

SFI guidance on the addition of SFI Funded Investigators to an SFI Research Centre

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Addition of SFI Funded Investigators to a Research Centre

An SFI Funded Investigator (FI) is an SFI designated title which recognises the level of input of a researcher to a large scale SFI award such as an SFI Research Centre. This guidance document, although targeted towards investigators in SFI Research Centres, is also relevant to other awards of scale including those made under the SFI Partnerships Programme. Please refer to the [SFI Partnerships](#) webpage for further information.

An FI is an academic member of staff or independent researcher employed by an eligible Irish Research Body, who is undertaking a management role in a research project within the Research Centre. Being an independent researcher means that the FI is not tied to a particular award or funding agency and has the freedom and capacity to carry out research within the Research Centre.

FIs have responsibility for a research project, budget and, where relevant, personnel within the Research Centre and will serve under the direction of one or more of the Research Centre co-Principal Investigators (co-PIs).

Eligibility Criteria for Research Centre Funded Investigators

1. Employment Status

The FI must be a member of the academic staff of an eligible Research Body, **or**

A contract researcher with a contract that covers the period of the project, who is recognised by the Research Body as an independent investigator and will have an independent office and research space at the host Research Body for which the researcher will be fully responsible for at least the duration of the SFI Research Centre project on which they work. Postdoctoral researchers, research fellows or other non-independent researchers are not eligible to be FIs.

It should be noted that FI salaries are not an eligible cost for the SFI Research Centres Programme. Consideration should be given to time commitments on existing awards, including other SFI awards. Where applicants have significant time commitments on existing awards, the relevant research funder should be consulted as required. This is particularly important where an applicant is in the first 12 months of an SFI early career award (such as the Starting Investigator Research Grant), due to the time commitment required.

Retired or emeritus members of academic staff, meeting all other eligibility criteria, are eligible to apply if their institution makes the necessary commitments. Further details are available on the SFI [eligibility information](#) webpage.

2. PhD Duration

The FI must have held a PhD or equivalent qualification for at least three years.

- The official date of a PhD is defined as the year that the degree was conferred (i.e. the year printed on the official PhD certificate). The number of years is determined by calendar year.
- Details of SFI's PhD [equivalence policy](#) can be found on the SFI website.

3. Senior-Author Publications

The FI is required to demonstrate that they are a senior author on at least three international peer-reviewed articles. Only original research publications, and not review articles or other secondary research literature, are acceptable. For this programme, senior authors are defined as follows:

- Authors that are listed as first or joint-first author, reflecting the fact that they have provided the greatest intellectual contribution, have held the primary responsibility for collecting and analysing data, and for the writing of the manuscript and associated drafts.
- Last authors will also be considered as a senior author, since this position generally reflects their 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.); however, it is of overriding importance that the applicants should be able to convince and reassure SFI 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 the researchers were responsible for the finance associated with the research that was reported.

4. Management of Research Centre Budget

An FI is expected to manage a portion of the Centre budget. FIs can be added to existing Centre projects, as long as they will be assigned part of the budget to manage going forward. This budget can be from SFI, industry, NE-NC (Phase 2 only), or any combination of these sources. For FIs being added to a Centre with industry and/or NE-NC budget that is new to the Centre, the start date of the newly funded project is required to start after the submission date of the request for addition of the FI. Once this condition is met then the industry/NE-NC funding can be counted as Centre cost-share.

To facilitate the addition of FIs who are awaiting confirmation of funding, a conditional request for the addition of an FI can be made by a Centre. This is a request where the approval of the FI application is conditional on successful winning of an NE-NC grant or the successful negotiation of an industry project. This means that Centres can, for instance in the case of a Phase 2 Centre, assist in the preparation of an NE-NC grant application with a non-Centre researcher, and if the grant is awarded, the researcher joins the Centre and the grant can be attributed to the Centre. Conditional FI applications should be clearly communicated in the request, including the expected date of the funding decision whereupon the result must be communicated to the Centre's Scientific Programme Manager.

*SFI may consider applications for FIs which do not meet one or more of the above eligibility criteria, if a strong rationale and strategic case is provided regarding the added value to the Centre, and how the addition of this individual as an FI will positively impact on the delivery of the Research Centre objectives.

Request Submission Process

To request the addition of a new FI to the Research Centre, the following documents must be submitted via SESAME:

1. A completed request form for the addition of an FI signed by the Research Centre Director.
2. A letter of support from the proposed FI's Research Body, including mention of the individual's employment status that meets the eligibility criteria laid out above.

3. A signed letter/email from the proposed FI that s/he is prepared to act as an FI in the Centre and will assume the responsibilities for the Research Centre award that are attached to that role.
4. The CV of the proposed FI, clearly showing the PhD conferral date and publications, with senior author publications highlighted.

Any additional pertinent information may also be provided, and SFI may seek additional information that is considered relevant and/or appropriate.

Please note that the date when an FI officially joins a Centre is:

- a) The date of submission of the request, in the case of a standard FI addition.
- b) For a conditional request awaiting confirmation of funding, the FI joins on the date that notification is sent to SFI of a positive funding decision.

In each case Centres are responsible to ensure that only outputs after the date of the FI joining are affiliated to the Centre.

Affiliation of Funded Investigator SESAME Profile

The aggregated research outputs from all affiliated team members (i.e. Co-Applicants, FIs, etc.) are used to calculate the KPI results of the Centre, which are updated in January and August of each year. As such we require a statement that the proposed FI grants permission for her/his individual SESAME profile to be affiliated to that of the Research Centre.

Upon affiliation, the Centre Admin **will** be able to:

- c) Run an automated report that extracts relevant Research Outputs that the FI has entered in their SESAME profile.

The Centre Admin **will not** be able to:

- d) View or report on any other part of the FI's profile, such as their date of birth, year of PhD, etc.

- e) Edit any records on the FI's SESAME profile, i.e. the report is a 'read only' operation.

Further information on SESAME, as well as guidelines on how to update Research Profiles, can be found on the SFI [website](#).

Any personal data collected by SFI is processed and stored in accordance with all applicable data protection law, including the General Data Protection Regulation, in accordance with SFI's [privacy policy](#).