Who Can Apply to Science Foundation Ireland

Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) is committed to supporting individuals throughout their academic career lifecycle (or career progression). SFI recognises that supporting such individuals is the foundation to building research capacity, expertise, and reputation through funding excellent scientific research. To this end, SFI has developed a suite of programmes that provide researchers with an opportunity to advance their programmes of research and mentoring experience whether they are contracted to a single entity (as defined in this policy) or hold a secondary appointment.

The policy: To be eligible to apply for an SFI Research Grant,[1] the applicant must be in one of the following two categories:

1) An applicant who holds a primary contract of employment, that is, an employment contract in which the researcher devotes a minimum of 50% of a full time equivalent (FTE) with an Eligible Research Body (ERB)[2]. This might include:

   i) Permanent members of the academic or non-academic staff at an Eligible Research Body (ERB), who hold a primary contract of employment that will span the duration of the Grant awarded.

   ii) Academic or non-academic staff at an ERB who hold, or will hold, a primary contract of employment that will span, at least, the period of the Grant and who will be recognised by the ERB as an Independent Researcher[3] from the time the Grant commences and for at least the duration of the Grant (if awarded).

2) A Clinical Researcher/Scientist who is either employed by, or affiliated with, an ERB and who holds a minimum 50% employment contract with a clinical research facility/practice within the public health system in Ireland.

   Individuals who hold a contract of employment (whole or in-part, primary or secondary) with industry or any other private sector entity, are not deemed eligible to apply[4]. In such instances, these individuals should contact the relevant programme manager for further information.

Applicants who hold secondary appointments

SFI recognises a secondary appointment as concurrent, defined by a contract of employment,[5] working arrangement[6] or conferment of title or privileges, with another ERB, or a Research Performing

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[1] This policy does not apply to individuals intending to apply for funding under the SFI Discover Programme.

[2] For a complete list of Eligible Research Bodies, please see SFI's Eligibility Information.

[3] An Independent Researcher, sometimes referred to as an "Independent Investigator" or "Established Researcher", is an individual who conducts research independently, identifies research problems and opportunities, selects appropriate methodologies and approaches, advances a research agenda, and has the ability to establish collaborative relationships. They will have secured significant independent funding in their name and will have full autonomy to conduct their research. They will be affiliated with an Eligible Research Body, who in turn, will recognise and support them as an Independent Researcher (adapted from the European Commission's definition for "Established Researchers").

[4] With the exception of the SFI Discover Programme. Further, people who hold a contract of employment with industry or any other private sector entity may be eligible if said employer is applying with an ERB within the context of a programme operating under a State aid exemption (GBER).

[5] In which the researcher devotes **no more** than 50% of their time commitment.

[6] Including both formal and informal agreements and/or contracts where the terms and conditions are clearly defined and understood by all parties.

Organisation that is not an existing approved ERB, or a public body, and which may or may not be based in Ireland. Where an applicant holds such an appointment, the following will apply:

Secondary appointment categories: SFI recognises and supports[7] four main categories of secondary appointments and affiliations, namely Titular Academic, Healthcare, Administrative and Interorganisational-Joint, as well as several subcategories thereunder (Figure 1). Full definitions can be found in SFI's Secondary Appointments Framework Related Terms and References **here.**
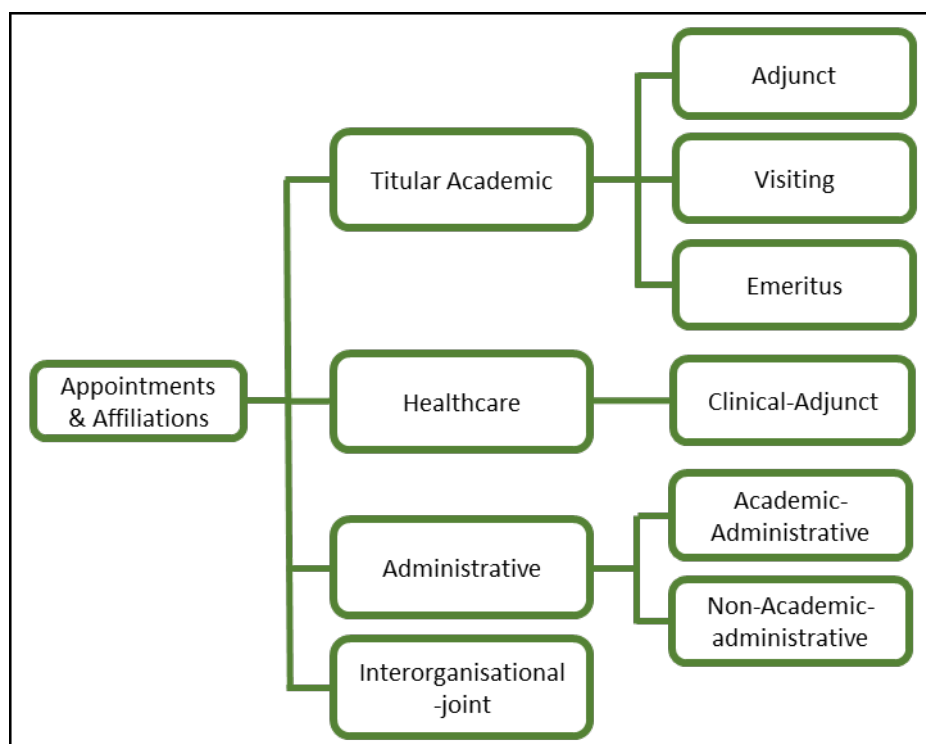

Figure 1. SFI Framework of secondary appointments and affiliations.

What to do: Applicants who hold a secondary appointment at the time of submitting an application to SFI for Grant funding, or who intend to hold a secondary appointment during the term of the Grant, if awarded, must notify SFI (via the relevant SFI programme call email inbox) at the submission stage of their Grant application with the details of the appointment[8]. Where a Grant holder's status[9] changes during the term of the Grant, they must contact the relevant SFI programme call email inbox (as per the SFI Grant General Terms & Conditions) and outline how their ability to maintain their time commitment to the Grant, complies with that specified in their approved application for funding or as specified in the Letter of Offer[10].

Considerations for the Letter of Support: The host ERB should be informed about the applicant's secondary appointment and, in the Letter of Support, confirm their capacity to allocate a sufficient percentage of their time to the Research Programme as outlined in the Programme call guidance.

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[7] Subject to an individual Programme Call's eligibility requirements being met.
[8] With reference to the SFI Framework of Secondary Appointments.
[9] Relating to their secondary appointment.
[10] Where an appointment is accepted during the lifetime of the Grant.

Furthermore, where applicable[11], the host ERB should confirm its recognition of the applicant as an Independent Researcher.

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[11] As per the Programme call guidance.