Guide for Applicants - Call 2 {2026}

NeuroAdapt

Marie Sklodowska-Curie Action COFUND

Important dates

Call Opens	15th Jan 2026
Application deadline	**10th April 2026**
International remote review	Approx 10-12 weeks
Interviews*	Week of 9th of June
Awards*	Within one week of completion of Interviews
Anticipated employment start*	October 2026 onwards

** These dates are indicative and subject to change*

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Taighde Éireann Research Ireland

Purpose of this Guide for Applicants

This guide provides instructions and practical information to potential applicants to assist in preparing and submitting an application for a NeuroAdapt Fellowship. In addition, it provides a general overview of the application and assessment process.

Applicants should also review the Terms and Conditions document, and information published on the NeuroAdapt website (link). The submission portal is accessed on the website under 'Apply Here: Submission System' tab.

The NeuroAdapt Programme

About NeuroAdapt

NeuroAdapt is a Marie Skłodowska-Curie COFUND Action. This programme is coordinated and co-funded by **FutureNeuro, the Research Ireland Centre for Translational Brain Science**. Any academic institution in Ireland that is affiliated with FutureNeuro may host fellowships. The list of Host Institutes can be found below.

NeuroAdapt is funding 11 Postdoctoral Fellowships of 24 months, awarded over two calls for proposals. Following the first call, 7 Fellows have already been recruited. The second call will complete the recruitment by awarding the remaining 4 Fellowships.

The overall objective of NeuroAdapt is to equip the next generation of research leaders with the skills necessary to catalyze their careers, in academia or industry, and develop much needed innovative, safer, and more effective therapeutic approaches to brain diseases tailored specifically towards individual patient needs.

Key features of our fellowship programme are:

- Fellows will work on a core research project of their own choice in a world-class, collaborative research environment, with excellent supervision.
- Intersectoral engagement is a key part of each Fellowship, including a 3–6 month secondment to an industry, clinical, or patient organization setting anywhere in the world, providing hands-on experience beyond the academic environment.
- Fellows will receive guidance to support the integration of Public and Patient Involvement (PPI) in their research actions, ensuring their work addresses real-world needs.
- A comprehensive training programme will further enhance fellows' development, featuring targeted schools on clinical and patient needs, and on translating research into market-ready solutions. The programme will be enriched by invited speakers from industry, clinical practice, and patient organisations, who will deliver focused sessions directly aligned with the proposal's core themes. Their contributions will provide in-depth, practice-oriented insights and ensure that the training content is firmly grounded in real-world challenges, opportunities, and innovation pathways.

About Future Neuro

FutureNeuro is a National Research Centre, bringing together expert investigators based in universities across Ireland to work on a common theme.

Research Ireland's FutureNeuro Centre Translational Brain Science, is a multi-disciplinary, inter-institutional research centre and collaborates closely with industry, patient organisations and the health service to transform the lives of patients in Ireland and worldwide. FutureNeuro's mission is to transform the patient journey through research that prioritises the needs of both patients and the healthcare professionals dedicated to their care. We develop diagnostic tools, therapies to correct damaged brain networks, and technologies empowering patients to monitor their own health and well-being which are linked to Ireland's national imaging, diagnostics, and eHealth infrastructure. Our collaborative network encompass cutting-edge core expertise and technologies specialising in genomics, bioinformatics, cell biology, viral vector production, single-cell and spatial sequencing technologies, electrophysiology, neurotechnologies and wearables, preclinical and human brain models, functional brain imaging, biobanks, and clinical research centres

Our primary goal is to reduce the substantial burden of neurological, psychiatric, and neurodevelopmental disorders on both healthcare and society. Through our work, we aim to achieve tangible impacts in economic, health, policy, skills, and societal domains. Our research has contributed to the development of new products, enhancements in healthcare system efficiency, and collaborative data science research fostering resilience in the Irish economy.

The Host Institutes

Depending on the location of the project's supervisor, the Fellow will be an employee of one of the following institutions for the purpose of conducting their Fellowship

RCSI is a community of academic, research, clinical and professional staff working collaboratively to lead the world to better health. As outlined in RCSI's strategic plan *Innovating for a Healthier Future 2023-2027*, RCSI is working to enhance human health by meeting the health needs of society, creating the insights and inventions that drive health improvements, and working in partnership with patients and the public in support of better health and well-being for all. The RCSI Research Institute is one of Ireland's foremost research centres, committed to performing high levels of research activity, to commercialising intellectual property arising from its research, and to developing collaborative links with industry, educational and research institutions both nationally and internationally.

Dublin City University (DCU) is a young, dynamic and ambitious university with a distinctive mission to transform lives and societies through education, research and innovation. Since admitting its first students in 1980, DCU has grown in both student numbers and size and is now a multi campus environment in Glasnevin, located just north of Dublin city. DCU is recognised nationally and internationally as a centre of academic excellence with over 16,000 students and it is regularly featured among the top young universities globally as measured by the Times Higher Education Top 100 under 50 and the QS Top 50 under 50.

Maynooth University is an internationally recognised institution located 25 kilometers outside of Dublin, Ireland, and is the nation's fastest growing university. One of four constituent universities of the National University of Ireland, Maynooth University in 2021 placed #88 in the global top 100 universities under 50 years old in the Times Higher Education World University Rankings. Today, Maynooth University is a place of lively contrasts – a modern institution, dynamic, rapidly- growing, research-led and engaged, yet grounded in historic academic strengths and scholarly traditions. Maynooth's unique collegial culture fosters an interdisciplinary approach to research, which its world-class academics bring to bear in tackling some of the most fundamental challenges facing society today.

As Ireland's university example on the world stage, Trinity College Dublin (TCD) is recognised for academic excellence and a transformative student experience. The historic campus is located in the heart of Dublin city centre at the meeting place of the retail and cultural districts. With a tradition of scholarship spanning more than four centuries, Trinity is home to talented inquiring minds, a liberal education, and research conducted at the frontiers of disciplines.

University College Dublin (UCD) has its origins in the mid-nineteenth century under the leadership of the renowned educationalist John Henry Cardinal Newman. Since its foundation in 1854, the University has flourished and made a unique and substantial contribution to the creation of modern Ireland, based on successful engagement with Irish society on every level and across every sphere of activity. UCD is one of Europe's leading research-intensive universities; an environment where undergraduate education, masters and PhD training, research, innovation and community engagement form a dynamic spectrum of activity.

Founded in 1845, and inspiring students for 170 years, University of Galway has earned international recognition as a research-led university with a commitment to top quality teaching. There is a vibrant research ecosystem at the university. This dynamic community attracts researchers, academics, entrepreneurs and students of the highest calibre.

University College Cork (UCC) was established in 1845 as one of three Queen's Colleges, established in the reign of Queen Victoria, and named after her. Nowadays University College Cork (UCC) is an internationally competitive, research-led University that plays a key role in the development of Ireland's knowledge-based economy. UCC's mission is to advance excellence in teaching, research and the quality of the student experience. UCC's institutional research strategy focuses on creating and supporting world-leading clusters of researchers, building on the research strengths of the University.

South East Technological University (SETU) was established in May 2022, merging the former Institutes of technology of Waterford and Carlow. SETU is a leading research-intensive institution where undergraduate education, postgraduate masters, PhD training, research, innovation and community engagement form a dynamic continuum of activity.

About Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions

Internationally respected in industry and academia, a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship is a recognised mark of research excellence. The Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA), named after the double Nobel Prize winning Polish-French scientist famed for her work on radioactivity, and aim to support researchers at all stages of their careers irrespective of nationality. Researchers working across all disciplines, from life-saving healthcare to 'blue-sky' science, are eligible for funding, typically through fixed-term fellowships.

Mobility, training and personal development are key factors in any MSCA scheme. Therefore, the actions also support industry doctorates, combining academic research study with work in companies, and often include innovative training that enhances employability and career development.

What are the long-term benefits of a MSCA Fellowship?

MSCA Fellows' publications are more-often cited than equivalent peers, and are more frequently published on influential scientific journals MSCA fellows are more successful in applying for European Research Council (ERC)'s competitive grants for high quality research.

MSCA Fellows achieve professorship titles more frequently than others, and are more likely to hold principal investigator position.

For further information see the links at the end of this document.

NeuroAdapt as a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Action

NeuroAdapt is a MSCA-COFUND Action. This means that NeuroAdapt fellowships are part-funded by the European Commission, and part by the FutureNeuro Research Ireland Centre. Fellows benefit from the prestige and long-term benefits of holding a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship. The disciplinary field of the programme focusses on the NeuroAdapt thematic areas (Diagnostics, Therapeutics and Digital Health) for which the host institutes have excellent infrastructure and capability to support research projects.

In contrast to the MSCA Individual Fellowship, NeuroAdapt supports researcher career development with a training programme, designed to meet the specific needs of the fellows. Fellows will benefit from training as a cohort, forming a network of peers across Ireland and internationally. While the programme is centrally designed, fellows actively co-organise training activities, proposing topics of interest alongside the structured programme offered. The central budget supports these group training initiatives, while fellows also have access to a travel fund to attend conferences and workshops. Additionally, each fellow has an individual training budget, enabling them to pursue tailored opportunities that complement their research and professional development goals.

Working in Ireland

Why choose Ireland?

Ireland is an English-speaking, technologically advanced country (population just over 5 million), home to leading multinational and indigenous companies, with a young, growing population. It is in the top centile of Eurostat rankings for Innovation Output.

Ireland is building a reputation as a world leader in scientific research capability, Ireland is currently 1st in the world for knowledge diffusion, 3rd for knowledge impact, 5th for knowledge absorption, 12th most innovative country, and 12th in the global scientific ranking for overall quality of scientific research.

Ireland ranks in the top 5 in key disciplines such as Nanotechnology (1st), Animal and Dairy Science (2nd), Chemistry, Immunology, Materials Sciences, Agricultural Sciences (3rd in all) and Mathematics (4th).

Ireland provides an ideal location for researchers to access Horizon Europe programmes, European Research Council grants and international funding from charities and industry. Research Ireland, our Prime Funder, works in partnership with many organisations including the Royal Society, the BBSRC, the US National Science Foundation, NIH, and the National Natural Science Foundation of China.

Many of the world's biggest and best companies have located strategic research facilities here, and multinationals often choose Irish locations to base their European, Middle Eastern and African (EMEA) operations. The driving factors are typically economic, but companies frequently cite access to excellent innovation, alongside the flexibility and adaptability of the population, as reasons to stay and expand. In Irish research and innovation, you will find a friendly ecosystem that sees academic researchers working hand-in- hand with small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) as well as large companies, and funding agencies extremely willing to support them.

Please visit http://www.iua.ie/international for more information on relocating to Ireland as a researcher.

Visas & Work Permits

You must personally review all information on visas and work permits to ensure you can work in Ireland before applying. We recommend applicants apply for Visas at the earliest opportunity and do not rely on the turnaround times that are indicated on the immigration webpages. These are often not up to date with Visas taking substantially longer than websites suggest.

The visa requirement depends on your nationality, or the country that issued your main travel document.

You can check requirements here:
www.irishimmigration.ie/coming-to-work-in-ireland/working-in-ireland-travel-path/

To enter employment in Ireland, if you are a citizen of an EU/EEA (European Economic Area) nation or a Swiss national, you do not require a permit.

For other nationalities, the eligibility requirements and contractual terms of the NeuroAdapt programme are designed to fulfil the conditions of the 'Hosting Agreement Scheme'. This special scheme for non-EU researchers offers a free and fast-track service for permission to work. With a Hosting Agreement, researchers' families can accompany them, have access to public services including schools, and are entitled to seek work themselves.
For full information on the Hosting Agreement Scheme, visit: www.euraxess.ie/ireland/fast-track-work-permit-non-eu-rd-hosting-agreement-scheme

Living in Ireland
Ireland is renowned for its friendly citizens and warm welcomes and has previously been voted the 'World's friendliest country' by Lonely Planet. As an English-speaking European nation, it is often seen as a gateway to Europe by the rest of the world. Today, Ireland is a dynamic, lively, modern country with a young population and a successful, technologically orientated economy. Ireland also remains a country with deep heritage, where tradition, culture, music and conversation are valued.

For more information about coming to Ireland live and work including healthcare, welfare, accommodation, climate and other practicalities see:

www.citizensinformation.ie/en/moving_country/moving_to_ireland/coming_to_live_in_ireland/ www.livinginireland.ie

About the Fellowships

NeuroAdapt Fellowships are designed for postdoctoral researchers of any nationality, seeking a prestigious career development position in a selection of Ireland's leading universities. NeuroAdapt aims to develop research, technical and other skills, fostering their ability to collaborate across disciplines, and engage with industry and clinical partners. Fellows also receive guidance on integrating Public and Patient Involvement (PPI) into their projects, ensuring that research is relevant, patient-centered, and aligned with real-world needs.

NeuroAdapt Fellows will be researchers who are technically strong in their own discipline, and capable of performing high-value, interdisciplinary research.

Two main types of Fellowships are offered, defined by their mobility format:

Incoming Fellowships	The Fellow will relocate from anywhere in the world to Ireland, to conduct their project at a NeuroAdapt host institute, for the duration of the fellowship
Global Fellowships	The Fellow will begin their Fellowship by relocating to a host organisation outside of Ireland (outgoing host) for 12 months, before returning to their NeuroAdapt host (primary host) for the remainder of the fellowship

Mobility and relocation are fully defined in the eligibility requirements below.

Research Themes

NeuroAdapt Fellowships must be aligned to one of three research themes:

Diagnostics	Including: i) genomic & omic data from human/ animal models; ii) identification & validation of disease-specific biomarkers (pre-/ clinical testing); iii) use of AI to integrate diagnostic data and to inform on new treatments and, iv) the development of in-situ monitoring point-of-care devices
Therapeutics	Including: i) identification of new target genes; ii) validation of therapeutic potential of new drugs using a wide range of experimental models spanning from in vitro approaches to pre-clinical/ human model systems and, iii) design of translatable drug delivery systems
Digital Health	Including i) application of ethical AI/ML solutions to multimodality data to inform clinical decision making and smart healthcare approach; ii) examine the validity, usability & feasibility of connected health devices and their potential to provide objective digital biomarkers that yield insights into a patients' health status and, iii) development of standardised models that facilitate harmonisation and interoperability of health data.

Domains of expertise have been further subdivided to help candidates identify a suitable supervisor match, and to facilitate the review process. A list of potential supervisors can be viewed on our website here. (Search under NeuroAdapt supervisor in the Role menu).

Supervision Team

Each NeuroAdapt supervision team (ST) will comprise four individuals

1. The principal academic supervisor, based in FutureNeuro
2. Co-supervisor for Global Fellowships, based at the out-going university
3. A Secondment supervisor from industry/patient group/clinical setting
4. An impartial individual (academic or other) mentor to provide independent advice and experience in career development chosen by the applicant (support in identifying additional mentors may be provided by supervisor and NeuroAdapt manager).

Where possible, applicants are encouraged to identify the complete supervision team at the application stage. If not, the team will be defined prior to a fellowship commencement with the help of the NeuroAdapt Programme Manager.

Training & Development

The NeuroAdapt programme is designed as a ***full research training and career development programme***, with a series of training and career development activities and opportunities. Fellows will be helped to build their network towards their individual career goals and given guidance on making the most of training opportunities at their host institute and externally.

Each Fellow will discuss and define a Career Development Plan (CDP) with their supervision team in their first two months. Along with the research and technical objectives of their fellowship, the CDP will also indicate a clear set of training and development goals, career targets, industry involvement, PPI, and publication strategies as appropriate to their project.

Intersectoral Engagement and Secondment

Working with industry, clinical partners and patient groups to inform, steer and create impact from research is an important feature of the Research Ireland Centre environment in which NeuroAdapt fellows will be immersed.

FutureNeuro has well-established links with major multinationals, SMEs, pre-commercial start-ups, hospitals and clinical practices and public-patient organisations, with many supervisors participating in a variety of exciting collaborations. The NeuroAdapt training programme, along with regular formal and informal events, will provide each Fellow with a further opportunity to interact with our industry and clinical networks.

As well as this continuous immersion, NeuroAdapt Fellows are expected to undertake an intersectoral Secondment of 3 - 6 months duration with a non-academic partner,

anywhere in the world, that complements their research, training and development needs. Applicants should identify a potential secondment host (industry/clinical sector), or, at minimum, describe a potential secondment host profile. The Programme Manager, with support from the fellows' supervisor, will endeavour to help the applicant to identify a suitable national and international secondment host pre- and post-award, if required. Secondment organisations include industry (*i.e.*, SMEs, multinationals), NGOs, clinical settings or patient groups/organisations with the capacity to provide training for postdoctoral researchers within their chosen field of research.

For Global Fellowships, where the host of the outgoing phase is an academic organisation, an intersectoral Secondment should be proposed during the return phase.

Public and Patient Involvement (PPI)

Public Patient Involvement (PPI) is the development of active partnerships between researchers, patients and public stakeholders to develop research, which is relevant and useful to patient and public needs.

By 'patients', we mean people living with or caring for people with neurological conditions including past and current health care service users, formal carers, and informal carers such as parents and family members.
By 'public', we mean people who have a specific interest in neurological health, such as patient support groups, charities for neurological conditions, healthcare providers and policy makers.

Applicants must embed PPI throughout their Fellowship. High-level strategies should be included in your initial proposal, with reference to the links provided in the 'Links' section of this document below.

Additional PPI measures to strengthen research proposals may be proposed later through a combination of feedback from our NeuroAdapt PPI Panel (involving patient representatives from the Neurological Alliance of Ireland), and by participating in a Patients Feedback session, organised by FutureNeuro. For the Patient Feedback session, successful applicants will 'pitch' their proposal concept to a group of patients/carers, experienced with healthcare and research in brain diseases. Patients can offer their advice and input to any aspect of the proposed project at the start of project implementation.

Additional Training

Fellows are encouraged to supplement their NeuroAdapt research and training activities with individual training relevant to their research projects and career goals. All host institutes have staff development programmes, with technical and non-technical courses available in specific and transferable skills. Funding will be available to Fellows to pursue training outside of these programmes.

Eligibility Criteria

Applicants are strongly encouraged to raise any eligibility concerns and queries with the NeuroAdapt Programme Manager before starting to develop an application.

Applications are encouraged from Scholars / Researchers at Risk; please contact us for additional support.

Applicant Eligibility

Universal Criteria

- Applicants must be postdoctoral researchers by the relevant NeuroAdapt Call deadline, i.e., in possession of a doctoral degree

The application, interview and research fellowship are conducted through the English language. Applicants must demonstrate sufficient English language proficiency (written and spoken) to undertake the application process and to complete the fellowship effectively. Proof of English fluency may be requested.

Definitions:

- "Postdoctoral Researcher" is an individual in possession of a doctoral degree (i.e., have successfully completed all the formal requirements to obtain a doctorate). Applicants who have successfully defended their doctoral thesis but have not yet formally been awarded the doctoral degree will also be considered eligible to apply. The successful defense must be unconditional (no further requirements/corrections that need to be addressed) and take place before the Call open deadline.

- A medical doctor's degree will be accepted only when it corresponds to a doctoral degree or if the researcher can demonstrate his/her appointment in a position that requires doctoral equivalency (e.g., professorship appointment). Medical doctor degrees corresponding to basic medical training defined in Annex V of Directive 2005/36/EC will not be considered a doctoral degree.

- 'Fluent in English' means minimum standard (or native):
    - TOEFL: 237 (computer-based), 580 (paper-based test)
    - Cambridge Certificate of Proficiency in English (CAP): Overall score of 180 with a minimum of 169 in all components
    - Other English language examinations of equivalence will also be considered

Please note that you do not need any certificate at the application stage.

Mobility Criteria:

Fellowship Type	Additional criteria on eligibility	Mobility Rule
Incoming	The applicant who is a national or long-term resident of a Horizon 2020 Member State (MS) or Associated Country (AC) may apply for an outgoing phase to any country in the world.	Applicants must not have resided or carried out their main activity (work, studies, etc.) in Ireland for more than 12 months in the 3 years immediately prior to the call deadline.

Global	The applicant who is not a national of a Member State (MS) or Associated Country (AC) may apply for an outgoing phase but only to a MS or AC. Refer to *'Definitions and exceptions'* below regarding Associated Countries.	The applicant must move or have moved from any country to the outgoing partner organisation. The applicant must not have resided in or carried out their main activity in the country of the outgoing partner organisation for more than 12 months in the 3 years prior to the call deadline.

Definitions and exceptions:

- Compulsory national service and/or short stays such as holidays can be ignored
- For refugees covered by the 1951 Refugee Convention (Geneva Convention), the refugee procedure (i.e., before refugee status is conferred) will not be counted as 'period of residence/activity in the country of the beneficiary'. This is regardless of whether he/she was active in research at that time.
- Associated Countries are as defined by the Horizon Europe programme[1]

Application Eligibility

- The research proposed by the applicant must be aligned with one or more of the NeuroAdapt research themes
- Applications must be complete in their entirety and submitted before the call deadline
- The research proposed must adhere to NeuroAdapt ethical standards (see Ethics Resources section for relevant links as well as Appendix IV)
- For Global Fellowships, applicants must provide letters of commitment from the host of each phase (i.e., a letter from the outgoing phase host, and one from the Research Office of the primary Irish host); applicants considering Global Fellowships are strongly encouraged to contact the NeuroAdapt programme manager to facilitate obtaining these letters.

Only one application per applicant may be submitted per call.

We strongly encourage resubmissions from applicants who were previously unsuccessful.

How to Apply

Applicants for the NeuroAdapt Fellowships are strongly advised to contact a Supervisor as early as possible in the process. Candidates will submit a research proposal, CV and a self-assessment of eligibility to the programme manager. Once eligibility is confirmed, an international, independent panel of experts will review the submission. The top ranked submissions will pass to the next stage, where the candidate will be invited for an

[1] https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/list-3rd-country-participation_horizon-euratom_en.pdf

interview. Those successful at the interview stage will be informed of the award, and the subsequent intent to offer a Fellowship position at one of the NeuroAdapt host institutes.

The actual start of the fellowship will occur after an employment contract is issued by the institution and accepted by the Fellow, and any visa / permission to work processes completed. Fellowships will ideally start within 3 months of award; delayed starts may be considered with justification.

Overview of the Application and Selection Process

Publication of the Fellowship Call

The application process starts with the publication of the NeuroAdapt Call, along with this document and associated templates. **An online application portal (accessed via the NeuroAdapt website)** is open for the duration of call. At any stage, applicants may contact the NeuroAdapt Programme Manager (NeuroAdapt@rcsi.ie) for support.

Preparation for Applying

Applicants are encouraged to start preparation as early as possible. Please review all relevant documentation, including this Guide, FAQs and Application Templates published on the NeuroAdapt webpage and application portal.

Applicants are advised to contact the NeuroAdapt Supervisor with whom they would like to work on their research project should they be successful. The Supervisor may offer guidance on developing the research plan and advise of the resources available in their Host organisation.

For Global Fellowships, the applicant is strongly advised to contact the NeuroAdapt programme manager as early as possible to discuss practical considerations for the outgoing phase, and the **requirements for commitment from both hosts**.

Developing and submitting your proposal

Applicants are required to propose a research project that can be completed over the duration of a two-year fellowship. Be mindful of time requirements for clinical ethics approvals which can be lengthy.

The fellowships are specifically designed to support career development and hence, it is important that the proposal includes a well-considered description of the fellowship will develop the applicant's career.

The submission will comprise a written research proposal, your CV and supporting information. Document templates are provided and can be downloaded from the NeuroAdapt website.

Eligibility Check

After the call closes, all applications will first be checked for completeness and eligibility. Applicants will be informed of the result by email. If an application is found ineligible, the reason will be stated and the submission is rejected. Note that documentary evidence of eligibility will only be requested should the application be reviewed successfully and selected for award.

International Expert Review and Ranking

All eligible applications will undergo independent, international remote review. Each proposal will be evaluated by at least three experts. Applications will be scored and ranked according to the NeuroAdapt Assessment Criteria (Appendix III). At the end of the stage, applicants will receive a summary of their score and feedback, and the decision on their progression to interview.

Interviews of Top-Ranking Applicants

Top-ranked applicants will be invited for a 30-minute remote interview. During the interview, the applicant will give a 10-minute presentation on their scientific project and an overview of their career development and training objectives. This will be followed by 20 minutes of questions from the interview panel.

The interview is a time for the candidates to discuss the research proposal and demonstrate that they understand what the Fellowship has to offer and have the desire and competency required for its execution. It will also give the candidates an opportunity to further explore their research concept and plan, and to learn more about the NeuroAdapt environment.

Candidates will then be informed of their evaluation scores, panel feedback, and the award decision.

The Award and Offers of Employment

The final score for each application will be comprised of the score for the written proposal and the interview, with equal weighting applied. Starting from the top ranked submission and working downwards, the NeuroAdapt Steering Committee will approve funding of awardees, considering the maximum number of fellowships available in the Call. Those who score above the threshold but are not approved for funding immediately may be placed on a reserve list at the discretion of the Steering Committee.

Upon selection, successful applicants will be informed of the award decision, and to expect an employment offer from their host institute. Prior to the institution giving a firm offer (an employment contract to execute the Fellowship), NeuroAdapt Programme Manager and/or the host institute may contact the applicant's referees and request further documentary evidence to verify applicant eligibility. Should these checks fail, the award may be withdrawn.

It is expected that awardees will start their Fellowship at their earliest convenience, and within three months of the contract offer from their host institute. Given that mobility is a key feature of the programme, NeuroAdapt recognises that additional time may be required to allow a Fellow to complete their previous commitments before the move to

Ireland and obtain visas if required. Requests for a delayed start will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Ethics Review

An additional, parallel review will take place if the applicant answers 'yes' to any of the questions in the ethics self-assessment and subsequently provides an Ethics Statement.

The intent of the ethics review is to help applicants understand and manage ethical issues. The review may find that the applicant has necessary controls and measures in their plan or may request additional measures. In extreme cases, the proposal may be declared ineligible. The Ethical Review Committee may ask for more information before deciding.

Applicants will be informed of the outcome of the review, including requirements, recommendations, and advice. In all cases, formal ethical approval for the project must be obtained, if a requirement of the research project, by the applicant from relevant ethics committee(s) of Host organisations prior to the start of the project.

Appeals process

Applicants who believe that their proposal has been unjustly evaluated may submit an appeal. Appeals can be made with regards to evaluation procedures that were followed and/or to the application of the evaluation criteria. Appeals related to the scientific judgement of reviewers will not be considered. Applicants must submit their appeal within 15 days of being notified of their evaluation outcomes (eligibility review, remote review, interview/selection).

An appeal template will be available on the NeuroAdapt website for this purpose, to be emailed directly to the NeuroAdapt Programme Manager. An appeals Committee will review the submission, and applicants will be informed by e-mail within 15 days if their appeal is accepted, and actions that will be implemented, which may include repeat of part or all the review process. Appeals Committee decisions are final.

Employment as a NeuroAdapt Fellow

1. Contracts

NeuroAdapt Fellows will be offered fixed-term or specific purpose Research Fellow employment contracts from the host institution of their supervisor for the duration of the fellowship. The terms of the employment contract will be in line with the Terms of Employment (Information) Acts 1994–2014, Ireland, which ensures provision of pensions, vacation / maternity / parental and carers leave, accident insurance cover and access to healthcare.

The Fellow may be required to sign additional agreements (non-disclosure, safety documentation etc.) due to their interaction with an industry or other academic partner, in a Secondment, outgoing phase or otherwise.

In addition to standard terms and conditions, employment contracts will specify the

following:

- The nature of the appointment of the researcher / status (i.e., Research Fellow)
- The maximum duration of the Fellowship
- Details of the name(s) of the Supervisor(s) with overall responsibility for the project
- The gross salary provided for the Fellow, including the mobility and family allowances if applicable
- Working hours, vacation and other leave entitlements, such as sickness and maternity leave
- Arrangements between the institute and the researcher relating to Intellectual Property (IP) rights, confidentiality and any other policies of the institute

2. Financial Aspects

The total award, following the MSCA model, is a fixed amount (fully specified in the programme Terms and Conditions). All payments are subject to statutory employment deductions which may vary by host institute.

2.1 Fellow's Salary Allowance

The Fellow's salary consists of the following components:

a) Living Allowance

Base salary aligned with the Irish Universities Association (IUA) Postdoctoral Researcher Level 1 salary scale.

b) Mobility Allowance

€600 per month for all Fellows. Intended to support relocation to the host institute.

The minimum gross salary comprising the living and mobility allowances is €44,385 per year without family allowance.

c) Family Allowance

€660 per month for Fellows with dependent family members (if eligible)

Eligibility for family allowance:

- Marriage or equivalent recognized relationship.
- Dependent children maintained by the Fellow.
- Fellows acquiring dependents during the fellowship will become eligible for the family allowance.

Note:

All salary components are subject to taxes and statutory deductions under host institute policies and national law (Revenue Ireland).

The gross salary offered is determined by the Host Institute at the time of the employment offer.

In addition to salary, Fellows receive support for research and professional development:

2.2 Research Consumables and Training Support

- **Research Consumables**: Up to €900 per month of the Fellowship completed.
- **Travel and Training**: Up to €200 per month of the Fellowship completed (conference travel, secondments, training).

These consumable/training payments are subject to a payment schedule. 25% of each cost will be retained until the final six months of the Fellows project.

Fellow funds will be placed in a research account at the Host Institute and may be used according to the Host Institute's procurement policies, under the authorization of the Fellow's supervisor.

2.3 Programme-wide Training and Development

NeuroAdapt provides:

a) **Programme-wide training and development activities**. The NeuroAdapt team is responsible for organizing training opportunities for Fellows, including summer schools, workshops, and other events. Fellows are also encouraged to actively participate in the design and delivery of these activities where appropriate, contributing to workshops, mentoring sessions, or other programme initiatives in line with their expertise and research interests.

b) Support for **individual training relevant to the Fellow's research or career goals**, up to €1,500 per Fellow (subject to request and approval by the NeuroAdapt management team).

2.3 Other benefits

Fellows will receive all the necessary management and technical support to ensure access to the facilities required to carry out their research. Each host institute has administrative and welfare structures in place for the Fellows, such as accommodation advice, IT support, and health services.

Fellows will be given induction training in their host institutions, including IT security, data protection and health and safety appropriate to their role. This will give Fellow's information on their rights as employees, employee services and a practical guide to living in Ireland, including tax-incentive travel schemes such as the Annual Travel Pass and Bike to Work.

Relevant Links

Guidance for writing MSCA "Individual Fellowship" Proposals	https://msca-net.eu/scientific-community/msca-postdoctoral-fellowships-pf/ https://www.iua.ie/for-researchers/marie-sklodowska-curie-actions/resources-events-training/
European Charter for Researchers	https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/jobs/charter/european-charter
Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers	https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/jobs/charter/code https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/cca3dd5c-2d1c-11ef-a61b-01aa75ed71a1/language-en
Horizon Europpe: How to complete your ethics self-assessment	https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/how-to-complete-your-ethics-self-assessment_en.pdf
European Textbook on Ethics in Research	https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/12567a07-6beb-4998-95cd-8bca103fcf43
Toolkit "Gender in EU-funded research"	https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/c17a4eba-49ab-40f1-bb7b-bb6faaf8dec8
Understanding gender dimension for MSCA projects	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hq4eWo30RfY (8.06min)
Marie Curie researchers and their long-term career development: A comparative study (2014)	https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/9c2cb7d8-3773-430c-b1c0-db94ec421b01
Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions – Collection of EC Videos	https://audiovisual.ec.europa.eu/en/event/59959
Health Service Executive Ireland's National Framework for the Governance, Management and Support of Health Research (RGMS Framework)	http://hseresearch.ie/governance-framework/
PPI-IGNITE – Irish national initiative on Patient and Public Involvement	https://ppinetwork.ie/
INVOLVE PPI – PPI (Patient and Public Involvement) resources (collated for applicants to NIHR [UK] research programmes	https://www.nihr.ac.uk/documents/ppi-patient-and- public-involvement-resources-for-applicants-to-nihr- research-programmes/23437

Contact Details

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LinkedIn	https://www.linkedin.com/company/NeuroAdapt-fellowship

Appendix I: Proposal Submission

Applications must be submitted via the NeuroAdapt online application, which will be accessible through the website.

To submit an application, applicants register to create an individual login. Following registration, you can begin your application, save and submit it. You may return to edit it at any time before the call deadline.

The Programme Manager may remove potential sources of bias by editing your submission documents prior to evaluation, in the best effort to present only the research concept and your capacity to enact it. To limit edits made on your behalf, it is recommended to avoid using terms that disclose **gender, age or nationality**.

The elements of the application process are:

Tab	Element(s)	Details	Limits
Start Here	Fellowship type	Select Incoming or Global	
Applicant Information	Personal Details	Your details as the applicant, including your nationality and gender. These are used only to help improve future calls; they are not part of the review.	
	Source	Identify where you heard about the programme	
Project Description	Title	The title of the research proposal	No limit
	Short name	A short name identifier	1 word
	Abstract	An overview of your research proposal. This abstract is not assessed, but it will be viewed by experts before they evaluate your proposal so they can confirm they are capable of providing a review. It will also be published if your proposal is successful. Therefore, it should contain only non-confidential information and include an unambiguous description of your research proposal's concept.	2000 character
	Supervisor Selection	Select the nominated NeuroAdapt Supervisor	1 selection
	Theme Selection	Select the main research domain from the list given	1 topic
	Subtopic Selection	Select the appropriate expertise / application areas from the list	
	Keywords	These are important and crucial to appointing appropriate international expert reviewers; please use keywords to assist in reviewing proposal for fellowship	10 words
Ethics Self Assessment	Questionnaire	Answer all questions. If you respond 'yes' to any question, you are required to include an ethics	

		statement to the document uploads.	
Eligibility Self Assessment	Questionnaire	Answer all questions. Documentary evidence will be required if you are successful in the selection process, prior to contract offer.	

Upload Proposal Documents	Document uploads	Upload: The research proposal. Use the Research Proposal template provided, which contains instructions for structure, and content. 10 pages max. See notes in Annex II. Your CV; template provided, 5 pages max Your ethics statement (if required) 2 pages max	Min. 11pt font, 2cm border. Tables & footnotes at least 10pt & 8pt resp. 5Mb document size
Letters of Support	Document Uploads	(Only appears for Global Fellowship Applications) Upload: A letter of support from your outgoing host, confirming arrangements for the first 12 months of the fellowship A letter of support from your return/primary host, confirming they will be the main host of your fellowship and will arrange the outgoing phase	
Declarations	Checkbox	Assert your agreement with the programme terms, and that you are acting in accordance with general research integrity best practice	

Appendix II: The Research Proposal Document

The research proposal is the most important part of the application and will be submitted as a written document of **no more than 10 pages** (page count does not include the title page or Gantt chart).

The template is provided on the NeuroAdapt website.

The research proposal must contain three sections: EXCELLENCE, IMPACT and IMPLEMENTATION. Notes on the expected content of each section are given the template application form. As you develop your proposal, you should also refer to the evaluation criteria in Appendix III.

Please abide by the following formatting rules:

- All text must be readable (11pt or greater, single line spacing; 10pt may be used in tables)
- References should be in footnotes, in 8 or 9pt font. All references count towards the page limit
- Diagrams, plots and tables may be used; however, use of colour to indicate differences should be avoided in case the document is viewed in black and white

Appendix III: Evaluation Criteria

Remote Review

All eligible applications will be evaluated by three independent reviewers and will be given a score from 0 (very poor; fails to address the criterion or cannot be assessed owing to missing or incomplete information) to 5 (outstanding in all criteria) for each category heading (Excellence, Impact and Implementation), considering the sub-criteria outlined in the table below.

For each category, the reviewers will determine a consensus score. Category weightings will be applied to generate an overall score, given to one decimal place. Proposals will then be ranked for selection. In cases where proposals have equal scores ("ex aequo"), they will be ordered on the priority listed at the end of the table. An overall threshold of 70% will be applicable to the overall score, i.e. a score of 3.5/5 must be obtained to have the possibility to proceed to the next stage of evaluation.

All applicants will be informed of their score and summary reviewer comments on their proposal.

	Excellence	**Impact**	**Implementation**
		Sub-criteria	
	Quality and pertinence of the project's research and innovation objectives (and the extent to which they are ambitious, and go beyond the state of the art).	Enhancing of the future career prospects of the researcher after the fellowship.	Quality and effectiveness of the work plan.
	Soundness of the proposed methodology (including interdisciplinary approaches, consideration of the gender dimension and other diversity aspects if relevant for the research project, and the quality of open science practices).	Suitability and quality of the measures to maximise expected outcomes and impacts, as set out in the dissemination and exploitation plan, including communication activities.	Assessment of risks assigned to the work packages.
	Quality of the supervision, training and of the two-way transfer of knowledge between the researcher and the host.	The magnitude and importance of the project's contribution to the expected scientific, societal and economic impacts.	Appropriateness of the effort assigned to work packages.
	Quality and appropriateness of the researcher's professional experience, competences and skills.		

	Criterion Weighting	
50%	30%	20%
	Priority in case of ex aequo	
3	2	1

Interview

The interview panel will include an external representative from the FutureNeuro Scientific Advisory Committee, the FN EU Funding Manager, an industry representative, and an international academic expert in neuroscience.

The interview panel shall agree (consensus) on a score between 0 (very poor; superficial addressing of criteria) and 5 (excellent in all criteria) and with one decimal point, under three category headings detailed below. A weighted overall score will be determined.

	Criteria	
Quality of the presentation content and delivery including general communication skills	Ability of the candidate to respond to questions, including those in the from the remote review report	Candidate's motivation and match between the applicant, supervisor and host environment
	Criterion Weighting	
10%	50%	40%

Priority in case of ex aequo		
3	2	1

Overall score calculation

After the interview, the PM will sum the total weighted scores from the remote review (60%) and the interview (40%), to produce a final score between 0 (very poor) and 5 (excellent).

Appendix IV: Ethics

The NeuroAdapt Programme is committed to ensure that all research is conducted according to best ethical practice and thus maintain the good name of research in Ireland and Europe.

Applicants must always consider and address any of the following ethics issues, if they arise, in their proposals. Definitions are provided in the Horizon guides.

- Humans
- Human cells/tissues
- Personal data
- Animals
- Crosscutting issues
- Third countries
- Environment & Health and Safety
- Dual use
- Misuse
- Artificial Intelligence

Research areas excluded from funding include:

- research activities aiming at human cloning for reproductive purposes
- research activity intended to modify the genetics of human beings that could make such changes heritable (with the exception of research relating to cancer treatment of the gonads, which may be financed)
- research activities intended to create human embryos solely for the purpose of research or for the purpose of stem cell procurement, including by means of somatic cell nuclear transfer

Research activities involving human embryonic stem cells (hESCs) require an additional level of approval from the Research Executive Agency funding this programme. If your concept involves use of hESCs we strongly recommend contacting the programme manager in advance of submitting a proposal.

All applicants to the NeuroAdapt Fellowship Programme are required to complete an Ethics Self-Assessment, which is part of the online application form. Should the self-assessment indicate potential ethical issues, a statement describing how they will be addressed should be provided, using the template provided. All applicants will be informed of their score and summary reviewer comments on their proposal.

Excellence	Impact	Implementation
	Sub-criteria	
Quality and pertinence of the project's research and innovation objectives (and the extent to which they are ambitious, and go beyond the state of the art).	Enhancing of the future career prospects of the researcher after the fellowship.	Quality and effectiveness of the work plan.
Soundness of the proposed methodology (including interdisciplinary approaches, consideration of the gender dimension and other diversity aspects if relevant for the research project, and the quality of open science practices).	Suitability and quality of the measures to maximise expected outcomes and impacts, as set out in the dissemination and exploitation plan, including communication activities.	Assessment of risks assigned to the work packages.

Quality of the supervision, training and of the two-way transfer of knowledge between the researcher and the host.	The magnitude and importance of the project's contribution to the expected scientific, societal and economic impacts.	Appropriateness of the effort assigned to work packages.
Quality and appropriateness of the researcher's professional experience, competences and skills.		

	Criterion Weighting	
50%	30%	20%
	Priority in case of ex aequo	
3	2	1

Interview

The interview panel will include an external representative from the FutureNeuro Scientific Advisory Committee, the FN EU Funding Manager, an industry representative, and an international academic expert in neuroscience.

The interview panel shall agree (consensus) on a score between 0 (very poor; superficial addressing of criteria) and 5 (excellent in all criteria) and with one decimal point, under three category headings detailed below. A weighted overall score will be determined.

	Criteria	
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	Criterion Weighting	
10%	50%	40%

Priority in case of ex aequo		
3	2	1

Overall score calculation

After the interview, the PM will sum the total weighted scores from the remote review (60%) and the interview (40%), to produce a final score between 0 (very poor) and 5 (excellent).