

WELLCOME TRUST

Institutional Strategic Support Fund

Supported by the SFI-HRB-Wellcome Trust Research Partnership



Mid-Career Stimulus and Diversification Scheme Call Document

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Introduction to Institutional Strategic Support Fund (ISSF)

The Wellcome Trust ISSF scheme (supported under the SFI-HRB-Wellcome Trust Research Partnership, with matched funding from UCD (Research, CHAS and CoS) aims to help UCD's researchers overcome systemic barriers to career and network development, ultimately unlocking future research potential within the University and beyond. The fund will support high-quality research in the biomedical and clinical sciences. It is also available to directly support research or collaborations within the medical humanities field. This award will enable UCD to strategically advance research in these areas and to leverage further external funding from agencies such as the EU and the Wellcome Trust, amongst other sources.

In particular, the fund will be used to support initiatives in the *Personalised & Translational Medicine* and *One Health** arenas, enablers for which include 1) facilitating the early stage research careers of professionals, practitioners or other individuals in allied health professions within the medical and veterinary medical field, 2) support for excellent mid-career academics who have suffered a loss of track record due to external circumstances such as changes in the national funding landscape and/or career break, and 3) the development of internal teams of critical mass and external stakeholder networks through project management supports, patient and public involvement (PPI) and dissemination activities. Particular emphasis will be placed on interdisciplinary research and on research that translates into real benefit for human or animal patients and society. To enable inter-institutional activity, academics will be encouraged to seek collaboration with other Wellcome Trust funded institutions.

Three cross-cutting initiatives will be funded for support as follows:

- a. Clinical Primer scheme
- b. Mid-Career Stimulus and Diversification scheme
- c. Networks of Excellence scheme

***One Health integrates human medicine, veterinary medicine, and environmental science, with the aim of preventing disease and improving the health of all species – animal and human.**



Introduction to Mid-Career Stimulus and Diversification Scheme

Over the past decade, there has been a significant decline of funding for basic biomedical research, as a result of changes to the mandate of a number of national funding agencies. This situation is even more acute for researchers who have needed to temporarily disengage from research, such as those who have taken maternity / extended paternity / adoption leave or career breaks. The aim of support under this particular ISSF scheme will be to find sustainable sources of funding to enable re-establishment of excellent work. The scheme will be open to two main cohorts of staff, namely 1) those who have lost research momentum due to changes in the national funding landscape and 2) returners, notwithstanding the fact that there may be overlap between these two cohorts. Given the funding source for this particular call, applications from those affiliated to the CHAS and CoS can only be considered. The eventual grant holder will need to have an academic post within either of these two Colleges.

[NOTE 1: In exceptional circumstances, where matched funding can be demonstrated from another College, then the application may be considered (on a case-by-case basis). Please contact issf@ucd.ie to clarify in such an eventuality at least two weeks prior to the grant deadline].

The Mid-Career Stimulus and Diversification scheme will support excellent mid-career researchers (7-20 years post PhD), from CHAS/CoS (or see note 1 in exceptional circumstances), within whom were ***previously highly productive*** but whose activity has been impeded by radical post-recession changes in Irish research funding or has been lost as a result of extended leave, or indeed a combination of the two. This scheme will be open to academics working within the remit of biomedical and clinical sciences across the university, including researchers within the medical humanities field.

This scheme will fund up to two fellows in this round for up to 12 months. The maximum value of the award under this programme is €70,000 per awardee. This is being made available to buy out teaching and administrative duties, to enable returning staff to concentrate fully on their research, or to employ research staff, in addition to associated research costs.

Award features include:

- Seed funding of up to 12 months duration to help researchers generate pilot data to support larger-scale applications for external research funding.
- Mentorship to be provided by members of senior academic staff. To promote this, a Wellcome Trust Excellence Award in Mentoring will be awarded to the nominated Mentor to demonstrate the importance and prestige of mentorship in UCD's culture, and inspire participation.
- Dedicated project management and grant writing support will be available to all fellows, linking in with the project management team within the ISSF Network of Excellence Scheme. This support will enable researchers to write competitive grants and, in particular, to enable diversification of funding.
- Fellows will link in with UCD Research's dedicated Public Engagement & Outreach Project Manager to ensure participation in at least one event per year which exposes both them and their research to a broad range of audiences outside that of the academic sector.
- Fellows, where appropriate, will also engage in networking hubs funded through the Networks of Excellence scheme to generate ideas for integrated research and foster new collaborations.



- Awardees will be expected to engage with the Research Impact supports recently developed within the University, the outcome of which will be featured case studies on the UCD Research website.
- Fellows will be required to present their research at least once annually at an international conference, workshop or event in the *Personalised & Translational Medicine* or *One Health* field, as appropriate.
- Awardees will be required to upload publications stemming from their fellowship projects to Research Repository UCD, the University's Open Access institutional digital collection of scholarly research publications.

Award Aims:

- Enable academics to shape the academic field as a result of re-engaging with cutting-edge research.
- Allow more senior academics the possibility to exercise leadership and assume responsibility for the career development of others.
- Encourage engagement with stakeholders to include patients and/or end-users.
- Support the development of research projects, to a point where they are considered ready for competitive submission to an external national/international funding agency or high impact journal.
- Enhance UCD's research portfolio, profile and impact nationally and internationally.

Eligibility Criteria

In order to be eligible for the Mid-Career Stimulus and Diversification Scheme, applicants must:

- Be in the mid-stage of their research career, i.e. normally between 7-20 years' experience post-PhD.
- Must be currently employed directly by UCD, be in the CHAS or CoS (or please see note 1 above), and hold an employment contract with UCD for the entire duration of the award.
- Identify an appropriate UCD Mentor, whom should be a member of senior academic staff in the University.
- Provide written permission from their Head of School regarding academic buy-out time, where relevant.
- Demonstrate an excellent track record as evidenced by previous academic achievements.
- Provide a thorough justification as to why this stimulus is relevant, including rationale for a loss of track record.

Eligibility checks, on submitted proposals, will only be carried out by after the call has closed.

The maximum funding available under this programme is €70,000 per awardee. It is anticipated that awardees will be on track to publish in high impact journals within 12 months of receipt of funding. In addition, it is anticipated that awardees will be competitive for funding through Horizon 2020 (e.g. under the ERC programme), the Wellcome Trust, Department of Agriculture Food and the Marine (DAFM) or SFI, within twenty-four months following the period of the award.



Details of Programme

The purpose of the Mid-Career Stimulus and Diversification Scheme is to support academics, more established in their careers and whom were ***previously highly productive*** in scientific terms but suffered a loss of performance due to external factors, who now wish to enhance their academic potential through re-engagement in research.

The scheme is co-funded by UCD (Research, CHAS and CoS) and the SFI-HRB-Wellcome Trust Research Partnership, the latter under the auspices of the Wellcome Trust Institutional Strategic Support Fund.

This funding can be directed toward academic buy-out time (in consultation with the Head of School), staff costs, consumables, small equipment items, travel, and subsistence.

Assessors will be looking for submissions that have a clear justification for the reasons behind the loss of track record, and the applicant's potential to generate high impact outputs and attract large scale funding.

Funding available: The maximum value of award under this programme is €70,000 per awardee.

Time-lines:

Deadlines for applications will be announced on the opening of each round. The deadline for this current round is: Friday 12th November 2021, 5pm.

Evaluation:

Applications will be evaluated by a central multidisciplinary evaluation committee consisting of at least four senior academic staff from across the University to include biomedical and clinician scientists, along with researchers from the medical humanities with the following profile:

- Track record of excellence.
- Track record of mentorship and development of early and mid-career researchers.
- Significant experience of and success in leading large interdisciplinary programmes or groups.
- Diversity in discipline, gender and background will be a key feature.

Each review panel will be chaired by a member of the SFI-HRB-Wellcome ISSF Steering Committee.

Evaluation Criteria:

Submitted projects will be assessed, scored and awarded based on the following criteria. With the exception of a), all other criteria will be scored between 0 and 5.

1. Relevance to the scope of the scheme (Answer *yes* or *no* for this question only).
2. Activity within a strategic priority area for UCD, SFI, HRB, DAFM and the Wellcome Trust.
3. Clear demonstration of the applicant's outstanding future potential (**weighted X2**).
4. Excellence of the candidate's proposal.
5. Clear demonstration of interdisciplinary and/or translational aspect.
6. Clear outline of how the project will help the applicant to secure prestigious research funding (**weighed X2**).
7. Appropriate public engagement and outreach activity.
8. Value for money and the applicant has provided a clear budget justification.

In addition to the above standard criteria, the following will also be taken into account:



1. Awardees will be previously highly productive mid-career researchers (assessed using comparators of success for career stage) that have suffered a loss of track record with good rationale for the gap in research funding.
2. Applicants to provide evidence of having made significant prior effort to overcome funding impasse.
3. It is of particular interest to support research where the ambition is to develop new links between biology, medicine, veterinary medicine and the humanities that promote cross-departmental and interdisciplinary research in a way that adds value, coherence and enables translation of research into better health outcomes for patients.
4. Projects that align with *Personalised & Translational Medicine* or *One Health* will be preferentially supported.

Applications will be assessed within 4-6 weeks of the closing date. Feedback and comments on each application are recorded and will be provided to help applicants understand how they might further improve the quality for future calls.



Proposal Application

The deadline for submissions of applications to issf@ucd.ie is Friday 12th November 2021, 5pm. Applications **must include support letter from appropriate Head of School.**

Queries and application submissions should be directed by email to issf@ucd.ie

Applications must be uploaded as a single PDF attachment less than 5 MB in size, with the naming convention consisting of the applicants full name, followed by “MCS” for the scheme, and year of application e.g. “Ann Smith MCS 2021”. Applications must be provided in Times New Roman font, or similar, with minimum font size of 12, and at least single line spacing as well as a minimum margin size of 2.54cm. Text in diagrams may be in any clearly legible font.

The mandatory format for submissions is outlined below. Candidates and mentors are advised to consider the Guidelines, Evaluation Criteria, and Terms and Conditions for the Call when preparing their submissions.

Submission Format	
1.	Candidate CV. Max 5 pages
2.	Detail of Previous Research Experience. Max 1 page
3.	Rationale for Loss of Track Record. Max 1 page <i>(Include evidence of having made significant prior effort to overcome funding impasse)</i>
4.	How Proposal Fits Within Remit of One Health and/or Personalised & Translational Medicine. Max 1 page
5.	Summary of Proposed Research Programme. Max 3 pages <i>(Summary covering project title, objectives and methodology, Gantt chart)</i>
6.	Proposal References. Max 0.5 page
7.	Summary of Expected Impact of Research Programme. Max 1 page.
8.	Strategic Plan to leverage Extramural Funding and/or High Impact Publication. Max 1 page
9.	Statement of Mentor Support. Max 0.5 Page.
10.	Detailed Budget Breakdown and Budget Justification. Max 1 page
11.	Letter of support from Head of School. Max 1 page <i>(and permission for academic buy-out time, if requesting in budget)</i>
12.	References from two referees. Max 1 page per reference



Terms and Conditions

1. The Mid-Career Stimulus and Diversification Scheme is open to all mid-career academics within the biomedical and clinical sciences, as well as researchers within the medical humanities field affiliated to CHAS or CoS. In exceptional circumstances, where matched funding can be demonstrated from another College, then the application may be considered (on a case-by-case basis). Please contact issf@ucd.ie to clarify in such an eventuality at least two weeks prior to the grant deadline.
2. For the purposes of this scheme, mid-career is defined as between 7 to 20 years' experience post-PhD.
3. Applicants must already hold a UCD employment contract, which covers the entire duration of the award.
4. The scheme will give priority to all proposals within the remit of *Personalised & Translational Medicine* and *One Health*.
5. Successful applicants will be expected to start their projects no later than 1st January 2022.
6. It must be clear from the application that the objectives of the programme have been taken into account.
7. A clear rationale must be included for the reason behind the applicant's loss of track record. Demonstration of attempts to overcome funding impasse must also be provided.
8. Applicants must have a clear sustainability plan outlining the approach for obtaining successful extramural funding or high impact publications within 12 months of completion of the award.
9. Applicants may only submit one application within a given round.
10. Application forms must be complete. No supplementary material will be accepted - all relevant material must be displayed within the application form. Application forms must display information clearly and concisely and must be of a high professional standard. Page limits must be strictly adhered to. Incomplete application forms will not be evaluated by an Assessment Panel.
11. All successful applicants will be required to submit bi-annual progress reports to the review committee. Failure to submit these reports, or to reach appropriate milestones, may result in termination of this award.
12. All applicants must have written permission from their respective Head of School for academic buy out time, if relevant to the application.
13. Funding received under this programme must be used for the project outlined in the application.
14. Successful applicants must apply in writing to the Chair of ISSF Steering Committee in order to make any changes to their application following receipt of an award.



15. UCD Research must be notified of any significant budget transfers between categories. Up to 20% or €500 (whichever is greater) transfer between budget categories will be allowed without seeking written approval.
16. The Principal Applicant cannot transfer an award to any other person.
17. The start date of the project will be automatically activated following the announcement of the awards. The award must be spent either within 12 months of the start date or the applicant's contract end date, whichever is earlier.
18. In extenuating circumstances, a no-cost extension of up to 3 months may be considered (subject to duration of initial project and what the funder may allow). This must be applied for in writing to issf@ucd.ie, no later than 3 months prior to award cessation. Requests for a no cost extension will be reviewed by the Steering Committee and granted on a case by case basis, if possible. The no cost extension cannot fall beyond the end date of the overall ISSF project.
19. All research awards will be registered under the name and school of the successful applicant.
20. Any over-spend will be charged to the relevant School. The Office of the Vice-President for Research, Innovation & Impact (VPRII) will not be responsible for any over-spend on the project.
21. Any under-spend must be returned to the Office of the VPRII within 2 months of the end of the project or immediately on cessation of the project for any reason other than completion.
22. Successful applicants will be required to provide details of their actual spend compared with their budgeted spend at the end of the award period. Auditable back-up documentation, including invoices, cost allocations, etc. must be maintained by all successful applicants. The Office of the VPRII may undertake annual review procedures in this regard.
23. Requests for the supply of externally sourced goods, services and facilities are subject to the standard University procurement procedures.



Post Assessment Process - Reporting

Timeline for Assessment

Applications will be assessed within 4-6 weeks of the closing date. Formal results notifications will be sent to all applicants. Feedback comments on each application are recorded and will be provided in the results letters; the purpose of which is to help applicants understand how they might further improve the quality of future proposals. All notifications regarding the Mid-Career Stimulus and Diversification Scheme will be emailed to the applicant's email account as appears in your application.

Research Account Set Up

All awards made under the Mid-Career Stimulus and Diversification Scheme will be paid into UCD Research Accounts which will be set up by UCD Research. All successful applicants will be notified of the relevant research accounts within four weeks of announcement of results.

Once the research account has been set up, successful applicants can manage the spending on their award by logging into RMS Grants (https://rms.ucd.ie/ufrs_apex/f?p=1000:14) and navigating to Grant Reporting. This component of RMS Grants provides details on the current expenditure of the account.

Research Account Expenditure

Spending on the grant can be made through eProcurement (http://www.ucd.ie/bursar/orders_invoices_payments.html#e_procurement) or alternatively applicants may be reimbursed for expenditure by downloading and completing an expense claim form, all of which are available on the Bursars webpage www.ucd.ie/bursar. Please reference your Research Account number when completing all expense forms.

The above forms must be completed with codes for the different types of expenditure being claimed. A list of expense codes, to determine the nature of the cost incurred, can be obtained at www.ucd.ie/bursar/ucd_research_d_codes.html

All expense claim forms must be submitted to the Bursar's Office and be accompanied by receipts for all expenditure. These expense codes must be used along with the cost centre number and research account. Please ensure that your supervisor or Head of School/ Institute Director signs off on all claims.

Project Reports

Successful applicants will be required to submit biannual progress reports, detailing their progress to date. The continuation of funding is dependent upon submission of these reports. Within 1 month of project completion, a final report must be completed in terms of outputs and deliverables. Future funding within UCD will be dependent upon submission of this report.



Appendix 1: Submission Checklist

Section	Checklist
Currently a UCD Employee in CHAS or CoS or in exceptional circumstances where matched funding can be demonstrated.	
Candidate CV. Max 5 pages	
Rationale for Loss of Track Record	
How the Proposal Fits Within Remit of <i>Personalised & Translational Medicine</i> and/or <i>One Health</i>	
Summary of Proposed Research Programme	
Proposal References	
Summary of Expected Impact of Research Programme	
Strategic Plan to Leverage Extramural Funding and High Impact Outputs	
Statement of Mentor Support	
Detailed Budget Breakdown and Budget Justification	
Letter of support from Head of School	
Referee 1	
Referee 2	



Appendix 2: Mid-Career Stimulus and Diversification Scheme Budget Policy

This section sets out the financial/budgetary information you should provide when submitting a proposal to the Mid-Career Stimulus and Diversification Scheme. Please read through this carefully in advance of submitting a proposal. All costs must be in line with the [Wellcome Budget Policy](#)

Pay Costs

1. Salary costs can be included for personnel essential to carrying out the research project. This includes Research Assistants, Post-doctoral Researchers, Technicians, Laboratory Managers and Administrators. **The applicants own salary costs is not allowable.**
2. Academic buy-out time (with HOS approval) is an allowable cost. Appointment should be on the lecturer scale.
3. The duration of the appointment should be clearly outlined in the proposal.
4. In line with current practice, all appointments should be made on point 1 of the appropriate UCD pay scale. Any deviation from this must be clearly explained in the budget justification.
5. Employers Costs should be included to cover Employers PRSI (11.05%) and pension (20%).
6. PhD Student stipend and fees are not eligible costs.

Equipment

7. Details of all requested equipment necessary should be itemised. VAT at the prevailing rate should be included.
8. Where equipment of a value of more than €3,000 is requested, details of quotations should be included in the budget justification.
9. Please adhere to the [Wellcome Budget Policy](#) for further details on allowed equipment costs.
10. Applicants must confirm that their School is willing to cover the maintenance costs of the equipment following completion of funding under the Wellcome Trust ISSF scheme.
11. A proposal should not be submitted for equipment only.

Materials and Consumables

12. An outline of all materials and consumables that will be used during the course of the research should be provided alongside detailed justification for all costs.
13. Access charges for use of Infrastructure can be included here.



14. Conference registration fees can be included here.

Travel

15. Only travel and subsistence costs for journeys and events directly related to the research programme and undertaken by the applicant or team member may be requested.
16. Details of the trip should be outlined including location, duration, purpose and name of proposed traveller.
17. Business class travel is not an allowable expense.
18. Subsistence should be as per the rates listed on the Bursar's website. The 24 hour subsistence rate covers accommodation and all meals. Subsistence should be reduced accordingly where meals and or accommodation is provided by a third party or covered under a conference registration fee.

Co-funding / cost share

19. Reduce the budget request by any funding available from any other source.

Budget Justification

1. The budget justification is the narrative explanation of the budget. It helps reviewers to evaluate whether the budget requested is reasonable and represents value for money. It should clearly explain why requested eligible costs are necessary for the proposed research project and how they have been calculated. Some general guidance is provided below.
 - When constructing a budget justification follow the same order as that in the itemised budget form, so that reviewers can easily compare the two documents.
 - Ensure that everything in your budget is referenced in the justification. Provide more details for higher value requests.
 - For academic buy-out time, please indicate an exact break-down calculated costs (to include salary scale). For part-time funding, the % FTE will be required, in addition to a clear justification as to how this will not affect the overall project deliverables.
 - For staff costs describe roles and responsibilities and where necessary describe why a certain level of experience or qualifications is required.
 - For equipment, justify why existing equipment cannot be used and why this equipment is critical.



- For materials and consumables, where relevant provide details relating to estimated numbers of runs. If use of technology is required please include any access costs and detail estimated usage in days or hours.
 - For travel include details of personnel travelling, location, duration and purpose of proposed trip and why it is necessary.
2. Provide details of any cost-share or co-funding available from any other source.
 3. Provide confirmation that funding requested for the proposed project is not available from any other source.

