

# IOTI Postgraduate Scholarship Initiative

## Call Documentation

March 2014



## 1. Purpose and Background

- 1.1 IOTI invites applications from **academic or research staff members** interested in supervising Masters or PhD students to be funded under the **Postgraduate Research Scholarship Initiative 2014/2015**.
- 1.2 31 scholarships will be awarded in the 2014/2015 scheme.
- 1.3 The purpose of this scholarship programme is to promote strategically oriented research of both a fundamental and applied nature which has the potential to impact both on society and the economy across the Institute of Technology sector. Support will be directed towards the generation and application of new knowledge and the provision of research and development training for highly skilled graduates leading to the award of a Masters or PhD degree.
- 1.4 These Scholarships will be awarded on a competitive basis. Research proposals must demonstrate their alignment with the research strategies of their respective individual institutes and their contribution to the strategic direction set out for the IOT sector as a whole in *Sustaining and Growing the Delivery of Strategically Oriented, Impact Focused Research, Development and Innovation in the Institutes of Technology: A Strategic Position Paper Developed by the Heads of Research Group* (April 2013). This paper can be accessed from [www.ioti.ie/RDI](http://www.ioti.ie/RDI)

## 2. Eligibility and Scope

- 2.1 Applications are welcome from research active staff members (i.e. academic and research staff) in the following thirteen Institutes of Technology who have subscribed to the IOTI Postgraduate Research Funding Initiative:
  - Athlone Institute of Technology
  - Institute of Technology, Blanchardstown
  - Institute of Technology, Carlow
  - Cork Institute of Technology
  - Dundalk Institute of Technology
  - Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology
  - Institute of Art, Design and Technology (IADT)
  - Letterkenny Institute of Technology
  - Limerick Institute of Technology
  - Institute of Technology, Sligo
  - Institute of Technology, Tallaght
  - Institute of Technology, Tralee
  - Waterford Institute of Technology

- 2.2 Capacity building across the Institute of Technology sector is a key objective of the scheme. As such, each participating Institute will receive a minimum of 2 awards, subject to applications meeting the minimum threshold for funding.
- 2.3 The initiative is open to research proposals from all discipline areas.
- 2.4 All applications submitted must demonstrate that the research proposed is aligned with the research priorities of the applicant's institution.
- 2.5 The research proposal must also demonstrate that the proposed project is part of a wider development path that will build further capability within the specific research area. Future plans with regard to progression of research activities, expansion of capacity, collaborative links and funding sources to be targeted must be an essential component of each individual proposal.
- 2.6 Applications are welcome from both full time permanent and contract staff from across the institutes. However for contract staff the duration of their contract must extend for the full duration of the proposed project. If this is not the case then the applicant must have an additional eligible supervisor who meets this criterion.
- 2.7 The proposed supervisor(s) must hold a cognate qualification at or above the level for which the candidate is to be registered (Level 9 or Level 10) and should be research active in the relevant domain or field.
- 2.8 Applications are particularly welcome from supervisory teams involving early stage researchers. Proposed supervisors within nine years of PhD or Masters by Research qualification will be considered as early stage researchers. The evaluation panel may give consideration to the inclusion of early stage researchers in the composition of the supervisory team in the final decision-making process.
- 2.9 Applicants must have the agreement of their relevant Head of School or Department that they can perform the supervisor role in the proposed research project.
- 2.10 Interdisciplinary and collaborative proposal submissions are encouraged, which can involve industry, academic or other external partners. For such applications a clear rationale must be given as to the added benefit brought by the external partner to the project. Collaborative projects cannot allocate direct funding from the initiative to partners.
- 2.11 Lead supervisors will only be awarded one scholarship per annum. Co-supervisors will be eligible to receive more than one scholarship per annum.

### 3 Application Process

- 3.1 Applications must be submitted on the application form supplied.
- 3.2 Applications should clearly demonstrate their contribution to development of research capability within the proposed area, the research strategy of the relevant Institute and the stated strategic direction of the wider Institute of Technology sector.
- 3.3 The scholarships will be awarded on a competitive basis.
- 3.4 The upper limit is 9 pages excluding cover sheet, appendices and declaration sheet.
- 3.5 Appendices may include a Gantt chart project plan, relevant letters of support, references and pro-forma supervisor profile sheets only.
- 3.6 Applications which exceed the stated page limit will not be considered for funding.
- 3.7 The supervisor sheet may be duplicated to provide co-supervisor details. Supervisor profiles must not exceed 5 pages.
- 3.8 It is intended that the application and assessment process will progress in line with the following timeframe:

<b>28<sup>th</sup> March 2014:</b>	Call for Applications Issued
<b>9<sup>th</sup> May 2014:</b>	Deadline for Applications
<b>12<sup>th</sup> May - 6<sup>th</sup> June:</b>	Review of Applications by Independent Panel Members
<b>9<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> June:</b>	Independent Panel Meeting to Agree Award Decisions
<b>16<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> June:</b>	Communication of Results by Applicants and Feedback to all Applicants
<b>20<sup>th</sup> June:</b>	Postgraduate Recruitment Campaign Launched

### 4 Assessment of Research Proposals

- 4.1 Each research proposal will be scored out of 100. Project evaluation will be based on the following criteria and scoring:
  - **Technical Merit:** to include the originality, research methodology and technical feasibility of the project and its quality as a vehicle for training in advanced research techniques. Projects must be adjudged to be suitable for a Masters/PhD degree. (40 marks)
  - **Postgraduate Training Proposed and Project Plan:** this will include scheduling of the various research tasks, a statement of the 'deliverables' expected from each task and the incorporation of 'milestones'. Evidence of R&D management skills, i.e., the capacity to manage the project well, will be relevant (10 marks).

- **Strategic Relevance:** this will include demonstration of fit with the stated strategic direction in research, development and innovation across the IoT sector, the research strategy of the relevant Institute and future plans with regard to development of research capability in the proposed area, i.e. progression of research activities, expansion of capacity, collaborative links and funding sources to be targeted (15 marks).
- **Impact Focus:** Research projects must be impact-focused. There should be a statement of the research problem to be addressed, how this is to be achieved and of the likely impact in an economic and/or societal context. Any contribution the project will make in filling an identified gap in the research knowledge base should be emphasised, as should efforts to apply new knowledge to a particular area. The mechanisms planned to disseminate outcomes (e.g. publications, seminars, social media etc.) in order to maximise the impact of the project should also be indicated. (15 marks)
- **Collaboration:** Proposals should detail meaningful collaborations with key research partners and should show how these relationships have been developed and maintained to date, and the advantages that they bring to the research project and the Institute. Collaboration with other HEIs, industry, government agencies, community organisations or other stakeholders, and any proposed contribution to the costs or delivery of the project should be detailed. Plans to transfer new knowledge obtained during the project to the external partner must also be outlined. (10 marks)
- **Experience of Supervisory Team:** this will include specialist expertise and the record of the supervisory team in bringing students to successful completion of a research degree. Supervisors with no previous experience will be acceptable provided adequate co-supervision arrangements are made (10 marks).

4.2 Applicants must achieve a minimum threshold of 70% of the total marks available and at least 50% of the available marks for each criterion. Proposals which meet this threshold will then be ranked and scholarships awarded on the basis of the overall scores.

4.3 Applicants will also be asked to set out any gender dimension to the proposed research and how this dimension will be handled. While the response in this regard will not be scored, it must set out, to the satisfaction of the assessment panel, how potential sex-gender issues will be handled or why such a sex-gender dimension does not exist in relation to the proposed research. Further guidance on the sex-gender dimension in research is provided on the Irish Research Council website at [http://research.ie/sites/default/files/irish\\_research\\_council\\_gender\\_action\\_plan\\_2013\\_-2020.pdf](http://research.ie/sites/default/files/irish_research_council_gender_action_plan_2013_-2020.pdf)

4.4 Applications will be evaluated by one of three independent evaluation panels - Business/Humanities/Social Sciences; ICT/Engineering; and Science. All members of this panel will be independent of any of the participating Institutes of Technology and will include appropriate funding agency and external stakeholder representatives.

## **5 Duration of Project/Award**

- 5.1 Scholarships will be awarded for a period of up to two years for full-time postgraduate students in pursuit of either Masters by Research or PhD qualifications. For pursuit of a PhD qualification involving more than two years of study, a viable plan to carry the candidate to completion must be demonstrated.
- 5.2 The scholarship will comprise:
  - (a) Tuition fees paid by the Institute of Technology for all scholarship holders.
  - (b) An award of €12,000 p.a. to cover a maintenance grant for the postgraduate student and a Travel/Consumables/Materials budget. This will include a minimum contribution of €2,000 for travel, materials and consumables. If it is anticipated that a higher budget is required for the project, the source of the additional funds must be identified in Section 2 (Research Proposal) of the project application.
- 5.3 IoTs can co-fund from industry, other external partners or their own resources to provide additional maintenance support or to supplement the travel/consumables budget.
- 5.4 Postgraduate students receiving scholarships should not be in receipt of another Exchequer funded grant on appointment to the research project.

## **6 Recruitment of Project Postgraduate Students**

- 6.1 Postgraduate students must be qualified to undertake the proposed research i.e. Students must hold or be due to graduate in 2014 with a Level 8 Honours Degree at 2:2 or higher standard. In the case of foreign national students, they must hold an IELTS certificate at 6.0 or higher.
- 6.2 All scholarships are subject to successful acceptance to the relevant Institute's postgraduate research register .
- 6.3 All postgraduate students will be recruited by public advertisement through IOTI's sectoral promotion campaign for the scholarship scheme.
- 6.4 Postgraduate applicants will be shortlisted and interviewed in line with the relevant Institute's own policies and procedures.
- 6.5 Applicants should be advised of the requirements of the programme.
- 6.6 Awarding of these bursaries to students does not affect their eligibility in any application they may make relating to other higher education grant supports.

## 7 Method of Application/Closing Date

- 7.1 Supervisors must submit applications on the standardised form. Forms must be completed using Arial font and no less than font pitch size 10.
- 7.2 Each application must be approved by the relevant institution.
- 7.3 One electronic copy of the application form to be received by IOTI at [kate.wiseman@ioti.ie](mailto:kate.wiseman@ioti.ie) by 5pm Friday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2014.

### **Applications will not be accepted:**

- If received after the closing date deadline
- If the application has not been pre-screened and endorsed by the Head of Research or equivalent within the relevant Institute
- If the application exceeds 9 pages in length

## 8 General Conditions of Approval

- 8.1 The decision of the evaluation panel is final.
- 8.2 Awards are not transferable between staff or institutes except by explicit approval of IOTI.
- 8.3 A project should be commenced as soon as practicable following notification of an award. If a project is not commenced within five months of such notification the scholarship approval may be withdrawn.
- 8.4 A condition of a project's funding is that Interim and Final Monitoring Reports (setting out financial details, outcomes and milestones achieved) will be submitted within the schedule of the project identifying key indicators of value for research funding.
- 8.5 It will be an objective to ensure that equal opportunity applies in respect of this programme.
- 8.6 Applicants who are awarded a scholarship must register with an Institute of Technology as a postgraduate student.
- 8.7 Supervisors should make clear in their supporting documentation if they plan to take leave of absence from the Institute for any period greater than one month during the course of the proposed research.
- 8.8 All intellectual property arising from the research undertaken is the property of the Institute (unless otherwise defined within the IP policy of the Institute).