

# Innovate for Ireland

## First Call



### **Key Information**

Application deadline

4<sup>th</sup> November 2024, 13:00 Dublin local time

Interviews

Week of 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2024 (anticipated)

Outcome of submissions

Week of 16<sup>th</sup> December 2024 (anticipated)

**For further information on the Innovate for Ireland Programme not included in this call document, please contact: [i4i@researchireland.ie](mailto:i4i@researchireland.ie).**

### **Terms of reference**

*While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy and reliability of this document, it is provided for information purposes only and as a guide to expected developments. It is not intended, and should not be relied upon, as any form of warranty, representation, undertaking, contractual, or other commitment binding in law upon Taighde Éireann – Research Ireland (“Research Ireland”), the Government of Ireland, or any of their respective servants or agents. Research Ireland Grant Conditions (to include General Terms and Conditions and Letters of Offer) shall govern the administration of Research Ireland grants to the exclusion of this and any other oral, written, or recorded statement.*

*All responses to this Call for Submission of Proposals will be treated in confidence and no information contained therein will be communicated to any third party without the written permission of the applicant except insofar as is specifically required for the consideration and evaluation of the proposal or as may be required under law, including The Research and Innovation Act 2024 and the Freedom of Information Acts 1997, (Amendment) 2003 and 2014.*

1	Overview of the Innovate for Ireland Programme .....	3
2	Features of the Innovate for Ireland Programme .....	4
2.1	Programme Remit .....	4
2.2	Guiding Principles for the Innovate for Ireland Programme .....	4
2.3	Eligibility and general requirements for participation .....	5
2.4	Funding provided.....	6
3	Application Procedure .....	6
3.1	General Proposal Submission Requirements.....	7
3.2	Section A: Application information, student/project details, Lead Applicant Letter of Support.....	7
3.3	Section B: Individual iScholar application form and CV .....	8
4	Proposal Review Process and Criteria.....	8
4.1	Shortlisting stage.....	8
4.2	Interview stage.....	9
5	Further Information .....	9
6	General Terms and Conditions, Policies & Positions.....	9
7	Appendices .....	10
7.1	Appendix 1 - Section A: Application information, student details and project details template .....	10
7.2	Appendix 2 - Section B: iScholar Application form template.....	12

## **1 Overview of the Innovate for Ireland Programme**

The objective of **Innovate for Ireland** is to attract the world’s leading research and entrepreneurial talent to Ireland to conduct advanced, multidisciplinary PhD research to address global sustainability challenges. This first call is seeking applications from established Research Ireland awardees to rapidly create the first group of **Innovate for Ireland iScholars**, who will go on to benefit from the opportunities of the full Innovate for Ireland Programme.

***This call seeks to fund approximately 10 iScholars over a period of four years. PhD students who have started (or will start) their studentship in 2024 can benefit from an increase of up to €6,000 to their stipend, to a level of €28,000<sup>1</sup>, for each year of their degree. Additional funding support for participation in the wider training and development elements of the Innovate for Ireland Programme will be provided at a later date.***

Over the next decade, it is envisioned that Innovate for Ireland will fund up to 1,200 doctoral scholarships with additional benefits, that will attract exceptional talent who may otherwise not have considered pursuing a PhD or, indeed, considered Ireland as a research destination for their doctoral studies. In order to deliver upon the vision outlined above, three pillars of activity will comprise the Programme, which all iScholars will participate in fully:

- 1. The Innovate for Ireland PhD Research Scholarship Programme:** iScholars will undertake advanced doctoral research at higher education institutions throughout Ireland that will deliver world class PhD training and supervision as part of agreed research projects to address global grand challenges.
- 2. The Innovate for Ireland Entrepreneurial, Leadership & Innovation Programme:** iScholars will undertake a world class, nationally delivered, multi-year, personal and professional development programme to equip them to thrive as entrepreneurial leaders who are catalysts for innovation and sustainable growth.
- 3. The Innovate for Ireland Innovation Ecosystem:** iScholars will participate in a cross-sectoral community of innovation leaders – building academic, professional and community networks that will amplify the impact of the Innovate for Ireland initiative. This will include an ambitious and vibrant cross-sectoral innovation network, including but not limited to an extensive range of informal learning activities such as mentorship and menteeship schemes, inspiration sessions, community activities, hackathons, cultural engagement, industry events and consultation groups, international conferences and awards programmes.

The iScholars will be a global community of world-class researchers and innovators, with a passion for entrepreneurship, in all its forms. Academic excellence and entrepreneurial capability will be the primary criteria in the selection of the students, with a vision that these exceptional candidates will collectively form the community of iScholars. The Programme will create a rich research and innovation community that develops solutions to complex world problems and supports students with the necessary skillsets and career development support for evolving workplaces. Innovate for Ireland will be delivered by Taighde Éireann - Research Ireland (“Research Ireland”) and Global Innovators Ireland (GII), in partnership with academic and industry partners. Research Ireland is the national research and innovation funding agency which was established on 1 August 2024; it amalgamates the activities of the Irish Research Council and Science Foundation Ireland. Research Ireland will oversee State funding for Innovate for Ireland and will manage the administration of the PhD Research Scholarship Programme. GII is a not-for-profit CLG founded to design and deliver Innovate for Ireland. GII’s role includes responsibility for corporate fundraising and corporate engagement with the initiative, global promotion, inputting into the design of the Entrepreneurial, Leadership & Innovation Programme with Research Ireland and delivering the Innovation Ecosystem.

---

<sup>1</sup> This level may be adjusted further, subject to the formal outcomes of the National Review of State Supports for PhD Researchers.

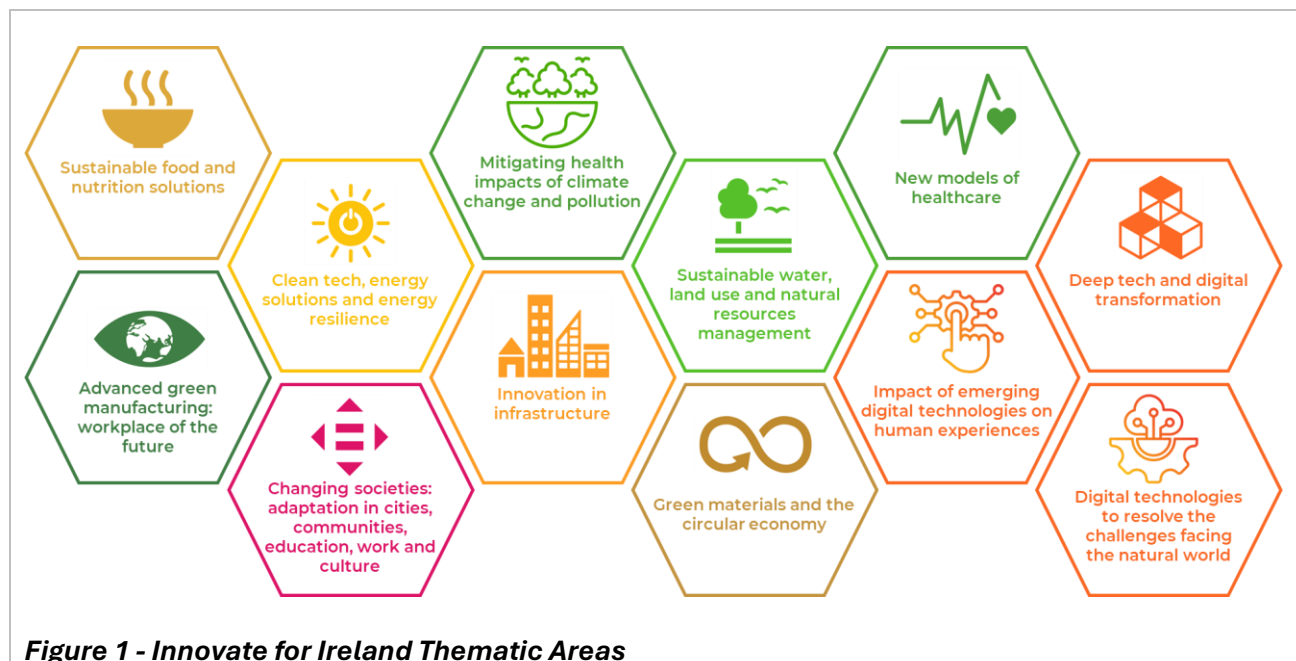
**The iScholars supported through this call will have an important role in the final development and success of the Innovate for Ireland Programme. As the first members of the iScholar community, they will have the opportunity to be ambassadors for the Programme, catalysing interest among and participation by other students in the wider research community.**

**As stakeholders in the Programme, they will be afforded a unique opportunity to inform key aspects of it, through providing early feedback on the design of the Entrepreneurial, Leadership & Innovation Programme and Innovation Ecosystem. This contribution will be recognised through the increased stipend that the iScholars receive.**

## 2 Features of the Innovate for Ireland Programme

### 2.1 Programme Remit

Applications will be accepted within the broad thematic areas outlined in the Figure below.



### 2.2 Guiding Principles for the Innovate for Ireland Programme

**The iScholars recruited through this call will benefit from taking part in the broader activities of the Innovate for Ireland Programme detailed below, as they are rolled out.**

- Each proposal for this call must be under one of the Innovate for Ireland Programme thematic areas outlined in **Figure 1** above.
- Each proposal for this call must have one Lead Applicant (who will be the lead supervisor), at least 1 PhD recruited in 2024 and may have multiple co-supervisors.
- As part of participation in the Innovate for Ireland Programme, placements for iScholars may be arranged in enterprise and/or other non-academic establishments.
- iScholars will undertake advanced doctoral research that will deliver world class PhD research training and supervision as part of agreed research projects that will address global challenges. Research by iScholars will deliver innovative solutions to global grand challenges, positioning Ireland as a leading force in sustainability research.

- iScholars will undertake a multi-year, personal and professional development programme to equip them to thrive as social and industrial entrepreneurial leaders, who are catalysts for innovation, public impact, and sustainable growth.
- iScholars will participate in a vibrant, cross-sectoral innovation network, including but limited to, an extensive range of informal learning activities such as mentorship schemes, inspiration sessions, community engagement and innovation, hackathons, cultural engagement, industry events and consultation groups, international conferences and awards programmes.
- The Entrepreneurial, Leadership and Innovation Programme and the Innovation Ecosystem will likely be delivered through models which will involve both in person participation and virtual attendance at various training sessions, activities and events.

## **2.3 Eligibility and general requirements for participation**

### **Eligibility and requirements of Lead Applicants**

Lead Applicants must be Research Ireland award holders on one of the following qualifying Research Ireland programmes and must be established investigators capable of supervising one or more students. **Applications are welcomed for students working across all disciplines.**

- A request for support for **one student** may be made by holders of Frontiers for the Future awards (as Lead Applicant or Co-Applicant).
- A request for support for **one or more students** may be made by holders of the following awards of scale<sup>2</sup>:
  - Co-Centres (Climate + Biodiversity + Water, Sustainable and Resilient Food Systems, as Republic of Ireland Lead Applicant or Co-Applicant),
  - Strategic Partnerships (as Lead Applicant or Co-Applicant),
  - 2016 Research Centres (as Lead Applicant or Co-Applicant),
  - Research Professorship (as Lead Applicant only).

Please note that for the above awards of scale, only one application can be submitted for each qualifying award. When seeking support for more than one student, it is strongly encouraged that the application include **students working across multiple disciplines**.

Please contact Research Ireland ([i4i@researchireland.ie](mailto:i4i@researchireland.ie)) in advance of submitting a proposal if you are unsure whether your award counts as a qualifying award.

**The Innovate for Ireland Programme is initially only open to applicants with the above qualifying awards. Applications are welcomed for students working across all disciplines who are supported through these awards. It is intended that future calls will be open to broader participation, without the requirement to hold a qualifying award.**

### **Eligibility of PhD student candidates**

PhD student candidates must have either started their PhD during 2024 or will start their PhD in 2024<sup>3</sup>.

---

<sup>2</sup> In all cases, the parent award of scale must be active for at least the duration of the PhD studentship for which support is being requested.

<sup>3</sup> This should be the official start date in terms of being registered/enrolled in the PhD programme.

## **Eligibility and requirements of the Research Body**

The Research Body is the institution responsible for the overall financial and administrative co-ordination of research programmes supported by funding from Research Ireland.

The Research Body must:

- Be a Research Ireland Eligible Research Body (ERB)<sup>4</sup>;
- Have the authority to confer Doctoral degrees, or must be associated with an organisation with the authority to do so.
- Adhere to best practice guidelines, including but not limited to the National Framework for Doctoral Education and QQI Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Research Degree Programmes.
- Be responsible for ensuring that the quality of the research meets the standards of the postgraduate research degree being undertaken by that student.
- Ensure that there is a fundamental research-related training component as part of the iScholar's studentship(s).
- Ensure that appropriate time and access is given to allow the iScholar(s) to participate in the wider training and development activities that will form part of the full Innovate for Ireland Programme, including the Entrepreneurial, Leadership & Innovation Programme and Innovation Ecosystem activities (once these are developed).
- Ensure that appropriate time and access is given to allow the iScholars(s) to participate in any placements in enterprise and/or other non-academic establishments that form part of the Programme.

## **2.4 Funding provided**

Each Lead Applicant can request funding from Research Ireland (direct costs) for at least 1 PhD for a period of 4 years. For this call, this funding will cover the costs associated with increasing the student's annual stipend to the iScholar level, which will initially be €28,000<sup>5</sup>. The students receiving this stipend increase will be expected to act as ambassadors for the programme, as well as actively informing the development of the Entrepreneurial, Leadership & Innovation Programme and Innovation Ecosystem pillars.

Once the full Innovate for Ireland Programme becomes active, there will be opportunities to receive supplemental funding to support participation in the wider iScholar training and development activities. The students must already have been recruited and enrolled in 2024 or will be by the end of the year. If they are not recruited in this time frame, Research Ireland reserves the right to decommit the unused budget.

## **3 Application Procedure**

**Applications to this Innovate for Ireland Call must be submitted to Research Ireland by the Lead Applicant. The application must be submitted to Research Ireland via email to [i4i@researchireland.ie](mailto:i4i@researchireland.ie).**

Each Lead Applicant should prepare an application to Research Ireland with plans to host at least 1 PhD being directly supervised by the Lead Applicant themselves and potentially co-supervised by another individual. PhD projects should be within the broad thematic areas outlined in **Figure 1**.

---

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/eligibility-related-information/>.

<sup>5</sup> This level may be adjusted further, subject to the formal outcomes of the National Review of State Supports for PhD Researchers.

**Deadline for submissions: 4<sup>th</sup> November 2024 at 13:00 Dublin local time**

### 3.1 General Proposal Submission Requirements

All text should be provided in Calibri font, size 11 with at least single-line spacing as well as a minimum margin size of 2.5cm. Prepare your submission according to the following instructions:

- Complete a **single copy of Section A** and a **copy of Section B for each student** and save these as **individual PDFs**. For Section 2 submissions, use the student's name as the filename when saving the document.
- Attach all documents (Section A document and completed Section B document for each student, saved as PDFs) to one email and submit directly to Research Ireland.

### 3.2 Section A: Application information, student/project details, Lead Applicant Letter of Support

See **Appendix 1** for a template for Section A. Provide the following information:

- Lead Applicant (Principal Supervisor) name, details and time commitment to the programme.
- Name of the host Research Body (the ERB).
- Names and details of Co-Supervisors.
- Details of the Lead Applicant's qualifying award.
- Student name(s) and official start dates of their PhD(s), which must be during calendar year 2024.
- For **each student**, provide:
  - The title of their PhD project.
  - A statement on how their project aligns with the themes of the Innovate for Ireland programme (max. 250 words).
- For **each student**, the Lead Applicant, or Primary Supervisor (for students on awards of scale – see **Section 2.3** above and the fourth point below) should prepare and enclose a letter of support, addressing the following:
  - Their track record in the recruitment and training of students to date.
  - How they envisage that hosting an iScholar will advance the overall goals of their research activities.
  - How they will ensure that the candidate(s) will have the time throughout the lifetime of their PhD to access and participate in the wider training and development activities, that will form part of the full Innovate for Ireland Programme. These will include the Entrepreneurial, Leadership & Innovation Programme and Innovation Ecosystem activities, as well as the potential for placements in enterprise and/or other non-academic establishments as part of the Programme. This participation should not impact on required activities within their PhD (research time, accredited institutional training modules, etc.).
  - For Co-Centres, Strategic Partnerships and the 2016 Research Centres, the letter of support for each student should be prepared by the **Primary Supervisor**. The single overall application may be coordinated and submitted by the Lead Applicant/Co-Applicant on the award.
- **Submissions must be approved by an authorised host Research Body representative by completing the Institutional Signatory Authority section of the application form. This provides confirmation that the host Research Body accepts and agrees with the Research Ireland Grant Conditions<sup>6</sup>, will meet the Eligibility and requirements of the Research Body**

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/sfi-general-terms-and-conditions/>

**set out above, that the applicant meets eligibility requirements for the programme and that the host institute will support the candidate to participate in the full Innovate for Ireland Programme. Unsigned applications will be declined without review.**

### 3.3 Section B: Individual iScholar application form and CV

- Provide a copy of the completed ‘iScholar Application Form’ for **each PhD student** that funding is being requested for (see **Appendix 2** for template). Use the student’s name as the filename when saving the document.
- Provide a copy of the candidate’s CV. The CV does not have to follow a particular format but should outline the candidate’s academic record, experience, achievements, etc., particularly those which may be relevant to participation in the Innovate for Ireland programme. Candidates are strongly advised not to include impact factors or other research performance metrics in their CV<sup>7</sup>.

It is the responsibility of the Applicant to ensure that eligible proposals are received by Research Ireland on, or before, the deadline indicated. Applications cannot be withdrawn and subsequently modified for re-submission in the same call. Applications not adhering to these requirements, or with incomplete content, will be deemed ineligible and will not be accepted for review, regardless of the date of submission.

## 4 Proposal Review Process and Criteria

Following submission, all applications will be checked for compliance with the requirements set out above. Incomplete applications will be declined without review. Applications to this call of the Innovate for Ireland Programme will be assessed through a 2-stage review process.

### 4.1 Shortlisting stage

Proposals will be shortlisted by international expert reviewers and Research Ireland staff, based on the following criteria:

- The commitment of the Lead Applicant to supporting the candidate PhD student becoming an iScholar, and the benefit that hosting them will bring to Lead Applicant’s overall research activities.
- The overall academic calibre of the PhD student, based on their CV details.
- The suitability and capabilities of the candidate for the Innovate for Ireland Programme, as demonstrated against the following competencies and characteristics:

<b><i>Innovation capacity</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Managing ambiguity; uncertainty; risk</li> <li>• Working with others/collaboration</li> <li>• Taking the initiative</li> </ul>
<b><i>Leadership capacity</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perseverance</li> <li>• Commercial acumen; identifying opportunities</li> <li>• Mobilising and inspiring others; self-awareness</li> </ul>
<b><i>Entrepreneurial drive</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creativity</li> <li>• Vision</li> <li>• Maximising opportunities</li> </ul>

<sup>7</sup> (research performance metrics include, but are not limited to, H-index, i10-index, G-index, H(2)-index, HG-index, Q2-index, AR-index, M-quotient, M-index, W-index, Hw-index, E-index, A-index, R-index, W-index, J-index).



<b>Making the most of Innovate for Ireland</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ambition to harness the unique training and mentoring opportunities as a launch pad for a successful career</li></ul>
--	---

The competencies for innovation capacity, leadership capacity and entrepreneurial drive are aligned with the European Commission’s **EntreComp framework for entrepreneurship competence**<sup>8</sup>.

## 4.2 Interview stage

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to attend an interview. Research Ireland will convene an interview panel which will include international experts. Candidates will give a presentation at interview related to their entrepreneurial, leadership and innovation competencies, as well as their motivation for participating in the Innovate for Ireland Programme, and answer questions from the expert reviewers. Further information about the topic of the presentation will be made available to shortlisted candidates in advance of the interview date. The expert reviewers will give final recommendations to Research Ireland on candidates to receive awards.

**Research Ireland is committed to building equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) within the Irish research and innovation sector.**

**Candidates are encouraged to contact Research Ireland directly at [i4i@researchireland.ie](mailto:i4i@researchireland.ie) should they require any assistance or reasonable accommodation(s) to enable their participation in the interview stage of the application process.**<sup>9</sup>

Research Ireland reserves the right to modify the review process. Applicants will be notified of any relevant modification to the review procedure. The final funding decisions are the sole and exclusive discretion of Research Ireland.

## 5 Further Information

For all additional queries please contact: [i4i@researchireland.ie](mailto:i4i@researchireland.ie).

## 6 General Terms and Conditions, Policies & Positions

In addition to complying with the Research Ireland Grant Conditions (to include General Terms and Conditions and Letters of Offer)<sup>10</sup> that the parent award was issued under, award holders are expected to be familiar and consult with relevant policies/positions<sup>11</sup> and with all relevant national policies.

<sup>8</sup> [https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/entrecomp-entrepreneurship-competence-framework\\_en/https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/entrecomp-entrepreneurship-competence-framework\\_en](https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/entrecomp-entrepreneurship-competence-framework_en/https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/entrecomp-entrepreneurship-competence-framework_en)

<sup>9</sup> In your correspondence, please do not provide any personal, medical information.

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/sfi-general-terms-and-conditions/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/>

## 7 Appendices

### 7.1 Appendix 1 - Section A: Application information, student details and project details template

**A Word document copy of this template can be downloaded from the Research Ireland website.**



# Innovate for Ireland

*First Call*

*Application Section A*

This form is to be completed by the Lead Applicant.

#### **Applicant Details**

Name of Lead Applicant	
Host Research Body	
Lead Applicant qualifying Research Ireland award (provide award type, status of Lead Applicant on award and award reference number)	
Proposed time commitment to the programme	
Name and details of Co-Supervisors	

#### **Student details**

Provide details for each student that will be hosted and for which a stipend uplift is being requested. If you are requesting support for more than three students, copy and paste in additional tables below.

Student name	
Official start date of their PhD (enrolment/registration date, must be during 2024)	
Title of their PhD project	
How their project aligns with the themes of the Innovate for Ireland programme (max. 250 words).	

Student name	
Official start date of their PhD (enrolment/registration date, must be during 2024)	
Title of their PhD project	

How their project aligns with the themes of the Innovate for Ireland programme (max. 250 words).	
Student name	
Official start date of their PhD (enrolment/registration date, must be during 2024)	
Title of their PhD project	
How their project aligns with the themes of the Innovate for Ireland programme (max. 250 words).	

**Institutional Signatory Authority (Vice President/Dean for Research, or representative)**

*Signature below confirms that the host Research Body accepts and agrees with the Research Ireland Grant Conditions (to include General Terms and Conditions and Letters of Offer), will meet the Eligibility and requirements of the Research Body set out above, agrees that the applicant meets eligibility requirements for the Innovate for Ireland Programme and that the host Research Body will support the candidate to participate in the full Innovate for Ireland Programme.*

**Unsigned applications will be declined without review.**

Name	
Position	
Host Research Body	
Signature	
Date	
Email	

**Letter(s) of Support**

Ensure that a completed Lead Applicant letter of support with this Section A form, addressing the following areas. Please note that for awards of scale, where support for more than one student is being sought, an individual letter of support should be included for each student, prepared by the relevant primary supervisor.

- Their track record in the recruitment and training of students to date.
- How they envisage that hosting one or more iScholars will advance the overall goals of their research activities.
- How they will ensure that the candidate(s) will have the time throughout the lifetime of their PhD to access and participate in the wider training and development activities, that will form part of the full Innovate for Ireland Programme. These will include the Entrepreneurial, Leadership & Innovation Programme and Innovation Ecosystem activities, as well as the potential for placements in enterprise and/or other non-academic establishments as part of the Programme. This participation should not impact on required activities within their PhD (research time, accredited institutional training modules, etc.).

## 7.2 Appendix 2 - Section B: iScholar Application form template

A Word document copy of this template can be downloaded from the Research Ireland website.



# Innovate for Ireland

*First Call*

## *Application Section B*

This form is to be completed by the PhD student and returned to the Lead Applicant.

Name of Candidate	
Lead Applicant for application (sponsoring PhD supervisor)	
Host Research Body	

Please note there are 10 questions in this application form and **ALL** questions must be answered to the best of your ability. Please keep to the **word limit** specified. Every statement is individual; there is no single, “right” model. Selectors are looking for an original portrait of you as a candidate for the Innovate for Ireland Programme.

Section 1: Innovation	
Q1) How do you generate ideas?	Max word count: 100
Q2) How do you go about expressing or communicating ideas in a compelling way that encourages broad understanding and support?	Max word count: 100
Q3) Have you ever come up with an innovative idea that had real world impact? Describe the idea, its execution and any relevant outcomes?	Max word count: 100

Section 2: Leadership	
Q4) How do you respond in the face of challenges that need resolutions?	Max word count: 100
Q5) How do you identify entrepreneurial opportunities that others may miss?	Max word count: 100
Q6) How do you motivate people? How do they typically respond to you?	Max word count: 100

Section 3: Entrepreneurship	
Q7) How would you navigate entrepreneurial risk?	Max word count: 100
Q8) How do you collaborate to achieve ambitious outcomes?	Max word count: 100
Q9) What does entrepreneurship mean to you and how do you embody it?	Max word count: 100

Q10) How do you plan to use Innovate for Ireland as a launch pad for the rest of your career?	
	Max word count: 500