#) for further details on the available resources. Academic/Industry Partners should contact each other directly to discuss potential applications to the Industry Fellowship Programme.

Q14. How does SFI define a senior author?

A senior author is one who is that is listed as first or joint first author, reflecting the fact that she/he has provided the greatest intellectual contribution, has held the primary responsibility for collecting and analysing data, and for the writing of the manuscript and associated drafts. The last author will also be considered as a senior author, since this position generally reflects her/his overall responsibility for the study and suggests that a level of mentorship has been provided. It will be noted that different publishers have differing rules on how the senior authorship is indicated (e.g., by using asterisks, underlining, placing the name first or last in the list of authors, etc.); of overriding importance however is that the applicant should be able to convince and reassure reviewers that they are the key author on these publications. Joint first authorship may only be claimed where the article clearly states that two (or more) authors have provided equal and significant contributions to the work described. Please note that senior authorship does not necessarily mean that they were responsible for the finance associated with the research that was reported.

Q15. Referring to the minimum number of publication criteria, can conference papers be counted as publications to meet the criteria, or only journal papers?

Yes, conference papers can be counted as publications if they are internationally peer reviewed. This recognises the fact that in some fields, conference papers are the primary source of dissemination. Conference abstracts, patent applications, or invention disclosures may not be counted against the publication requirements.

Q16. I am a Postdoctoral Researcher with a Contract of Indefinite Duration. I wish to apply to the Industry Fellowship Programme but am unsure how this may affect my contractual status – could you please advise?

Queries relating to employment contracts are handled by individual Research Bodies. Please contact the Research Office/HR Section of your Research Body to seek clarification.

Q17. Are materials and consumables an eligible cost?

Materials and consumables are not an eligible cost in the Industry Fellowship Programme. Where project costs are required as part of a Fellowship, these costs should be met by the partners involved in the Fellowship.

Q18. Is it mandatory to include information on in-kind contributions within the application?

No, details of industry in-kind contributions are not mandatory, however if included, this information is likely to assist reviewers in their evaluation.

Q19. I am currently a Postdoctoral Researcher and hold an SFI Starting Investigator Research Grant (SIRG). Which category should I apply under?

Postdoctoral holders of individual fellowships (e.g. SIRG, IRC postgraduate scholarships, MSCA Fellowships) must apply under Category B and cannot apply earlier than one year before the end of their fellowship/contract/award.

Q20. I am a Senior Lecturer and intend to apply to the Industry Fellowship Programme. How do I calculate teaching buy-out and will a replacement staff member at the same level be covered by the Fellowship Award?

Teaching buyout costs should be calculated based on hiring a temporary lecturer (e.g. at point 1 on the Assistant Lecturer salary scale, or equivalent point on the institutional scale) regardless of the seniority of the Academic Fellow applying to the Industry Fellowship Programme. Full justification should be included in the Budget justification section of the application, including details of how many teaching hours per week the temporary lecturer is required for.

Q21. Can fellowship funding be used to pay for professional development, such as project management courses or other similar activities?

No, this is not an eligible cost. Please refer to the Call Document for eligible costs.

Q22. I intend to apply to the Industry Fellowship to travel to an international industry host – are travel insurance and visa costs eligible?

Reasonable health insurance and visa costs related to the relocation of the Fellow are eligible, where appropriate and fully justified.

Q23. Does an unemployed postdoctoral researcher need to identify both a host research body and an industry partner before applying to the Industry Fellowship programme?

Yes, unemployed postdoctoral researchers are eligible to apply but they must identify both a host research body and an industry partner.

Q24. I am a postdoctoral researcher currently working abroad in Europe. Can I apply via any higher education body in Ireland, or must it be the institution where I received my PhD and briefly worked as a postdoc?

You can apply at *any* eligible Irish Research Body. Please see the Call Document for further details. A list of eligible Irish Research Bodies can be found at: <http://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/eligibility-related-information/>

Q25. I am currently employed outside of Ireland. What is required for salary justification? Should I include a request analogous to my current salary (in a different country/system) or to my number of years of experience post-PhD?

An applicant who is currently employed outside of Ireland should calculate their requested salary for the duration of the Fellowship according to the number of years post-PhD.

Q26. Does the academic supervisor need to be an SFI-funded researcher?

No, the academic supervisor does not need to be an SFI-funded researcher.

Q27. Am I eligible for a Category A – Faculty Researcher Fellowship if my PhD was conferred in 2017.

No, in this case you would not be eligible. For Category A – Faculty Researcher, applicants must be at least three years post PhD from the date of their PhD conferral.

Q28. As a Postdoctoral Researcher can I go to a company that has collaborated with our research group before? Is this considered a Conflict of Interest?

A postdoctoral researcher can apply to be hosted at a company that their research group has collaborated with before. Please note, however, that the following would be considered conflicts of interest:

- A prospective Academic Fellow (Category B) wishing to work in a company founded by his/her current or past, postdoctoral supervisor.
- A prospective Academic Fellow (Category B) wishing to work in a company where his/her current or past, postdoctoral supervisor is a main shareholder.

Furthermore, proposals are not accepted from Applicants who wish to receive Industry Fellows from an organisation in which they have a financial interest or hold a decision-making role. Please refer to the Call Document for more information on disclosure of Conflict of Interest. All potential conflicts of interest must be addressed in the application document and in the letter of support for the Research Body, where relevant.

Q29. What is the definition of a research-active company? How is it possible to check if the industry partner is eligible?

A research-active company is an Irish or international research performing company. For further details on industry partner eligibility please refer to the call document.

Q30. Where can we find the 14 research priority areas list?

A list of the research priority areas (2018-2023) can be found at:

<https://dbei.gov.ie/en/Publications/Publication-files/Research-Priority-Areas-2018-to-2023.pdf>

Q31. Is it possible to work at an industry host for 12 months spread part-time over a two-year period and to spend the remaining time working with my PI in academia?

Yes, this is possible. Please note, however, that SFI will only fund the time spent at the industry host.

Q32. What letters of support are required for an application to the Industry Fellowship 2019 call?

At a minimum, applicants are required to submit letters of support from the Research Body, the Industry Mentor/Partner and the Technology Transfer Office of the Research Body. Additional statements and letters of support may also be required depending on the specifics of the application. These may include, where relevant, a statement from an SFI-funded Applicant, an SFI Centre Director letter of support, a conflict of interest statement and justification of a research fellow salary request. A full list of the letters of support that are required for Category A and Category B applicants is provided in Section 10 of the Industry Fellowship 2019 Call Document. Please note that Technology Transfer Office letters of support must be provided separately to the Research Body letter of support. Failure to supply a requisite letter of support will deem an application ineligible. Additional, unrequired letters of support will be removed from an application prior to review.

Q33. Do I need to address the gender element in research in my application to the Industry Fellowship 2019 call?

Yes. As part of your application on SESAME, you will be asked if there is a potential biological sex or social gender element to be considered in your research proposal. If you answer 'Yes' to this question, you will then be required to submit a statement to explain how the gender element will be considered in your research. If you answer 'No' to this question, you will be asked to explain why no gender dimension needs to be considered in your research proposal. In both cases, the maximum word limit for this statement is 1000 words. However, depending on the complexity of the project, applicants should note that the maximum word count may not be required.