

Collaborative Postdoctoral Fellowship Programme 2026

Frequently Asked Questions



Call launch (Pre-application) 01 October 2025 closing on 17 December 2025.

Please read the CPFP 2026 [Guidance Notes](#) for further information.

1 Eligibility*

* Please note the eligibility requirements for the CPFP 2026 leadership team at **group level** was updated on **Wednesday 29 October**. This update was communicated to higher education institution research offices and to prospective lead applicants registered in GEMS under the CPFP 2026 call.

The eligibility requirements were adjusted to reflect that each group level eligibility criterion (with the exception of the PhD or equivalent research experience requirement) can be shared or combined across leadership team members. For example, grants secured by all leadership team members **can be jointly assessed** to fulfill the research grant eligibility requirement.

Originally, the HRB intended for each group level criterion to be fully met by a single member of the leadership team. This is no longer an eligibility requirement. Please note the information provided, regarding this point, in the available CPFP 2026 webinar recording and pdf slide deck should be disregarded as the webinar was recorded before this change was implemented. For group level eligibility criteria please reference pages 8 and 9 of the CPFP 2026 Guidance notes.

All eligible leadership teams will be assessed on merit in line with the assessment criteria during the panel and peer review stages. It is envisaged that applications may be more competitive where each eligibility criterion is met in full by one team member.

1.1 Am I eligible to be the lead applicant member of the leadership team?

The lead applicant must:

- a) Hold a post (permanent or a contract that covers the duration of the award) in a HRB-recognised host institution in the Republic of Ireland as an independent investigator and
- b) Be listed as lead applicant or co-lead applicant on only one CPFP 2026 application.

1.2 Can a co-lead applicant be based outside of the Island of Ireland?

- No. All leadership team members must be based on the island of Ireland with the lead applicant required to be based in the Republic of Ireland.

1.3 Can a co-lead applicant be an individual who holds an adjunct position affiliation with an institution on the island of Ireland.

- No. An academic co-lead applicant must either 1) hold a post (permanent or a contract that covers the duration of the award) in an institution of higher education on the Island of Ireland as an independent investigator or 2) be an individual who will be recognised by their institution upon receipt of the HRB CPFP grant as a member of the academic staff or a contract researcher.

1.4 Do all members of the leadership team need to fulfil at least one of the six leadership group eligibility criteria.

- No. There is no minimum requirement for each member of the leadership team with regard to the group level criteria.

1.5 Are there any eligibility criteria that must be fulfilled separately by each leadership team member?

- Yes. Each member of the leadership team, whether lead or co-lead, must fulfil the relevant individual member eligibility criteria. Please reference page 9 of the CPFP 2026 Guidance notes.

1.6 Where a co-lead is eligible on the basis that they are an individual who will be recognised by their institution upon receipt of the HRB CPFP grant as a member of the academic staff or a contract researcher, can they receive salary from the grant?

- No. Only the salary of the recruited HRB fellows is supported by the grant.

1.7 Are all members of the leadership team required to possess a PhD qualification?

- No. Only one member of the leadership team is required to hold a PhD or HRB approved PhD equivalent research experience.
- For more information regarding HRB approved PhD equivalent research experience and the associated application form please [click here](#). For the purposes of CPFP eligibility assessment the completed form must be received by the HRB no later than Monday 01 December 2025.
- Once a researcher is confirmed to have HRB PhD equivalent research experience, it is valid for all HRB funding schemes which require PhD or PhD equivalent research under eligibility criteria. Confirmation of HRB PhD equivalent research is valid indefinitely and does not require renewal. Therefore if you have previously been confirmed (by email from the HRB) to have HRB PhD equivalent research experience, you do not apply for this again.

1.8 Are there any eligibility criteria for co-applicants.

- No. There are no eligibility criteria which co-applicants must fulfil.

2 HRB Fellows

2.1 Can the recruited HRB fellows be remunerated on the IUA Research Fellow L3 salary scale?

- No. The recruited postdoctoral researchers (HRB Fellows) can be salaried on the IUA L2 scale at either PD 1 or PD 2 level. The point on the PD2 scale on which each recruit is placed will be determined by the required level of experience and expertise for each HRB fellow role.

2.2 Can potential postdoctoral researchers be named on the application?

- While the HRB cannot influence the recruitment processes at any university it is expected that the recruited postdoctoral researchers would not have been named on the application to avoid any perceived conflict of interest. Importantly, each CPFP grant will support three PD researchers who must be recruited through an open, public recruitment process.

2.3 Do all recruited fellows have to be based in the host institution of the lead applicant?

- No. This is allowed but is not a requirement. The recruited HRB fellows may be contracted and based in the academic partner institution of either the lead or co-lead applicants or of a co-applicant based on the island of Ireland. The location of each fellow must be appropriately justified in the context of the collaborative research programme.

2.4 Can the recruited HRB fellows claim the CPFP grant as an independent grant in their own name?

- No. The HRB fellows are not members of the CPFP leadership applicant team and therefore cannot claim the CPFP grant as their own. However, they will be referred to as HRB postdoctoral fellows and considering the open recruitment process to this programme they can reference the scheme and role (e.g. HRB CPFP fellow) in future funding applications.

3 Host institution

3.1 Can the host institution be an approved HRB host institution located in Northern Ireland?

- No. The host institution must be that of the lead applicant and must be based in the Republic of Ireland. Co-lead applicants however can be based on the Island of Ireland. A list of HRB approved Host Institutions is available to download on the HRB website ([Before you apply | HRB | Health Research Board](https://www.hrb.ie/funding/funding-opportunities/before-you-apply/)) <https://www.hrb.ie/funding/funding-opportunities/before-you-apply/>.

4 Research scope

4.1 Are clinical trials in scope for CPFP 2026?

- No. Clinical trials are not within the scope of the CPFP 2026. Clinical trials are supported through a dedicated HRB funding call – Investigator Led Clinical Trials (ILCT) which is currently open for applications. Please see ILCT webpage for further information: [Investigator-Led Clinical Trials \(ILCT\) Programme 2025](#).

4.2 Are pre-clinical studies within scope?

- No. Pre-clinical studies, including those which involve the evaluation of potential therapeutic interventions in cell lines and/or animals or their tissues, are excluded. Pre-clinical studies, which involve the evaluation of potential therapeutic interventions in human samples are excluded where the primary outcome is exploratory.

4.3 Are there any aspects of basic biomedical research which would be considered within scope?

- No. Basic biomedical research is out of scope for CPFP 2026. For example, biomarker discovery studies are out of scope.

5 When is the deadline for pre-applications?

The deadline is Wednesday, **17 December 2025** at 13:00.

If you need further information, please contact:

cpfp@hrb.ie