

2026 SEAI Energise Fellowship Programme

Frequently Asked Questions - May 2026

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This document collates responses to questions submitted during the live 2026 SEAI Energise Fellowship Programme Webinar held on the 21st of May 2026, 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 June 4th 2026 and the answers will be published in the FAQ.

For full details of the call, please download the 2026 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.

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General Queries

1. Webinar

Q: Is the webinar (May 21st, 2026) recorded?

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

Q: I cannot find the 2026 application form template for offline completion. Could you confirm where this is available, or send it directly?

Both the academic and SEAI based fellowship call documents are located at the end of the following page [SEAI Fellowship Programme | Careers | SEAI](#). The section 'submitting your application' provides a complete list of the relevant headings that will appear in the online portal as well as guidance on your application.

2. Project start dates

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

A: Successful applicants to the 2026 SEAI Energise Fellowship Programme are expected to start from Q3 2026. 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 2026.

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.

4. Fellowship Suitability

Q: Is a DORA CV required?

A: The application gathers all information required for the application and Section 2 follows the structure of a narrative CV. The application 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 3 - Suitability of the application, applicants have the opportunity to provide information about previous research. Details of the evaluation criteria can be found in the call document.

Q: Can a final-year PhD candidate apply for the 2026 Energise Fellowship call if the PhD is expected to be completed after the application deadline but before the proposed fellowship start date.

In particular, could you confirm whether the PhD must be formally awarded by the application deadline, or whether it is sufficient for the PhD to be completed before the fellowship begins?

A: Applicants must either have a PhD or four year's equivalent research experience by Dec 31st 2026.

Q: From my reading of the Call Document, Postdoctoral Researchers with a PhD are eligible to apply regardless of the length of time of their research experience post PhD. If applicants are more senior than a Postdoctoral Researcher i.e., they are a Research Fellow, then they must have 4 years of research experience after their PhD.

A: The Energise Fellowship Call is open to applicants who either have a PhD or equivalent experience. Therefore post-doctoral researchers are eligible to apply. Applicants should request salary appropriate to their career stage according to IUA guidance.

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 2026, 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 or the SEAI Cork office. 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: 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: I would appreciate your guidance on whether an academic supervisor may support multiple postdoctoral fellowship applications within the same call. I have received expressions of interest from several prospective applicants and would like to confirm whether there is any restriction on the number of proposals that may be submitted under one supervisor.

A: Yes an Academic Sponsor or Mentor can support multiple fellowship applications

Q: I would like to clarify whether the same academic supervisor may submit applications under different fellowship streams simultaneously, for example both an Academic Fellowship application and an SEAI-Based Fellowship application within the same call.

A: It is possible that the same Academic Sponsor or mentor can support applications under different fellowship streams simultaneously.

Q: I would be grateful if you could confirm whether an industry collaborator/enterprise partner is a mandatory requirement for all applications under this call.

A: An industry collaborator/enterprise partner is not a mandatory requirement for all applications under this call.

Q: Can schematics and figures be added to proposal?

A: Relevant schematics and figures may be uploaded in the Work plan section of the application on SmartSimple.

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](#). SEAI welcomes applications from all relevant disciplines.

Q: Does SEAI strictly adhere to the maximum word counts in the application?

A: Applicants should adhere to the maximum word counts outlined for each section on the SmartSimple portal.

Q: My application is 12 months 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.

Q: Could you please confirm whether there is a specific word limit for the “Project Objectives” subsection (Section 4)? I could not identify a clear limit in the guidance document and want to ensure that the section is appropriately sized.

A: There is no word limit, however you should be concise and only include text appropriate to the project.

Q: Could you please confirm whether references, tables, and figures (8.6) are included within the Section 8 page or word limits (PM 1500 words)? In addition, are there any specific formatting requirements regarding font size, table size, figure captions, or reference list size?

A: References tables and figures are a separate upload field and are not part of word limits. Any unnecessary additions will be removed before going to evaluation. Please follow standard guidance re font etc. Bear in mind the capacity of reviewers and do not overload them with material for review.

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 2026 SEAI Fellowship Call Document, 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 June 4th 2026

Q: I have never done this before and conscious of deadline, any broad idea of how long timewise it might take to complete the application?

A: Please review the 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 SmartSimple portal.

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

A: For Academic Fellowships, it is anticipated that that successful awardees will work full-time on their Fellowship unless there are exceptional circumstances. It is possible to work on SEAI-Based Fellowships in a part time capacity with minimum 40% time commitment.

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

A: SEAI does not have any restrictions in relation to applying for research funding while holding an SEAI Energise 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: It is possible to work on SEAI-Based fellowships in a part time capacity with minimum 40% time commitment. Academic Fellowships are a full-time commitment and awardees will not have capacity to work on 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

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

A: The SmartSimple Grant Management System is now open. If you require technical support, please contact researchgms@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 SmartSimple well before the application deadline.

Q: I need to be set up with an approver/admin account on SmartSimple. Can I do this by simply registering online or do you need to do this for me?

A: SmartSimple currently operates on a one-approver model, where the approver role is assigned to the organisation's Legal Signatory. 3rd level education bodies should have their approver already assigned to their organisation within the SmartSimple Portal. If you have any difficulties, please contact researchgms@seai.ie

Q: Could I submit more than one project for the SEAI RD&D Programme under the postdoctoral "Academic Fellowship" category with different institutions in Ireland?

A: Yes, it is possible to submit more than one proposal.

Q: Could I submit a proposal that is submitted to another funding program in Ireland at the same time?

A: Yes, it is possible to submit a similar proposal to another funding programme but they could not both be funded.

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.

Q: I assume that new IP is protected within the evaluation system. Can you just confirm or give some guidelines.

A: Evaluators sign a confidentiality agreement in advance of receiving any proposals. They are prohibited from using GenAI to assist their evaluation.

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. Please refer to the RDD programme objectives. 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.

Q: Is healthcare decarbonisation within SEAI's remit or is it strictly under HSE's remit?

A: Healthcare decarbonisation can fall within SEAI's remit, provided the proposed research aligns with SEAI's Research, Development and Demonstration (RD&D) Programme objectives. SEAI supports research and innovation activities that contribute to Ireland's broader energy and climate objectives across all sectors, including healthcare. Applicants should ensure their proposal demonstrates a strong energy-related focus and alignment with SEAI priorities.

Q: For Academic Fellowships, areas which are previously funded, for example on a specific topic, is there any chances to get a similar topic funding again.

A: Previously funded topics are not excluded from future calls. Applications are assessed on their individual merit, quality, and alignment with the SEAI RD&D Programme objectives. While similar subject areas may have been funded in the past, applicants should clearly demonstrate the novelty, added value, and advancement beyond existing or previously funded work. Proposals that build on prior research can be competitive where they offer new insights, approaches, or impact.

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: Letters of support can be uploaded under the Declarations section of SmartSimple. A Letter of Support from the Academic Sponsor/Mentor is a requirement of the application. A letter of support for any collaborator organisation included in your application should also be provided, confirming their role in the project, and details of any proposed support (e.g., data access, technology trial/demonstrator, in-kind support, or other). Unsolicited letters of support (LoS) are not permitted.

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 Academic 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

Q: I am planning to apply through another institute rather than my current one. Should I register with that institute in order to submit the application, even though I do not currently have a contract with that institute?

A: When registering on SmartSimple you should select the institution who will support the fellowship. We would recommend that you confirm your Academic Sponsor or Mentor and liaise with the Research Office in your organisation sponsor. Please note the letters of support required for an eligible application. Further details are available in the call document.

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 by December 31st 2026**. 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.

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.

Q: I am currently in the 4th year of my full-time PhD, and I worked full time period as Master student as 2 years, so I was wondering whether this would satisfy the requirement. Do you happen to know how this is generally interpreted?

A: Applicants must have a PhD or 4 year's equivalent research experience by December 31st 2026 to be eligible to apply.

Q: If applicants are more senior than a Postdoctoral Researcher i.e., they are a Research Fellow, then they must have 4 years of research experience after their PhD. Can you confirm that the above is true?

A: Postdoctoral Researchers with a PhD are eligible to apply regardless of the length of time of their research experience post PhD.

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.

17. Applicant eligibility / Visa requirements

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

A: It is recommended to consult with the Research 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. For SEAI-Based Fellowships, part time fellowships are possible. For Academic Fellowships only full time fellowships will be funded.

Financial/ Budgetary Queries

18. Overheads

Q: Is there an overhead eligible for this?

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: 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. Fellows may request research costs from their SEAI supervisor if it is needed as part of the fellowship project.

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: Under the current call can a Senior Research Fellow apply for a fellowship and request the salary at Senior Research Fellow level?

A: The applicant should request the salary appropriate to their career stage according to IUA guidance. There is no cap on salary requested as long as it reflects the applicants' outputs and experience and is aligned to one of the IUA researcher salary 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.

Q: When calculating the salary costs for the fellowship period, should I include projected inflation or annual salary scale increments? In addition, should employer pension contributions, PRSI, and any healthcare-related costs be included in the salary calculation, or are these treated separately according to institutional budgeting rules?

A: Please refer to the [IUA salary scales](#) which include gross salary, employers PRSI and the obligatory pension contribution. Although the IUA scales are only set out to mid 2026, you could use projected figures going forward that take account of inflation and increments. Healthcare related costs are not eligible for inclusion. SEAI will only pay against actual costs incurred up to the awarded amount so it would be important to get the projected costs as accurate as possible.

Q: The application asks for the estimated resource allocation per Work Package, including estimated cost and FTE. Could you please clarify how detailed this should be? For example, should the cost and FTE be allocated approximately across each Work Package based on the researcher's time commitment, or should it include a more detailed breakdown of staff time, travel, consumables, dissemination, and other direct costs per Work Package?

A: For resource allocation per work package, please refer to the researcher's time commitment to each work package.

Q: In the Academic Fellowship, Is it possible to recruit one research assistant under the lead applicant?

A: No, Energise Fellowships are personal awards and will fund the salary or teaching buyout for the lead applicant only.

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).