



Irish Aid

Rialtas na hÉireann

Government of Ireland

Ireland Fellows Programme - SIDS
2021/22

STAGE 1
Guidance Note for
Applicants

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STAGE 1 Guidance Note

Please read through this document carefully, and in its entirety prior to completing the application form.

1 The benefits of studying in Ireland

Ireland is an English-speaking European country which has been a member of the European Union since 1973. Situated on the Western edge of Europe, Ireland is a relatively small, though highly connected, island nation with a population of five million people.

Ireland is an advanced knowledge economy whose focus on education has been at the core to government policy since the country gained independence from Britain in 1922. As a result, Ireland boasts one of the most highly educated populations in the world, ranking 4th globally for the percentage of our population who have completed tertiary education with 56% of 24-35 years olds having attained at least an undergraduate degree. In this regard, Ireland lies ahead of all other English speaking countries in the world with the exception of Canada and has the second most educated population in Europe.

Ireland is an open economy and our location, combined with our highly educated workforce, has served to attract significant inward investment over recent decades. Today, Ireland is a leader in the technology, bio-technology and pharmaceutical sectors, with most leading international companies choosing Ireland for the location of their European headquarters. With many of the world's biggest and best companies locating their key strategic research facilities here, Ireland offers an unparalleled ecosystem that sees academic researchers working hand-in-hand with small home-grown and start-up companies in partnership with some of the most powerful multinationals on the planet, through shared research projects and programmes, often supported by the Irish government.

Ireland's consciousness of its unique historical legacy has resulted in a higher education system which offers globally recognised expertise in a broad spread of programmes around development, conflict studies, gender, diversity and human rights. Ireland's universities lead the world in terms of their social and economic impact. The 2019 Times Higher Education university impact rankings (based around adherence to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)) ranked Ireland second in the world due to their strength in promoting good health and well-being, sustainable cities and communities, climate action and partnerships for the SDGs.

Studying at postgraduate level in Ireland offers a unique opportunity to join programmes that are driving innovation and changing lives worldwide.

For more information on studying in Ireland please see: <https://www.educationinireland.com>

2 Ireland Fellows Programme - SIDS – 2021/2022

The Ireland Fellows Programme enables early to mid-career professionals from eligible countries, with leadership potential, to benefit from a prestigious, world-class, quality education contributing to capacity building. It offers selected students the opportunity to undertake a fully funded one-year master's level programme at a higher education institution (HEI) in Ireland. The award covers programme fees, flights, accommodation and living costs. Eligible master's level programmes in Ireland commence in August or September each year and, depending on the programme, will run for between 10 and 16 months. The Ireland Fellows Programme promotes equal opportunity and welcomes diversity.

The Ireland Fellows Programme - SIDS – is one of a number of commitments set out in the Government's Strategy for Partnership with Small Island Developing States, launched in June 2019. The SIDS Strategy reflects the breadth of areas where Ireland and SIDS already collaborate, and where we have shared interests in global outcomes, including on climate action and ocean protection.

The Programme is intended to support successful candidates on their return home in strengthening their countries' capacity to address the challenges posed by climate change, and enhance the protection of the blue economy and marine life. It is also envisaged that they will contribute to building enduring positive personal and professional relationships with Ireland, promoting institutional linkages.

The aims of the Programme are to nurture future leaders; to develop in-country capacity to address climate change and its associated challenges; and to build positive relationships with Ireland.

The Ireland Fellows Programme is fully funded by the Irish Government and is offered under the auspices of the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA). It aligns with the Irish Government's commitment under *Global Ireland* and the national implementation plan for the *Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)*, *Ireland's Policy for International Development*, *Ireland's Strategy for Partnership with Small Island Developing States (SIDS)*, and *Ireland's International Education Strategy*. Programme implementation in Ireland is supported by the Irish Council for International Students (ICOS).

Eligibility

To be eligible for an **Ireland Fellows Programme – SIDS** fellowship award commencing at the beginning of the academic year 2021, applicants must:

- Be a national of one of the eligible SIDS countries and resident in one of the eligible SIDS countries - they can be a national of one country and resident in another, in the same region, as set out here:

Pacific and Asia: Fiji, Kiribati, Maldives, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu.

Caribbean: Antigua & Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, St Vincent & the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago.

Africa: Cabo Verde, Comoros, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritius, Sao Tomé and Príncipe, Seychelles.

- Have a minimum of three years' work experience that is **directly relevant** to their proposed programme(s) of study (this can include internships).

- Hold a bachelor's level academic qualification from an accredited and government-recognised higher education institution, with a minimum grade point average of 3.0 (4.0 scale) - i.e. a first class honour, or second class honour, Grade 1 (in some cases a second class honour Grade 2 may be accepted, if the applicant has sufficient directly relevant work experience). It must have been awarded by 2009 or later (i.e. within the last 12 years).
- Not already hold a qualification, have started a programme, or be due to start a programme in the academic year 2020/21, at master's level or higher.
- Be applying to commence a new programme at master's level in Ireland no sooner than August 2021.
- Be able to demonstrate leadership abilities and aspirations, as well as commitment to addressing climate change and its associated challenges within their own country.
- Have identified and selected three relevant programmes from the Directory of Eligible Programmes, available at https://www.irishaidfellowships.ie/sites/default/files/are-you-eligible/ireland_fellows_programme_-_sids_-_directory_of_programmes_2021-22.pdf.
- Have a clear understanding of the academic and English language proficiencies required for all programmes chosen.
- Must not have applied to the Ireland Fellows Programme on more than one previous occasion.
- Be in a position to take up the Fellowship in the academic year 2021/2022.

The **application process** consists of three stages:

- **Stage 1 - preliminary application:**
Opens 17 August 2020, closes 13 September 2020
 The Stage 1 application form can be found below. This is a short application form which allows our selection panel to assess your eligibility under the various criteria of the Programme.

 You will be contacted by the Irish Embassy or Irish Aid Office once final decisions have been made (no later than 25 September 2020) and informed whether you have been successful or unsuccessful at Stage 1. Please do not otherwise contact the Irish Embassy or Irish Aid Office during this period.
- **Stage 2 - detailed application:**
Opens 28 September 2020, closes 18 October 2020
 If your Stage 1 application is successful, you will be invited to move on to Stage 2 of the process, and complete a more detailed application form including the submission of all required documents. (*Please see note on page 8 which provides details of all stage 2 requirements.*)
- **Stage 3 –English language tests and interviews:**
 (Please see note on page 9 which provides details of all stage 3 requirements).

3. Stage 1 Application - Detailed guidance notes for applicants

Please read through these notes fully before you submit your Stage 1 application.

Documentation required:

The Stage 1 process is a preliminary application which seeks information under the headings detailed below and requires you to submit a scanned copy of the following documents with your application form:

1. **Your passport** (only the identity page is required), or other official identification document if you do not have a passport at this time;
2. **Your undergraduate degree award certificate.** Temporary certificates are not accepted, unless studies were completed within the previous 12 months;
3. **(Optional at this stage): Final degree academic transcripts. Please also include the explanation of the grading system, where provided with your transcript or otherwise available;**
4. **(Optional at this stage): Your IELTS English language test certificate. Only certificates dated September 2019 or later are acceptable.**
If you already have an English language test result from an exam other than the IELTS exam, this may also be accepted. Please include with your application form.

Your application will not be valid unless copies of documents 1 and 2 above are included.

Submitting applications:

Applications must be typed and be submitted by email to the relevant email address below. Where you are a national of one country and resident in another in the same region, as set out in the eligibility requirements, please apply according to your nationality rather than where you are resident:

Relevant Embassy of Ireland/Irish Aid Office	Processes applications from applicants who are nationals of:	Email address
Australia	Fiji Nauru Papua New Guinea Solomon Islands	australiafellowships@dfa.ie
New Zealand	Kiribati Samoa Tonga Tuvalu Vanuatu	pacificfellowships@dfa.ie
Irish Aid office	Maldives Marshall Islands Micronesia (Federated States of) Palau	SIDSFellowships@dfa.ie

	Timor-Leste	
Irish Aid office	Antigua & Barbuda Bahamas Barbados Belize Cuba Dominica Dominican Republic Grenada Guyana Haiti Jamaica Saint Kitts and Nevis Saint Lucia St Vincent & the Grenadines Suriname Trinidad and Tobago	SIDSFellowships@dfa.ie
Portugal	Cabo Verde Guinea-Bissau	lisbonfellowships@dfa.ie
South Africa	Mauritius	SouthAfricaFellowships@dfa.ie
Irish Aid office	Comoros Sao Tomé and Principe Seychelles	SIDSFellowships@dfa.ie

Q1. Personal information:

You will be asked to provide your name, gender, nationality, country of residence, date of birth and contact details.

Q2. Education:

This section requests information on your undergraduate qualification, the institution attended and the dates of study. This qualification must be accredited and have been awarded by a government-recognised university or college. It must have been awarded by **2009** or later (i.e. within the last 12 years).

Preferably your degree should be at first class honour or higher-second class level. In some cases a lower second-class degree will be considered, if the applicant has sufficient directly relevant work experience.

Please include a scanned copy of your final undergraduate degree award certificate, **and, if available**, your undergraduate degree academic transcript indicating your final grade. "Temporary" certificates are not acceptable unless studies were completed within the previous 12 months.

English language proficiency:

Irish higher education institutions require a high standard of English language proficiency and this must be formally certified, normally through the International English Language Test (IELTS-www.IELTS.org).

IELTS examines competency in English language across reading, writing, speaking and listening and is necessary for admission to all Irish HEIs – there are no exceptions. Most HEIs require a score of 6.5

overall, but some require a higher overall score, or specific scores within each band. The [Ireland Fellows Programme - SIDS Directory of Eligible Programmes](#) will indicate the levels required for each programme. It is the applicant's responsibility to be aware of the IELTS score required for all the programmes selected.

You can apply through Stage 1 of this process without having completed your IELTS test, however, you must have noted the IELTS score required for your selected programmes and considered whether you can achieve this grade.

If you have completed an IELTS test, provide full details as requested under question 2 of the application form and note that the test is only valid if completed within 24 months of the proposed commencement of your studies in Ireland (i.e. September 2019).

If you already have an English language test result from an exam other than the IELTS exam, this may also be accepted. Please include details as requested.

Q3. Work experience:

All applicants must have a minimum of three years' relevant work experience.

You will be asked to name your employing organisation, provide your job title and indicate (in years and months) how long you have worked with this organisation. You are also asked to provide details of previous work experience you may have. If you are unemployed at present you can include your previous work experience here, including relevant internships.

You are asked to provide brief details of any leadership positions you hold, or have held in the past. Leadership roles can include those held in work, in volunteer work, within social activism, in community organisations, as class/work representative, or college roles.

Q4. Master's programme choices:

Using the Ireland Fellows Programme - SIDS Directory of Eligible Programmes (available at https://www.irishaidfellowships.ie/sites/default/files/are-you-eligible/ireland_fellows_programme_-_sids_-_directory_of_programmes_2021-22.pdf), you are asked to list details of the three master's programmes you would like to pursue in Ireland, ranked in order of choice (1, 2, 3). In choosing these programmes, please take account of the relevancy of these programmes to your work experience; to your future; and to addressing climate change and its associated challenges in your country. Please make sure that you have a clear understanding of the academic and English language proficiencies required for all programmes chosen.

Q5. Why do you wish to be considered for a Fellowship in Ireland?

The final question provides you with an opportunity to demonstrate your leadership potential and show how your goals align with those of the Ireland Fellows Programme. Your response (no more than 250 words) should explain your motivation for applying for this Fellowship, with reference to how the specific programmes of study in Ireland which you have chosen would assist you in your career aspirations; how they would help you work towards addressing climate change and its associated challenges in your country; and how you would propose to develop links between your country and Ireland. You are expected to demonstrate some knowledge of Ireland and Irish higher education.

Declaration

Please read carefully and acknowledge as requested.

Appendix

Our Development Policy is aligned with SDG 16 on building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels, and we are encouraging applications from the broadest possible base.

If you have a disability or belong to a minority or disadvantaged group, you are invited to disclose this information here if you wish. All disclosures will be treated in confidence and will not negatively affect your application.

Information disclosed here will be used to create anonymous, summary statistics which we use for internal monitoring and reporting.

If you have disclosed a disability, and you are successful in your application for a Fellowship award, we may follow up with you on information you provide here, and with your consent will provide such details to the management agency for the Ireland Fellows Programme, so that any necessary supports can be arranged. If you do not choose to disclose a disability here, you may do so at a later stage in the application process.

Please tick the box on the form to explicitly consent to the Department using the personal information you have provided in this section for the purposes outlined above. You may withdraw this consent by contacting the Embassy of Ireland you have made your application to.

***** FOR INFORMATION – STAGE 2 APPLICATION PROCESS*****

Stage 2 Opens 28 September 2020 and closes on 18 October 2020.

If, following assessment of Stage 1 of the application process, you are invited to complete the Stage 2 application form, please note that you will be required to accompany that application with a number of important documents. Stage 2 applications and supporting documents are submitted by email.

Documents required:

1. **One recent passport-sized photograph, attached as per instructions on the front of the application form;**
2. **A copy of the graduation certificate for each higher education qualification you have completed;**
3. **A copy of the academic transcripts for each higher education qualification you have completed. Please also include the explanation of the grading system, where provided with your transcript or otherwise available;**
4. **Letters from two academic referees on official letterhead with original signatures. These references must be from academics who have taught you personally;**
5. **A copy of the identity page of your passport. If you do not have a passport at this time, another form of certified official identification must be provided;**

If you are shortlisted following Stage 2 and the interview process you will be required to submit a certified copy of the identify page of your passport.

6. Your original IELTS score report, if available. Please note that this test must have been taken no later than September 2019;

If you already have an English language test result from an exam other than the IELTS exam, this may also be accepted. Please include with your application form.

If you are shortlisted following stage 2 and the interview process and you do not have the English language certification required for your master's programme in Ireland, you will be required to take the examination and pass it to the standard required. Please see the following section on Stage 3 of the Application Process.

7. Your current C.V.

***** FOR INFORMATION – STAGE 3 APPLICATION PROCESS*****

If, following assessment of Stage 2 of the application process, you are invited to Stage 3, please note the following:

- Stage 3 Applicants who do not yet have the English language certification required for their master's programmes in Ireland will be provided with a coupon in order to take the Duolingo English language test. This is an online test that can be taken at home;
- Stage 3 Applicants who either already have the English language certification required for their master's programmes in Ireland, or who achieve a score of 110 on Duolingo, will be invited for interview. Interviews will take place in November and December 2020, and will take place remotely by video or telephone conference;
- Applicants who are invited to interview will be required to provide certified copies of their documents. The submitted documents must bear the official stamp and signature of the certifying authority. Where original documents are not in English, certified true copies of official English translations should be provided. **Photocopies of certified documents will not be accepted;**
- Applicants shortlisted following interview who do not yet have the English language certification required for their master's programmes in Ireland will be invited to take the IELTS English Test, or in some cases another accepted English language test, and will need to pass it to the standard required for their selected programmes.

Applicants shortlisted following interview

Applicants shortlisted following interview, who have the English language certification required for their master's programmes in Ireland, will be notified whether they have been selected to go forward to the next stage of the process as either a Candidate or a Reserve Candidate.

Applicants selected to go forward to the next stage of the process as a **Candidate** will be notified that their application will be forwarded to the management agency for the Ireland Fellows Programme. Once their documentation is verified and in order, they will be provided with information on making programme applications to Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in spring 2021. Applications should not be made to HEIs in Ireland until invited to do so. Application fees will be paid by the Department of Foreign Affairs for shortlisted Candidates.

Those applicants placed on a **reserve list of candidates** will be contacted if a place becomes available, and at that point will be invited to commence applications to their chosen programmes of study in Ireland.

When Candidates are invited to apply to HEIs in Ireland, priority will be given to their choices in the order they have listed them in their application. Candidates will normally be invited to apply to two programmes, their top ranked programme and either their second or third choice. Programme places cannot always be guaranteed. In the case of more than one offer being received from their programme choices they will be required, for logistical reasons, to accept the programme which they have ranked highest within their application.

Final decisions on the award of Fellowships will be confirmed in June/early July 2021. The academic year in Ireland is from autumn 2021 to summer/autumn 2022.

Please note that a medical form is required for successful Fellows before travel to Ireland so that, where appropriate, we can discuss with them any necessary supports.

4 Ireland Fellows Programme – SIDS - Stage 1 Application Form 2021/22

ONLY TYPED APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED BY EMAIL ARE ACCEPTABLE

The closing date for receipt of Stage 1 applications and accompanying documents is **13 September 2020**.

Applications should be submitted **by email** to the relevant Embassy of Ireland (see page 5 of the [Guidance Note](#) for contact details).

Before completing this Application Form, please carefully read the Guidance Note for Applicants

Have you included a **scanned copy** of the following documents with your application?

1. Your passport (only the identity page is required), or other official identification document if you do not have a passport at this time.
2. Your undergraduate degree award certificate.
3. Your undergraduate degree academic transcript, if available at this time. Please also include the explanation of the grading system, where provided with your transcript or otherwise available.
4. Your English language test (IELTS) certificate, if you have one at this time. Only certificates dated September 2019 or later are acceptable

If you already have an English language test result from an exam other than the IELTS exam, this may also be accepted. Please include your certificate with your application form.

Where did you hear about the Fellowship Programme?

- Social Media (please specify Facebook, Twitter, Whatsapp...)
- University/College
- Word of Mouth
- Radio/Newspaper
- Government Source (please specify)
- Other (please specify)

Your application will not be valid unless copies of documents 1 and 2 above are included.

1. Personal information:		Embassy Code No.
Surname		
First or given name <i>as it appears on your passport or official document</i>		
Gender		
Nationality		
Country of residence		
Date of birth (day/month/year)		/ /
Contact details		
Phone no.		
Main email address – <i>it is vital that we can communicate with you by email. Please provide the email address that you most regularly check. If this is a work address, please also provide your personal email address.</i>		

Have you ever previously applied for the Ireland Fellows Programme? Yes No

If yes, please list year(s) in which you previously applied and indicate if you were successful:

For Embassy use only:

2. Education:	
Highest education award attained (e.g. bachelors/diploma...)	
University/College name and location	
Dates (from-to) your undergraduate qualification must have been awarded by 2009 or later	From (month/year) / to (month/year) / Total number of years
Final overall grade achieved <i>Please provide final GPA score if available</i>	Grade GPA score GPA scale
Field (e.g. engineering, social science,...)	
Other higher education award attained	Bachelors/diploma... University/College Year Final overall grade Field
IELTS test results (if available) Date of test: (day/month/year) Must be dated September 2019 or later	Date: / / (Day/Month/Year) Overall score: Writing score: Reading score: Speaking score: Listening score:
If you have the results of another English language test (e.g. TOEFL), please provide details here	Name of test: Date: Overall score:
For Embassy use only:	

3. Work Experience: *Please refer to Guidance Note for Applicants*

A) Your employing organisation*	
Current Job title	
How long have you worked with this organisation?	years and months
B) If applicable, list in chronological order any <u>previous positions</u> you have held with <u>this</u> organisation, indicating your job title and start and finish dates (month/year).	
Job title	(month/year)
	/ to /
	/ to /

C) If you have previous work experience outside the organisation where you currently work, please state your job title and start and finish dates (months/years). This may include internships. If you are currently unemployed, please include your previous work experience here.

Job title	(month/year)
	/ to /
	/ to /
	/ to /

D) Total number of years' relevant work experience
 Please provide the total number of years of work experience that is directly relevant to your proposed programme(s) of study.

years and months

E) Please provide brief details of leadership positions you hold or have held in the past (e.g. in work, in volunteer work, within social activism, in community organisations, as class/work representative, or college roles).

Position	(month/year)
	/ to /
	/ to /
	/ to /

For Embassy use only:

4. Master's programme choices in Ireland:

Please ensure you have carefully read through the Directory of Eligible Programmes and the Guidance Note for Applicants before completing this question.

	University/college name	Full programme title	Programme code <i>Can be found on HEI master's programme website</i>
1			
2			
3			

For Embassy use only:

5. Why do you wish to be considered for a Fellowship in Ireland?

In 250 words or less, please explain your motivation for applying for this Fellowship, with reference to how the specific programmes of study in Ireland which you have chosen would assist you in your career aspirations; how they would enhance your capacity to work towards addressing climate change and its associated challenges in your country; and how you would propose to develop links between your country and Ireland. Do not exceed the word limit.

For Embassy use only:

DECLARATION

I acknowledge that the information and documents I submit as part of my application will be shared with:

- (i) the management agency for the Ireland Fellows Programme
- (ii) the Irish Embassy, and
- (iii) the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs

When your application form is received, we create a record in your name, which contains much of the personal information you have supplied. This personal record is used solely in processing your candidature. Such information held is subject to the rights and obligations set out in the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

The Ireland Fellows Programme is fully funded by the Irish Government and is offered under the auspices of the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA). It aligns with the Irish Government's commitment under Global Ireland and the national implementation plan for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Ireland's Policy for International Development, and Ireland's International Education Strategy.

The Department of Foreign Affairs (the Department) is committed to protecting your personal data and your privacy. This Data Privacy Notice lets you know how, and why, we use your personal information.

The Department has identified Article 6(1)(e) of the GDPR and Section 38(1)(b) of the Data Protection Act 2018 as lawful bases for processing your personal data. Section 38(1) provides that processing of personal data is lawful to the extent that it is necessary and proportionate for the administration of any non-statutory scheme, programme or funds where the legal basis is a function of a controller conferred by or under an enactment or the Constitution". In addition to the provisions of [Bunreacht na hÉireann/the Constitution of Ireland](#) and the International Treaties which guide Ireland's foreign policy work, the power to collect and process data, is bestowed to the Department by The Ministers & Secretaries Acts 1924 to 2017.

Information on your rights under the GDPR, including the contact details of the Department's Data Protection Officer, can be found here:

<https://www.dfa.ie/media/dfa/alldfawebsitemedia/aboutus/Data-Privacy-Notice.pdf>

The Department reserves the right to amend this privacy notice and an updated notice will be issued where required.

I have read and understand the following:

We do not ask whether applicants have a criminal record at the application stage. However, applicants should note that a criminal record may be a reason for a refusal of a visa or for entry to Ireland. If an applicant has a query about this, they are advised to contact the relevant Irish Embassy.

I certify that all the information I have given is true, complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

Name

Date: / / (Day/Month/Year)

Appendix

Our Development Policy is aligned with SDG 16 on building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels, and we are encouraging applications from the broadest possible base.

If you have a disability or belong to a minority or disadvantaged group, you are invited to disclose this information here if you wish. All disclosures will be treated in confidence and will not negatively affect your application.

Information disclosed here will be used to create anonymous, summary statistics which we use for internal monitoring and reporting.

If you have disclosed a disability, and you are successful in your application for a Fellowship award, we may follow up with you on information you provide here, and with your consent will provide such details to the management agency for the Ireland Fellows Programme, so that any necessary supports can be arranged. If you do not choose to disclose a disability here, you may do so at a later stage in the application process.

Please tick the box to explicitly consent to the Department using the personal information you have provided in this section for the purposes outlined above. You may withdraw this consent by contacting the Embassy of Ireland you have made your application to.