



SFI Grant Application Budget Policy

Version 14th July 2008

This document details the financial/budgetary information you should provide when submitting a proposal to SFI. Please read through this document carefully in advance of submitting a proposal to SFI. Applications which do not comply with the following instructions may be returned without review.

The scope of this document is currently limited to the Principal Investigator, Research Professor, Research Frontiers and PIYRA programmes.¹ Additional programmes will be included by SFI from time to time, details of which may be found at www.sfi.ie.

**PLEASE READ THROUGH THIS DOCUMENT IN ITS ENTIRETY BEFORE
SUBMITTING YOUR APPLICATION TO SCIENCE FOUNDATION IRELAND**

**PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS POLICY APPLIES TO CALLS FOR PROPOSALS
LAUNCHED FROM 10/05/2008**

¹ Once funded, grant holders have flexibility in the design of revised budgets in order to best achieve the research objectives of the funded research programme. SFI acknowledges the budget flexibility needed to run a research programme and hence accepts that the budget proposed in the grant submission is an initial budget outline only. Future changes will be possible as needed and as justified to achieve an approved proposal's scientific objectives, within the terms of the corresponding Letter of Offer and SFI Terms and Conditions.

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SECTION 1. STAFF and PERSONNEL

Financial/budgetary information in this section is intended to cover the following areas:

- Salaries (Grant Applicants and Team Members)
- Cost of Living/National Wage Agreement increases
- Pay increments
- Pensions
- Maternity
- Long-Term Sick Leave
- Termination Costs
- Student Stipends & Fees

Science Foundation Ireland does not act as an employer with respect to personnel funded on a SFI grant, and therefore in all cases where support is provided on the grant for the employment of staff, the Research Body undertakes to issue a contract of employment that is in compliance with relevant law and regulations.

The institution must accept full responsibility for the management, monitoring and control of all the research work funded as a result of this grant and all those persons (including employees, students and visiting researchers) employed in or involved with any research funded as a result of this grant.

Science Foundation Ireland expects that the institution will employ fixed-term contract staff in accordance with current legislation. All staff employed as a result of this grant must be recruited in compliance with the Research Body's requirements and recommendations for good practice in recruitment. We expect an individual's annual leave entitlement to be taken within the period of the grant.

1. SALARIES of APPLICANTS & CO-APPLICANTS

Henceforth SFI will not fund the salary of the grant applicant/co-applicant.

Exceptions to this rule are SFI's suite of recruitment programmes, where salary is allowed for the applicant (PI), i.e., Stokes Professor, Stokes Lecturer, Research Professor and PIYRA, and other situations as outlined below. Further details of these programmes may be obtained at www.sfi.ie.

The Stokes Professor/Lecturer programme facilitates strategic, planned recruitment by Research Bodies. The (revised) Research Professor and (revised) PIYRA programmes are intended to facilitate more opportunistic, fast-turnaround recruitment of established and emerging researchers, respectively. It is envisaged that established/emerging researchers recruited via the Research Professor/PIYRA instruments would transition to the Research Body's academic career track after the first term of the Research Professor/PIYRA award.

1.1. Stokes Professor/Lecturer

For the Stokes Professorship/Lectureship programmes SFI contributes a fund to the Research Body to cover salary, employer PRSI and other incidental costs (€90,000 for Stokes Lecturers/€180,000 for Stokes Professors). The salary should be consistent with the Research Body's academic pay scale.

1.2. Research Professor

For the (revised) Research Professor Programme (see www.sfi.ie)¹ SFI will fund the applicant's salary in two stages.

Stage 1: for Years 1 & 2 SFI will fund salary at up to 200% of the professorial scale at the Research Body.

Stage 2: for Years 3-5 SFI will fund salary at up to 100% of the professorial scale at the Research Body.

1.3. PIYRA

For the (revised) PIYRA Programme (see www.sfi.ie)², SFI may contribute to the applicant's salary. SFI will contribute in a manner that is consistent with the Research Body's academic pay scale. The level of salary support requested should not exceed that for the academic grade to which the individual is likely to be appointed, should they be recruited as a faculty member by the Research Body during or after the term of the PIYRA award. In cases where the applicant is already employed by the Research Body for the term of the award, SFI will not contribute to the applicant's salary.

1.4. Exceptions

For applicants who are or turn 65 years of age during a prospective PI grant SFI may contribute a level of salary to bridge the gap between the applicant's verifiable pension and the applicant's academic pay scale prior to turning 65 years of age.³

^{1,2} Revised versions of the both the Research Professor and PIYRA programmes are under design and are scheduled for roll out before end of 2008.

³ It is the responsibility of the Research Body to ensure that it employs staff in accordance with HEA rules/guidelines and current legislation.

For the avoidance of doubt, in accordance with SFI's policy of not funding salary except for recruitment programmes, SFI will not fund the core salary of the lead applicant(s) in the SFI Principal Investigator or Research Frontiers programmes.

2. SALARIES OF TEAM MEMBERS

- SFI will fund contributions to salaries of team members according to the following guidelines. SFI expects that the majority of funded teams will be composed of postgraduate students and postdoctoral researchers. Information about postgraduate students may be found in the next section of this document.
- In circumstances where it is appropriate to have part-time team members, the salary paid must be commensurate with their time commitment to the project.
- SFI does not fund contributions to the salaries of collaborators. However, it is possible for collaborators in eligible Irish Bodies to receive research funds from an SFI project grant.
- SFI does not fund the salary or benefits of staff within Irish research bodies that are in receipt of salaries and benefits for the duration of the grant from the research body.
- It is the responsibility of the Research Body to document the recruitment and salary negotiation process, which should be available to SFI upon request.

2.1. Research Assistants

SFI will fund a contribution to the salary of a Research Assistant according to the SFI Team Member Budgeting Scale ([*SFI team member budgeting scales*](#)). The scale has been developed from the IUA Contract Researcher Pay Scale, Version 20, July 2007. The point on the scale should be determined by qualifications and experience, and the rationale for appointment at that level should be explained in the Budget Justification.

2.2. Postdoctoral Researchers

SFI will fund a contribution to the salary of a postdoctoral researcher according to the SFI Team Member Budgeting Scale ([*SFI team member budgeting scales*](#)). The scale has been developed from the IUA Contract Researcher Pay Scale, Version 20, July 2007. The point on the scale should be determined by qualifications and experience, and the rationale for appointment at that point should be explained in the Budget Justification. SFI would expect to see individuals directly post-PhD appointed at point 1 of the scale. In the interests of sustainable career progression, this level is broadly aligned with entry-level academic salaries (e.g., lecturer below the bar, junior lecturer, etc.).

2.3. Research Fellow

For senior team members who, in the opinion of SFI, have unique and essential skills, SFI will fund a contribution to the salary of a Research Fellow (according to the SFI Team Member Budgeting Scale, Level 3, see the [*SFI team member budgeting*](#)

[scales](#)). Such a contribution will be made only in cases where, in the opinion of SFI, such an appointment is justified, where the Research Body has made provisions for an open and transparent recruitment process, and where the individual will be contractually differentiated from the standard cohort of postdoctoral researchers. Requests should be made at point 1 on the scale. This level is broadly aligned with mid-level academic salaries (e.g., lecturer above the bar, senior lecturer, etc.); therefore such positions should be recognised by the employer as comparable to such.

2.4. Senior Research Fellow

For critical senior team members leading a significant strand of research SFI will fund a contribution to the salary of a Senior Research Fellow (according to the SFI Team Member Budgeting Scale, Level 4, see [SFI team member budgeting scales](#)) in cases where, in the opinion of SFI, such an appointment is justified, where the Research Body has made provisions for an open and transparent recruitment process, and the individual will be contractually recognised as a senior researcher. Requests should be made at point 1 on the scale. This level is broadly aligned with academic salaries such as senior lecturer, associate professor, etc.; therefore such positions should be recognised by the employer as comparable to such.

2.5. Technicians/Laboratory managers

Except in the cases of very large awards and specific equipment grants, contributions to salary for dedicated technicians and laboratory managers will not usually be funded via SFI awards. Where such roles are warranted, this should be clearly justified and institutional salary guidelines should be applied. SFI will contribute to a competitive salary, based on the applicant's verifiable current salary, or an Irish Third-Level Institution salary that has been negotiated and agreed with the Research Body.

2.6. Administrative support

Except in the case of very large awards, contributions to salary for administrative support roles will not usually be funded via SFI awards. Where such roles are warranted, this should be clearly justified and institutional salary guidelines should be applied. SFI will contribute to a competitive salary, based on the applicant's verifiable current salary, or an Irish Third-Level Institution salary, that has been negotiated and agreed with the Research Body.

2.7. Other roles

Please contact SFI directly for information about contributions to salaries for other team members. Information regarding postgraduate students may be found below.

3. ANNUAL COST OF LIVING INCREASES

SFI will contribute an annual 3% cost-of-living increase to eligible salaries that it funds. For team members on the SFI team member fund scale this 3% increase is already included each year up to 2014 ([SFI team member budgeting scales](#)). For grant applicants where SFI contributes to core salary (i.e., Research Professor and PIYRA), an annual 3% cost-of-living increase is permitted, where such core salaries do not already incorporate cost of living (or national wage agreement) increases.

4. ANNUAL INCREMENTS TO SALARY

For applicants to the (revised) PIYRA and (revised) Research Professor programmes SFI will contribute to annual single-point increments for eligible core salaries, provided such increments are consistent with the Research Body pay scale norms. Please provide evidence of relevant pay scale points and associated increments in the Budget Justification section of your grant application to SFI.

For team members (other than the applicant(s) and students) SFI will contribute to annual, single-point salary increments as defined above and tabulated in the [SFI team member budgeting scales](#). Once individuals reach the top of the relevant scale, no further increments will be applied.

5. PENSIONS

SFI does not fund employer pension contributions via its programme grants. Do not include employer pension contributions in your grant applications to SFI. SFI reserves the right to return applications that include requests for employer's pension contributions without review.

SFI will meet its financial obligations with respect to the Fixed Term Workers Act (FTWA) for all new awards granted from 1 January, 2006 onwards, once SFI has received clarification on the nature of the Government pension scheme to be put in place for the Higher Education Sector. SFI understands that negotiations between the HEA and the relevant Government departments in relation to pension provision by Research Bodies are at an advanced stage and it is thought that clarity will be brought to the situation in the near future. It is acknowledged that institutions need to keep a record of the potential underlying pension liability which is accruing in relation to research staff covered by the provisions of the FTWA. However, we would request that these records should be maintained separately from the accounting records relating to each individual SFI award, i.e., that the cost is not charged to the award.

6. MATERNITY LEAVE

SFI will fund the cost of replacing a SFI-funded team member who is on paid maternity leave. This salary contribution will be to a maximum of the salary contribution level of the team member on maternity leave (less the state maternity contribution, where

applicable) for a maximum duration of 26 weeks. The grant holder should apply to SFI using the *SFI Eligible Leave Supplement Request* form ([Eligible Leave supplement form](#)) should they recruit a replacement team member.

7. LONG-TERM SICK LEAVE

SFI will fund the cost of replacing a SFI-funded team member who is on paid, certified long-term sick leave. This salary contribution will be to a maximum of the salary contribution level of the team member on leave (less any state contribution, where applicable) for a maximum duration of 26 weeks. The grant holder should apply to SFI using the *SFI Eligible Leave Supplement Request* form ([Eligible Leave supplement form](#)) should they recruit a replacement team member.

8. TERMINATION COSTS

SFI does not fund redundancy or other termination costs.

<p>As stated previously, SFI does not act as an employer with respect to personnel funded by its research grants. It is the responsibility of the Research Body to ensure that it employs staff in accordance with HEA rules/guidelines and current legislation.</p>

9. POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS STIPENDS AND FEES

Student stipends and fees should be requested as separate items, and listed as separate line items in budget tables where possible.

1. Fees

Fees must be requested at the current levels paid by the Research Body and the Research Body will be expected to provide evidence of these levels. Annual increases to fee amounts are eligible where these increases have been formally set by the Research Body, and the appropriate supporting documentation can be provided. Where future rates are unavailable SFI will fund an annual 3% increase on fees. If reduced fees are offered in the fourth year of the studentship, this should be reflected in the proposal to SFI.

In cases where the grant applicant has identified a highly competitive non-EU candidate for a PhD position they may request a supplement to assist with covering the cost of non-EU postgraduate student fees up to the level currently being paid by the Research Body (which shall be subject to verification), but up to a maximum of €15,000 over the lifetime of the award. This supplement may be requested in addition to the student stipend and the standard EU fees. Details of the recruitment process and the student's CV must be included in the application and the additional funding for non-EU fees will be granted on a case-by-case basis. If a non-EU PhD student candidate is identified after the award has been granted, the PI may adjust their budget to pay the additional amount required to

cover non-EU fees. This can be done at the discretion of the PI under SFI's flexible budget policy.

2. Stipends

SFI funds student stipends at a flat rate of €80,000 over four years. The provision of four-year support is to facilitate participation in structured PhD programmes. Whilst the level and manner of stipend payment to the student is ultimately at the discretion of the Research Body, SFI suggest a payment profile in the order of €18,500 in Year 1, €19,500 in Year 2, €20,500 in Year 3 and €21,500 in Year 4.

SFI accepts that in certain disciplines larger stipends may be required to attract postgraduate students. Where the grant applicant can demonstrate that the discipline requires a larger stipend SFI may, in exceptional circumstances, fund higher stipends.

SECTION 2. EQUIPMENT

Details of all requested equipment necessary for the research programme should be itemised. Small equipment of a value of less than €2,000 should be included in the materials and consumables section. For an equipment item in excess of €50,000, the quote number and cost must be included in the budget justification section. The documentation supporting this quotation must be kept in a manner and form that is suitable for audit purposes and such documentation shall be made available to SFI on request.

Equipment Maintenance Charges are allowable as a Direct Cost on SFI awards. The following conditions apply:

- The Maintenance Charges must be supported by a maintenance contract with the supplier in relation to the specified item of equipment
- The Maintenance Charges must relate to new equipment, which is clearly identifiable and funded by SFI under a specific award
- The Maintenance Charges will be funded over the term of the specific award only
- Proposed Maintenance Charges should be categorised in grant submissions as part of Equipment costs in the Budget Summary and analysed separately in the detailed Equipment section of the proposed budget
- If approved, the Maintenance Charges will be analysed under the Equipment category in the Letter of Offer

The final decision on whether Maintenance Charges are funded will rest with the SFI Executive Committee or the SFI Board Sub-Group on Programme Grants, as appropriate, in accordance with the normal SFI grant-approval process.

SECTION 3. CONSUMABLES/MATERIALS

An outline of all materials and consumables that will be used in the course of the research programme should be provided. Note that these may include access to facilities and services not available in the host research body, such as the costs associated with accessing international databases or commissioning specific experiments in other laboratories.

SECTION 4. TRAVEL

Only travel costs for journeys directly related to the progress of the research programme may be requested as a direct cost on the research grant. The applicant should outline the details of travel expenses directly related to conferences, scientific collaboration on the research programme, or learning special research techniques and should indicate the number of team members participating in each event. Where possible please supply the conference name and location. In the case of working visits, the rates sought for subsistence and other allowances may be no more than those that the research body's permanent staff may claim.

SECTION 5. INELIGIBLE COSTS IN GRANT APPLICATIONS

- Applicant Salary (exceptions noted above)
- Collaborator Salary
- Employer Pension Contribution
- Maternity and Long-Term Sick Leave (can be applied for as need arises)
- Redundancy or Other Termination Costs
- Contingency or Miscellaneous Costs
- Replacement Teaching Costs (except in the case of PICA, and in other exceptional circumstances. Please contact SFI in advance of any such request)
- Clinical time buyout
- Maintenance contracts on equipment not purchased on the grant
- Hospitality and Entertainment costs
- Office Equipment and Supplies
- Technology Transfer
- Patent Costs
- Workshop Organisation
- Journal Subscriptions
- Relocation Expenses

TABLE 1: Summary of allowable personnel-related budget elements in grant submissions

	Principal Investigator	Research Professor	PIYRA	RFP
Applicant/Co-applicant Salary *	no	yes	yes	no
Employer PRSI	no	yes	yes	no
Cost-of-Living Increase	no	yes	yes	no
Increments to Salary	no	yes	yes	no
Team Member Salary **	yes	yes	yes	yes
Employer PRSI	yes	yes	yes	yes
Cost-of-Living Increase	yes	yes	yes	yes
Increments to Salary	yes	yes	yes	yes
Pension	no	no	no	no
Maternity Leave ***	no	no	no	no
Long-Term Sick Leave ***	no	no	no	no
Termination Costs	no	no	no	no

* Applicant/Co-applicant refers to the persons named on the SFI grant application

** Team Member refers to the post doctoral researchers, research assistants etc. who are on the Applicant's team

*** Funding for replacement positions can be sought during a grant (not at initial grant submission)