

2025 SEAI Energise Fellowship Programme

Frequently Asked Questions - April 2025

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This document collates responses to questions submitted during the live 2025 SEAI Energise Fellowship Programme Webinar held on the 2nd of April 2025, as well as responses to other frequently asked questions submitted directly to SEAI.

As this is a competitive call, SEAI cannot provide feedback on draft proposals. For more information on the SEAI-Based Fellowship Topics, please send your queries to energyresearch@seai.ie by April 23rd, 2025 and the answers will be published in the FAQ.

For full details of the call, please download the 2025 SEAI Fellowship Call Document, and Application Form available from our website: <https://www.seai.ie/grants/research-funding/research-fellowship/>

If you have a question that has not been addressed below, please contact energyresearch@seai.ie.

Query topics

General Application Queries.....	3
1. Webinar	3
2. Project start dates	3
3. Fellowship Project Duration	3
4. Fellowship Suitability.....	3
5. What support is available in SEAI for fellowships in terms of remote working / flexibility?	3
6. Applications.....	3
7. Evaluation and Interview.....	4
8. Support for applicants.....	4
9. General Fellowship queries	5
10. Submitting your application via PEP	5
11. Intellectual Property and Data Management Queries	6
12. Fellowship Topic Related Queries	6
13. Supporting Documentation and Letters of Support	6
Applicant Eligibility Queries	8
14. Third level educational bodies.....	8
15. Fellowship Eligibility	8
16. Applicants from outside the Republic of Ireland	9
17. Applicant eligibility / Visa requirements	9
Financial/ Budgetary Queries	9
18. Overheads.....	9
19. Budget	9
20. Support for Travel Costs / Expenses	10
21. Reimbursement process.....	10

General Application Queries

1. Webinar

Q: Is the webinar (April 2nd 2025) recorded?

A: The webinar is available to view at the following [link](#).

2. Project start dates

Q: What is the projected start date for the Fellowship?

A: Successful applicants to the 2025 SEAI Energise Fellowship Programme are expected to start from Q3 2025. Project start dates are individual and are not uniform across all successful applicants. Individual start dates are agreed and set only when contracts are issued to successful applicants.

Further updates on overall application timelines will be provided throughout the Call process.

We do not anticipate any start dates to be earlier than Q3 2025.

3. Fellowship Project Duration

Q: What is the maximum duration of a proposed fellowship project under this Call?

A: Fellowships will be 2 years' duration. Longer durations will be considered in exceptional circumstances if well-justified in the application.

4. Fellowship Suitability

Q: Is a DORA CV required?

A: The application form gathers all information required for the application and Section 2 follows the structure of a narrative CV. The application form also requests a statement of Motivation - providing a statement to demonstrate interest in and suitability for the proposed Fellowship. This may include an outline of professional experience, how the Fellowship would enhance their career development and personal motivation for the submitted Fellowship proposal.

Q: Is prior experience of completing research projects important?

A: Under Section 2 of the application form, applicants have the opportunity to provide information about previous research. Details of the evaluation criteria can be found in the call document.

5. What support is available in SEAI for fellowships in terms of remote working / flexibility?

Q: What sort of remote working or flexibility would be possible for SEAI-Based Fellowships in SEAI?

Q: Is it possible to work from a 3rd level institute remotely with regular monthly visit to SEAI for the SEAI-Based Fellowships?

A: SEAI is currently operating a hybrid working model, and it is expected that fellows would be based in the SEAI office at least two days per week in 2025, however this is subject to change. It is anticipated that fellows would be based at SEAI Head Offices, which are located at 3 Park Place, Dublin 2. Other SEAI office locations may be considered on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the SEAI Fellowship supervisor and SEAI.

6. Applications

Q: Can a fellow submit more than one application?

A: Yes, applicants may submit more than one proposal. However, as it would not be possible to undertake more than one project in tandem, preference would need to be specified **in the motivation statement of the application** should more than one application be shortlisted.

Q: Can a fellow have two or more academic mentors?

A: It is possible for the candidate to have two mentors, however there should be a primary mentor who will take responsibility for the administrative management of the fellowship within the host 3rd level educational body. The primary mentor should be a member of academic staff that is core funded or has a contract that extends

beyond the end-date of the proposed project. The roles of both mentors should be outlined in the letters of support accompanying the application.

Q: Can schematics and figures be added to proposal?

A: Relevant schematics and figures may be incorporated within the Application Form.

Q: Do law-related topics in the field of energy fall under the remit of the Academic Fellowship?

A: Eligible project proposals include projects that address SEAI's remit and are aligned with the objectives of SEAI Research, Development and Demonstration programme as outlined in the [Call document](#).

Q: Does SEAI strictly adhere to the maximum page limits in the application?

A: Applicants should adhere to the maximum word counts outlined for each section. The completed application form should not exceed 35 pages.

Q: Is there a limit on number of applications with same Academic Mentor?

A: There is no limit on the number of applications with the same Academic Mentor. However, should all applications be successful further clarification may be sought as to the capacity of the Mentor to support multiple Fellows.

Q: My application is 12months academic + 3 months secondment to industry. Is that possible or only 12 months is feasible?

A: SEAI Energise Fellowships are 2 years in duration. There is currently no provision for secondment to industry.

7. Evaluation and Interview

Q: Who would be involved in the technical evaluations and interview process?

Details of the evaluation process are contained within the Call document. SEAI cannot share further information in relation to evaluation.

Q: Will the use of AI tool declaration affect the evaluation?

A: In the interests of responsible use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools and transparency, applicants are asked to declare the use of any generative AI tools in the preparation of applications and to describe which tools (with version specified), where the tool was used and to what extent. Applicants should also confirm that the use of generative AI or AI assisted tools in the production of the application has been appropriately disclosed and referenced.

Applicants should also check if their 3rd level educational body has any policies or restrictions on the use of AI tools in research applications.

Q: Is there a rubric for the application that outlines the weightage of each section?

A: Further details can be found in the Evaluation Process and Criteria section of the [Call Document](#) for both types of Fellowship.

8. Support for applicants

Q: Is there a support contact for a project team who would like to receive assistance with an application?

Can we discuss the fellowship project idea with SEAI to see its fit before we start building the project proposal?

A: If you have any queries on the application process or the programme, please do not hesitate to contact us at energyresearch@seai.ie. For full details of the call, please download the 2025 SEAI Fellowship Call Document, and Application Form available from our website: <https://www.seai.ie/grants/research-funding/research-fellowship/>

Questions on the SEAI-Based Fellowship topics only will be accepted until April 23rd and answers to these will be published in the FAQ document.

Q: I have never done this before and conscious of May 14th deadline, any broad idea of how long timewise it might take to complete the actual form/how detailed is the form?

A: Please review the Application Form, Call Document and associated links as soon as possible, these are all available to download from our website: <https://www.seai.ie/grants/research-funding/research-fellowship/>. Guidelines on the number of words per section are outlined within the application form.

9. General Fellowship queries

Q: Will an SEAI-Based fellow need to be responsive, on an ad hoc basis, to requests for data and insights from within SEAI during the fellowship? If so what proportion of the time would that take?

A: It is expected that SEAI-Based fellows will spend at least 80% of their time on their research project and less than 20% time on SEAI operational work.

Q: What level of supervision will be provided within SEAI?

A: Each SEAI-Based fellow will have an assigned supervisor within SEAI who will provide support and guidance throughout the fellowship.

Q: What is the success rate of this call?

A: Ultimately, this will depend upon the applications submitted to the call, and the quality of the proposals.

Q: How many fellowships of both kinds are available?

A: The Programme budget is not split between the SEAI-Based and Academic Fellowship Categories.

Q: Can the fellowship be held in conjunction with any other awards?

A: It is anticipated that that successful awardees will work full-time on their Fellowship unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Q: Can the successful applicants, while holding this fellowship, apply for other calls (from SFI, IRC, and SEAI)?

A: SEAI do not have any restrictions in relation to applying for research funding while holding an SEAI Fellowship. Full terms and conditions are provided in the contracts issued to successful applicants

Q: Can a PI or Co-PI of a SEAI funded project apply for this fellowship?

A: This is possible, however, if awarded it is anticipated that that successful awardees will work full-time on their Fellowship and will not have capacity to work on any other research projects.

Q: Can we reapply for SEAI funding if our first application was unsuccessful?

A: Unsuccessful applicants can reapply to future calls.

Q: Is there an opportunity for repeat applicants to outline improvements to a previous submission based on reviewer feedback?

A: Unsuccessful applicants can reapply with an improved submission. Each application will be evaluated independently of previous applications.

10. Submitting your application via PEP

Q: I work in the research office of a university; can Research Officers be given access to the PEP application system to track fellowship applications?

A: It is not possible for Research Officers to be provided access to the PEP portal to track applications. We recommend that applicants engage with their Research Office within their sponsor 3rd level educational body during the application process, in advance of submitting the application within PEP.

Q: When will the PEP application portal open for applications, and will technical support be available if there are any issues?

A: The [PEP portal](#) is now open. If you require technical support, please contact energyresearch@seai.ie, however please note that we cannot guarantee availability of support very close to the application deadline, therefore we recommend applicants familiarise themselves with the PEP portal well before the application deadline.

11. Intellectual Property and Data Management Queries

Q: For SEAI-Based Fellowships, can you clarify how IP will be managed in the projects funded under this call? Given that the fellows will be employed by a university but working in SEAI, who will own that data and the IP generated during the project?

Q: For the SEAI-Based Fellowship award, I am hoping you can provide me with information around any Data Management contractual post-award arrangements that SEAI will have for awardees (and Sponsor Organisations). Given that potential awardees will be employees of the third level institution (Sponsor Organisation) but working from/based in (and funded by) the SEAI.

A: Should a fellowship application proceed to award stage, management of IP, data management, along with other contractual obligations, will be clarified within the contracts issued alongside the letter of offer.

12. Fellowship Topic Related Queries

Q: Are there any specific areas to apply for other than energy?

A: Please note SEAI only fund research that is aligned with the SEAI remit.

Applicants may wish to refer to the [National Energy Research Database](#). This database provides information on current and previous energy research projects and is intended to enable additional collaboration between companies, academic institutions, research institutes and researchers who work in the energy/low carbon technology area. It allows users to search for projects by topic, year funded, funding agency and keyword.

13. Supporting Documentation and Letters of Support

Q: Is it possible to submit Letters of Support from companies or other collaborators (that do not receive funding)? Is there any specific section to add these LOSs?

A: Unsolicited letters of support (LoS) are not permitted. However, required Letters of Support should be submitted along with your application. Required Letters of Support include Letters of Support from:

- The Academic Sponsor/Mentor
- The Organisation Sponsor
- Please refer to the Call Document for more details or for information relating to the Fellowships LoS. A checklist is also provided in the Application form.

Q: Can you provide further detail as to what is required in the Organisation Sponsor 3rd Level Educational Institution Letter of Support?

A: A Letter of Support (Organisation Sponsor) should be provided for all fellowship applications from an authorised staff member in the lead institution/organisation (University/Research Institution Vice President for Research/Director of Research or equivalent) confirming the organisation's endorsement of the proposal and confirming that they will facilitate the proposed fellowship if successful.

Q: Does this mean it should state that the application meets the eligibility criteria? Should it confirm that the School will host the Fellowship?

A: The organisation letter of support does not need to state that the applicant meets the eligibility criteria. Application eligibility will be verified and assessed by SEAI at a later date. The relevant school does not need to confirm that they will host the fellowship at the application stage. Please refer to the above question for further guidance.

Q: Would a declaration such as "this university supports and endorses this application and will support the Fellowship should it be awarded" suffice?

A: Yes

Q: Can applicants apply without the initial support of an academic sponsor/mentor, i.e. can a matchmaking feature be set up ahead of submission? When you mentioned academic sponsor/mentor and identifying them now - do you mean the institution or actual person now?

A: It is up to the applicant to secure an academic sponsor/mentor who is a member of academic staff of an eligible institution and liaise with the sponsor/mentor to arrange the support of the institution in order to be an eligible application. This may take time so should be initiated as soon as possible.

Q: Can you provide further detail as to what is required in the Academic Sponsor/Mentor Letter of Support?

A: In their letter of support, academic sponsors should confirm their support for the proposal and also indicate that, as academic sponsor, they are core-funded members of academic staff or have a contract that extends beyond the term of the proposed fellowship. They should also confirm that they are willing to be responsible for liaising with the HR dept of the 3rd level educational body in relation to any contractual and employment requirements, leave entitlements and other administrative duties for the Fellow within the sponsor 3rd level educational body while the Fellow is participating in the Fellowship Programme. Academic Mentors, should in addition to the above, state that they are willing to mentor the research fellow should the application be successful.

Q: Can the academic and organisation sponsor be same?

A: No, as the academic sponsor/mentor is a member of the academic staff of the sponsor organisation. Please refer to the call document for a detailed description of the project roles.

Applicant Eligibility Queries

14. Third level educational bodies

Q: Could you provide a list of eligible 3rd level educational bodies for Fellowship applications?

A: Please refer to the list below which includes a list of all eligible 3rd level educational bodies. Please contact energyresearch@seai.ie if you have any queries.

- Atlantic Technological University
- Dublin City University
- Dundalk Institute of Technology
- Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology
- Maynooth University
- Munster Technological University
- South East Technological University
- Technological University Dublin
- Technological University Shannon
- Trinity College Dublin
- University College Cork
- University College Dublin
- University of Galway
- University of Limerick

15. Fellowship Eligibility

Q: Are postdocs on contracts of 1 year or less eligible to apply?

Q: Regarding the Academic Fellowship, are there any eligibility restrictions based on the number of years spent as a postdoc?

Q: Would an individual who has submitted a PhD thesis, but who will not graduate until after submission be eligible to apply?

Q: Can an applicant in the latter stages of their PhD apply for a Fellowship?

Q: The 4 years previous research experience for the Academic Fellowship can also be doctoral research experience?

A: It may be possible for PhD students to apply when in the latter PhD stages. Where applicable, applicants should clearly detail expected PhD completion and graduation dates within their application. The key eligibility criteria to consider as outlined in the Call document, is that **applicants must have a PhD or equivalent experience**. SEAI defines PhD equivalent as 4 years' full time research experience after primary degree. Evidence of this will be sought before an offer is made.

Applicants will be considered by SEAI as holding a PhD qualification if they are either:

i) conferred at the time of application. The official date is defined as the day, month and year that the degree was conferred i.e., the month and year printed on the official PhD certificate

OR

ii) the applicant has been certified by the awarding university as having fulfilled all the requirements for the award of a doctoral degree, including the submission of the hardbound corrected thesis by the date of submission of their fellowship application.

Q: I can serve as the academic mentor/sponsor, and I am wondering if there is opportunity to see if any applicant is interested to work on the topic that I propose.

A: Please note that SEAI Energise Fellowships are awarded in the name of the successful fellow. The application should be written and submitted by the fellow. The Academic sponsor role is to take administrative responsibility for the fellow should the application be successful. An Academic Mentor will also take on a mentoring role for an academic fellowship award.

16. Applicants from outside the Republic of Ireland

Q: Is it possible for a fellowship applicant to be based outside of the Republic of Ireland?

A: The SEAI Energise Fellowship Call is open to applications from applicants who have the support of 3rd level educational bodies based in the Republic of Ireland as evidenced by the appropriate letters of support.

17. Applicant eligibility

Q: Is there any restriction to applicants in terms of visa requirements?

A: It is recommended to consult with the relevant office within the Organisation Sponsor 3rd level educational body for guidance.

Q: Are there any age limits for applicants?

A: No there are no age limits for applicants.

Q: Can a full-time, research active staff member of a university apply, despite not being a postdoc?

A: Yes.

Financial/ Budgetary Queries

18. Overheads

Q: Is there an overhead eligible for this?

A: As part of the budget, SEAI will contribute to the indirect costs that it supports through an overhead payment calculated as 25% of Staff costs. Staff costs include salaries and relevant employer costs only.

Q: What is the percentage overhead allowance on grant applications?

A: As part of the budget, SEAI will contribute to the indirect costs of project-based research work that it supports through an overhead payment calculated by 25% of Staff costs. Grantee organisations are responsible for ensuring that the indirect costs are correctly spent in providing the central support that underpins SEAI funded research projects and programmes.

19. Budget

Q: What is the maximum budget per project?

A: Applicants may request up to €300,000 (including overheads)

Q: Will there be provisions for recruiting postdocs by the PIs under the SEAI RD&D funding programme this year (if granted)?

A: Please refer to documentation for the SEAI RD&D funding call when the call has launched.

Q: Does the SEAI-based fellowship funding also include costs of research dissemination outside of the SEAI (e.g., publication fees for journals)?

A: No, it would not be an eligible cost for the SEAI-Based fellowship category.

Q: Can you clarify the researcher's salary scales? The call document references IUA salary scales, but it's unclear how a researcher is classified under 'Post-Doctoral Researcher' or 'Research Fellow' scales

A: It is recommended that you check with your own institution's HR department regarding the appropriate point on the IUA scales.

Q: Can we include expected salary increases to June 2026 and a set % post June 2026 in salary costs?

A: In the absence of available IUA salary scales post June 2026 we would allow projected increments based on historical patterns for the purposes of setting out cost estimates. (Please note that reimbursement will be capped to actual costs incurred in line with available budget.)

Q: Should we include research expenses within our budget or list salary alone?

A: The maximum SEAI contribution to the Energise SEAI-Based Fellowship award is for two year's salary plus overheads. Should the application be successful, research expenses may be requested from SEAI however this is dependent on availability of budget and agreement of management.

For the Academic Fellowship, applicants can include equipment, materials and travel costs in their application.

For salary scales, please refer to the [IUA salary scales](#). Applicants should liaise with their organisation's HR department to determine the correct salary level.

20. Support for Travel Costs / Expenses

Q: Can an applicant request funding to support travel costs required for aspects of their proposed fellowship project?

A: For SEAI-Based Fellowships no, only salary costs (and associated overheads) are eligible to be requested within the application. After the fellowship has commenced, any required travel costs to support fellowship delivery would be reimbursed directly by SEAI to the Fellow, subject to prior approval from the SEAI Supervisor.

For Academic Fellowships, travel costs can be included in the application provided it is for the purposes of their research project.

Q: What about research expenses? For example, cost of any experiments etc.? Is there a budget for that?

A: Eligible requested costs within the SEAI-Based Fellowship application include Staff Costs (and associated overheads) only. All other expenditure including licenses, other resources and travel, will need to be justified and if deemed necessary will be covered directly by SEAI after the fellowship has commenced. Laptops and other office equipment will be provided by SEAI.

For Academic Fellowships, yes research expenses can be requested in the application provided it is for the purposes of their research project.

21. Reimbursement process

Q: Can you provide further details of how the financial claim and reimbursement policy e.g. Fellowship salary? Is the Organisation Sponsor 3rd level institution required to provide funds for a fellow upfront, with staff costings reimbursed at a later stage by SEAI?

A: Yes, the Organisation Sponsor 3rd level educational bodies pay salaries for fellowships supported by their institution. Financial claims are required to be submitted to SEAI on a biannual basis for H1 (Jan – Jun) and H2 (Jul – Dec).

A letter of support is required from an authorised staff member in the Organisation Sponsor institution (e.g. University/Research Institution Vice President for Research/Director of Research or equivalent) confirming their endorsement of the proposal and confirming their commitment to facilitating the proposed fellowship, should it be successful.