Ollscoil na Gaillimhe
University of Galway

cúram
SFI Research Centre for Medical Devices

HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

Guide for Applicants to the MedTrain+ Marie Skłodowksa- Curie Fellowship Programme at CÚRAM

Call 1, 2023

This detailed guide provides an overview of the MedTrain+ Fellowship Programme and practical information for potential applicants to call 1 (2023).

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1 CÚRAM MedTrain+ Programme

1.1 About MedTrain+

MedTrain+ is the successor Industry-Academia Training, Career Development and Mobility Fellowship Programme at CÚRAM, SFI Research Centre for Medical Devices to MedTrain (GA 713690). MedTrain+ is a maturity of approach with learnings from MedTrain by offering prestigious three-year fellowships to eligible experienced researchers in the broad area of Medical Device Research and Development, including:

- Biomaterials and Drug Delivery Devices
- MedTech AI, Machine Learning, Medical Imaging and Soft Robotics
- Immunoengineering
- Education and Public Engagement (EPE) and Science Advocacy Programmes

The MedTrain+ Programme aims to enhance researchers' creative, entrepreneurial, and innovative potential via advanced training, and international and inter-sectoral mobility. Fellows shall be based at one of ten CÚRAM academic organizations: University of Galway (GALWAY), University College Dublin (UCD), The Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI), Trinity College Dublin (TCD), University of Limerick (UL), Dublin City University (DCU), Technological University of the Shannon (TUS), University College Cork (UCC), National Institute for Bioprocessing Research and Training (NIBRT) and Technological University Dublin (TU Dublin). Fellowships include secondment to a non-academic research partner in any country appropriate to further each fellow's research, training and career development needs. MedTrain+ Fellows will be recruited across two calls over the four-year duration of the programme (2023-2027). The first call for applications (25 fellowships) opens at the end of March 2023.

1.2 CÚRAM

CÚRAM, SFI Research Centre for Medical Devices (CÚRAM – meaning “care” in the Irish language) is a national, SFI-funded, University of Galway (GALWAY), 64.8 Million Euro research Centre that brings together researchers from University College Dublin (UCD), the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI), Trinity College Dublin (TCD), University of Limerick (UL), Dublin City University (DCU), University College Cork (UCC), Technological University of the Shannon (TUS) National Institute for Bioprocessing Research and Training (NIBRT), Technological University Dublin (TU Dublin). CÚRAM's vision is to be a global leader in creating and translating clinic-ready and patient-focused medical devices, to develop the next generation of industry-relevant, publicly engaged researchers, and to become an anchor for industry-applicable research. Cutting-edge science will develop devices using the latest research from biomaterials, stem cells and drug delivery and the support of strong clinical collaborations, industry partners and hospital groups to enable rapid translation to the clinic. CÚRAM industry partners include Irish companies and multinationals in medical device, pharmaceutical, and biotechnology.

1.3 Marie Skłodowksa-Curie Fellowships

The MedTrain+ Fellowship programmes is part of the Marie Skłodowksa-Curie Actions (MSCA), a European Commission funding programme under Horizon Europe. Named after the double Nobel prize-winning Polish-French scientist Marie Skłodowksa-Curie, MSCA offer excellent and innovative research training, attractive career development and knowledge-exchange opportunities across borders and sector, e.g. academia and industry, Marie Skłodowksa-Curie Fellowships are

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internationally recognized as a mark of research excellence.

Testimonials from Marie Skłodowksa-Curie Fellows
Marie Curie Alumni Association

2 Fellowship Details

CÚRAM MedTrain+ Fellowships are open to experienced researchers of any nationality, resident anywhere in the world (see eligibility criteria), seeking a prestigious career development fellowship in medical device research and development based at GALWAY, UCD, RCSI, TCD, UL, DCU, TUS, TUD, UCC, NBRIT Ireland. The MedTrain+ programme will provide excellent experienced researchers with a research, complementary, and transferable skills training experience of the highest international standards. It will help them advance their scientific careers within a chosen sector, academia, industry, or the public sector. **Two fellowship levels** will be offered to 50 candidates over two calls, ensuring varying depths of experience: Level 1 candidates will have less than four years of experience post PhD; Level 2 candidates will have four or more years' experience post PhD.

The MedTrain+ programme will offer incoming fellowships across two calls over the four-years duration. The total duration of each fellowship is three years, divided into three phases: the initial phase at the host organization, the secondment phase in a non-academic sector, and the return phase at the host organization.
We welcome applications from candidates who have had career breaks and are looking to return to a research-based career and from candidates who have had a non-traditional career path, including those who have built up research experience but may still need to get a PhD.

3 Call Timetable

There will be two open calls for applications to the MedTrain+ Programme.
Call 1 (25 Fellowships): opens at the end of March 2023, for approximately 12 weeks (submission deadline for proposals 30 Jun 2023).
Call 2 (25 Fellowships): opens at the start of August 2023 for approximately 12 weeks (submission deadline for proposals Oct 2023) – call 2 details may be subject to change.
The frequency of calls and period are subject to change based on the progress made in selecting candidates. We may have additional or intermittent calls if required.

4 Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible, applications need to meet criteria in three categories: eligibility of applicants, project proposals, and secondments. Applicants must have two supervisors: one main host supervisor, one secondment supervisor, and an interdisciplinary mentor.

4.1 Eligibility of Applicants

- Must be experienced researchers, as per the MSCA definition: at the submission deadline (for call 1, 30 Jun 2023), they must have a doctoral degree or have at least four years of full-time equivalent research experience. Full-time equivalent research experience is measured from the date when a researcher obtained the degree which would formally entitle him/her to embark on a doctorate, either in the country in which the degree was obtained or in the country in which the researcher is recruited, irrespective of whether or not a doctorate is or was ever envisaged.
- Must comply with the MSCA mobility rule: have not resided or carried out their main activity

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(work, studies, etc.) in Ireland for more than 12 months in the three years immediately before the submission deadline (call 1, 30 Jun 2023). Compulsory national service and/or short stays such as holidays are not considered.

Table 1: Research experience and mobility requirement of Incoming fellows in the Programme

Fellowship	Research Experience	Mobility Requirement
Incoming Fellow (Level 1)	At the time of the call deadline, applicants must be a maximum of 4 years from the date of award of the (first) doctoral degree. In line with the MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowship call, this limit can be extended for the following reasons: **Maternity leave** (18 months, 548 days per child born after PhD award date, or the exact maternity leave duration, whichever is longest); **Paternity leave** (exact duration per child born after the PhD award date); **Research in a non-associated TC** (only for nationals or long-term residents of MS or AC, wishing to reintegrate in Europe); **Time spent not working in research**; **Long-term sick leave** (periods > 30 days)	Fellowships are open to candidates of any nationality who have not resided or carried out their main activity (work, studies, etc.) in Ireland for more than 12 months in the three years immediately prior to the call deadline. *
Incoming Fellow (Level 2)	At the call deadline, applicants must be in possession of a doctoral degree with a publication record and **four or more** years' postdoctoral research experience.	

***** The following periods are not considered: a) compulsory national service; b) time spent as part of a procedure for obtaining refugee status under the Geneva Convention; c) short stays (such as holidays), i.e., the researcher did not reside or did not have their main activity (work, studies, etc.) in the country during that period.

4.2 Eligibility of Project Proposals

- Must be within the research areas defined by CÚRAM, in the broad area of Medical Device Research and Development.
- Must be complete and in English.
- Must consider the gender dimension of the research project.
- Must be received by the University of Galway through the online application system (which can be accessed through https://medtrainplus2023.exordo.com/login on or before the advertised call deadline.
- Must include a completed ethics section, as outlined in the application form.
- Must adhere to the ethical rules of the host organization (GALWAY, UCD, RCSI, TCD, UL, DCU, TUS, TUD, UCC, NBRIT) and the European Union Horizon Europe research programme.

4.3 Eligibility of Secondments

- Non-academic secondments are a requirement, and secondment organizations must have an excellent international research reputation.
- Total secondment duration cannot exceed twelve months (single period or divided into

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shorter mobility periods of a minimum of three months and a maximum of six months)

5 Selection of Fellows

The evaluation criteria would be a) Research proposal: 70% weighting, b) Interview: 30% weighting.

Table 2: Evaluation criteria

Evaluation Criteria	Weightings
Research proposal	**70%**
Interview	**30%**

5.1 Evaluation Criteria - Research Proposal

Three independent experts will evaluate each eligible research proposal received by the deadline submission (Peer-Review Panel). Proposals will be evaluated based on the award criteria presented in Table 3, which align with the MSCA Individual Fellowships 2022 programme. For each evaluation criterion, several sub-criteria will be used to help the expert reviewers decide on the quality of the proposal and the project.

Table 3: Proposal award criteria and sub-criteria.

Excellence	Impact	QEI
Quality and pertinence of the project's research and innovation objectives (the extent to which they are ambitious and go beyond the state-of-the-art)	The credibility of the measures to enhance the career perspectives and employability of the researcher and contribution to his/her skills development	Quality and effectiveness of the work plan, assessment of risks and appropriateness of the effort assigned to work packages
The soundness of the proposed methodology (incl. interdisciplinary approaches, consideration of gender dimension/other diversity aspects if relevant for the research project, and the quality of open science practices)	Suitability and quality of the measures to maximize expected outcomes and impacts, as set out in the dissemination and exploitation plan, including communication activities	Quality and capacity of the host institutions and participating organizations, including hosting arrangements
Quality of the supervision, training and the three-way transfer of knowledge between the researcher, the host & secondment	Feasibility of secondment research ideas in terms of timeline, skills known and to acquire, and host suitability	Appropriateness of the management structures and procedures, including risk management
Quality and appropriateness of the researcher's professional experience, competences, skills	The extent to which the research enhances the Irish medical devices industry	The extent to which the research can create licensing or spin-out opportunities
50%	**30%**	**20%**
Weighting		
1	**2**	**3**
Priority in case of *ex aequo*		
An overall threshold of 70% will be applied to the total weighted score		

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QEI: Quality and efficiency of the implementation

Scores from 0 to 5 indicate the following with respect to the criterion under examination:

0 – Proposal fails to address the criterion or cannot be assessed due to missing or incomplete information.

1 – Poor. The criterion is inadequately addressed, or there are serious inherent weaknesses.

2 – Fair. The proposal broadly addresses the criterion, but there are significant weaknesses.

3 – Good. The proposal addresses the criterion well, but some shortcomings are present.

4 – Very Good. The proposal addresses the criterion very well, but a few shortcomings exist.

5 – Excellent. The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion. Any shortcomings are minor.

Evaluation scores will be awarded for each of the three criteria of "excellence", "impact", and "quality and efficiency of the implementation" (Table 2). Each criterion will be scored from 0 to 5. The sub-criteria will help the evaluators to form their opinion about the proposal; the evaluators shall not provide a score for each sub-criterion. Scores with a resolution of one decimal place may be awarded. The maximum total score is, therefore, 15. The scores shall then be weighed up according to Table 3 for an overall score. The total score will be subject to a threshold of 70%. In the case of *ex-aequo* results, the priority of the proposals on the ranked list shall be according to Table 3.

Only proposals passing the overall threshold of 70% will be placed on the ranking list. The peer-review stage will end with a consensus meeting via teleconferencing, The Peer-Review Panel will discuss the average allocated scores and agree on the final ranking list of applicants. The overall weighting for the Research proposal will be 70%.

5.2 Evaluation Criteria - Interview

The interview will be carried out in English in person or via teleconferencing facility by an Interview Panel. The candidate and the Interview Panel will agree on a suitable time. The interview is an evaluation of the candidate's oral presentation and motivation. Each candidate will be evaluated based on the award criteria presented in Table 4. Each criterion will be scored from 0 to 5, in line with the proposal scoring system. Candidates will be asked to give a 10 min PowerPoint presentation on their project proposal, proposed career development plan, and the impact of the fellowship on their long-term professional development plan. The presentation will be followed by a 20 min Questions and Answers session (Table 4). Overall weightings for the Interview will be 30%.

Table 4: Interview award criteria, sub-criteria, and scoring.

Presentation	Questions and Answers Session
Quality of **Presentation content** and **Organization**	Ability to **respond to questions** raised by expert reviewers in the **ESR**
Quality of the **Presentation Delivery**	**Motivation: Candidates' knowledge of MedTrain+ supervisor and research area**
Quality of **Communication Skills**	**Ambition**, evaluated by **the quality of career development plan**

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5.3 Selection Process

5.3.1 Overview

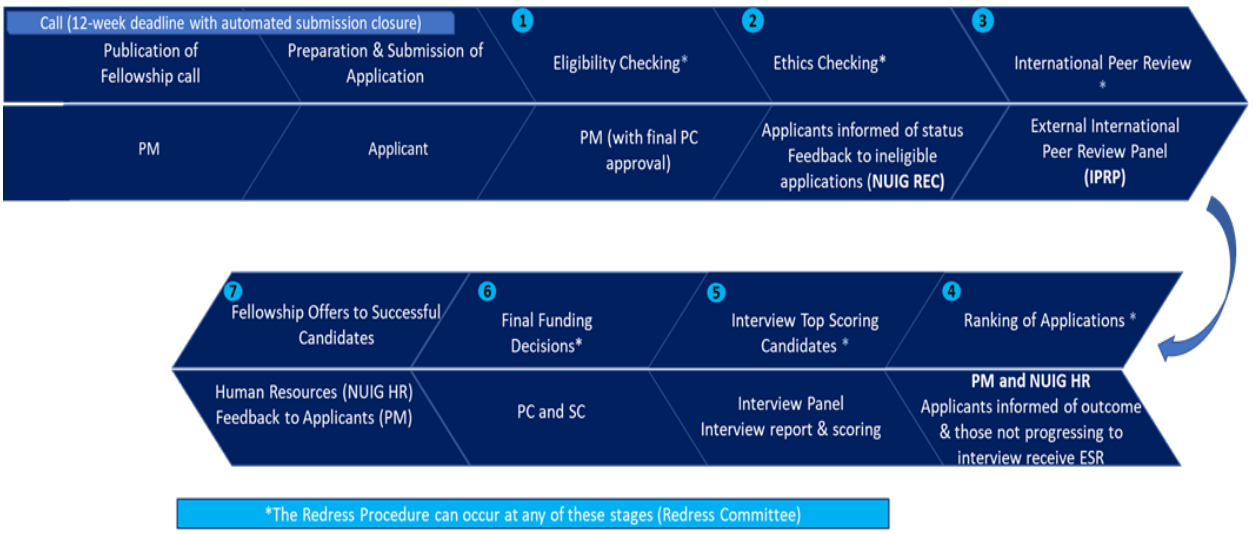

Figure 1: Overview of the selection process

5.3.2 Publication of the Fellowship Call

The application process starts with the publication of the call for proposals. An online application system, accessible via the MedTrain+ website, is open for the duration of the call, approximately 12 weeks. The online application system will close on the submission deadline, at midnight (UTC) on 30 Jun 2023, for call 1.

5.3.3 Preparation of the Application

Applicants are encouraged to start preparing their applications as early as possible. The first step is identifying the research area you want to be matched with a potential CÚRAM host supervisor. At a later stage, the MedTrain+ host supervisor can help you to identify an appropriate secondment Organization and supervisor in the non-academic sector.

The online application system requires the input of personal details, project title, summary and keywords, proposed secondment host and supervisor, completion of an ethics questionnaire and applicant declarations (online forms). Applicants are also required to upload the following pdf documents:

- Academic CV
- Research proposal

Please refer to the templates in Section 17 of this guide when preparing these documents.

5.3.4 Submission of the Application

Applications must be submitted via the online application system on or before the 30 Jun Jun 2023 call deadline for Call 1. To apply, all applicants need to register in the system. Each applicant will receive individual login details. Once registered, applicants can submit relevant information to the system, which is stored there until they submit the application or decide to change information recorded earlier. The online application system will automatically close at midnight (UTC) on the submission date. Applications cannot be accepted after this date.

Please refer to the Online Application System Help Manual (available on the MedTrain+ website) for

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further guidance on the system. Assistance with any technical difficulties is available at http://support.exordo.com or from the MedTrain+ Programme Manager.

5.3.5 Eligibility Checking

All applications will be checked for eligibility once the online application system is closed. All applicants will be informed of the results of eligibility checking. If an application is found ineligible, applicants will be provided with an explanation of the grounds for ineligibility.

5.3.6 Ethics Checking

All eligible proposals in which ethics issues are raised will be reviewed by the Research Ethics Committee. The Ethics Committee may approve the proposal as it is presented, request additional information, and then decide or declare the proposal non-fundable under the MedTrain+ programme. The Programme Manager or Peer-Review Panel may bring ethics issues to the attention of the Ethics Committee at any stage during the evaluation process. In cases where the national ethics policy (of Ireland or the countries of secondment) conflicts with Horizon Europe's ethics policy, Horizon Europe's ethics policy will prevail. Please refer to Section 6 of this guide for further information on ethics.

5.3.7 International Peer-Review

Each eligible application will undergo external international peer review. Three independent experts (Peer Review Panel) will evaluate each proposal in line with the criteria described in Section 5.1 of this guide.

5.3.8 Ranking of Applications

The peer-review stage will end with a consensus meeting via teleconferencing, where the Peer-Review Panel will discuss the average allocated scores and agree on the ranking list of applicants.

5.3.9 Interviews of Top-ranked Candidates

Top-ranked candidates will be invited to the next phase, a competency interview by an Interview Panel (see Section 5.2 for Evaluation Criteria - Interview).

5.3.10 Final Funding Decision

The MedTrain+ Steering Committee will endorse the final funding decision based on the recommendations of the Peer-Review Panel, Interview Panel & relevance of candidates.

5.3.11 Fellowship Offers to Successful Candidates

Human Resources will issue letters of offer to successful candidates based on the final funding decision of the Steering Committee. The Programme Manager will provide feedback to all applicants.

5.4 Redress Procedure

All candidates have a right to a redress procedure if they feel that there has been a shortcoming in how their proposal was evaluated and that this shortcoming may affect the final decision on whether to fund it or not or if they believe that the results of the eligibility checks are incorrect. To avail of that procedure, the applicant needs to submit a request for redress within 15 calendar days of receiving feedback on the evaluation of their proposal. Requests must be sent by email to manish.biyani@universityofgalway.ie. The redress form will be available on the MedTrain+ website.

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Redress requests will be examined by a Redress Committee composed of two independent CÚRAM representatives who were not previously involved in the evaluation process, and chaired by CÚRAM's Scientific Programme Manager.

Redress requests must be:

- Related to the evaluation process or eligibility checks, as described in the Guide for Applicants for the call
- Completed by using the form available on the MedTrain+ website, including a clear description of the grounds for complaint
- Received within the time limit specified on the notification which has been received by the applicant
- Submitted personally by the interested applicant

Once an applicant submits the request, the Redress Committee will review the case. If there is clear evidence that a shortcoming has occurred that could affect the eventual funding decision, the proposal will be re-evaluated. This procedure concerns the evaluation and/or eligibility checking process. The committee will not question appropriately qualified experts' scientific or technical judgement. Only one request for redress per proposal will be considered by the committee. All requests for redress will be treated confidentially. Applicants will be informed by the Programme Manager via email of the outcome within 30 calendar days following receipt of the redress request. If the redress procedure is successful, the applicant will be invited for a second (teleconference) interview. Decisions of the Redress Committee are final.

6 Ethics

All applicants must answer a series of ethics questions as part of the online application forms (see Section 17.1.4 of this guide).

Applicants who flag ethical issues there must also complete a more in-depth "Ethics Self-Assessment" in their research proposals. The Ethics Self-Assessment must describe how the proposal meets the EU and national legal and ethics requirements of Ireland and other countries (secondments) where the task of raising ethical issues is to be carried out and explain in detail how they intend to address the issues flagged. Suppose the applicant has not already applied for/received the ethics approval/required ethics documents when submitting their proposal. In that case, they must indicate in this section the approximate date when they will provide a missing approval/any other ethics document to the ethics committee (scanned copy).

Applicants must state explicitly in their proposals that they will not proceed with any research with ethical implications before the University of Galway has received a scanned copy of all documents proving compliance with existing EU/national legislation on ethics.

Research areas excluded from the funding include those that:

- Aim at human cloning for reproductive purposes.
- Intend to modify the genetic heritage of human beings, which could make such changes Heritable.
- intend to create human embryos solely for research or for stem cell procurement, including by means of somatic cell nuclear transfer.

Applicants must consider and address any of the following ethics issues, if they arise, in their

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proposals:

- Human embryos/foetuses
- Humans
- Human cells/tissues
- Personal data
- Animals
- Third countries
- Environment, Health and Safety
- Dual use
- Exclusive focus on civil applications
- Misuse
- Other ethics issues

All eligible proposals in which ethical issues are flagged will be reviewed by the University of Galway Research Ethics Committee. The Ethics Committee may approve the proposal as it is presented, request additional information, and then decide or declare the proposal non-fundable under the MedTrain+ programme. The Programme Manager or Peer-Review Panel may bring ethical issues to the attention of the Ethics Committee at any stage during the evaluation process. In cases where national ethics policy (of Ireland or the countries of secondment) conflicts with Horizon Europe's ethics policy, Horizon Europe's ethics policy will prevail. Please consult the Horizon Europe Programme Guidance 'How to complete your ethics self-assessment' (version 2.0 13 Jul 2021) for further information.

Further reference documents are also available from the University of Galway:
https://www.universityofgalway.ie/researchcommunityportal/research-ethics/

7 Intellectual Property (IP) Rights

IP protection and exploitation of commercially valuable results are vital to the MedTrain+ programme. Intellectual property rights (IPR) will follow MSCA guidelines and the IP agreements between CÚRAM and its partners. IP is subject to the host organization's internal policy and provisions of the employment contract of the MedTrain+ fellows. The IP policy will apply during the fellow's stay in the host and secondment organizations. For secondments, the host and secondment organizations must sign an IP agreement, which must be in place before the secondments can start. The MedTrain+ supervisors, with the assistance of the host organizations.

Technology Transfer Office (TTO) will train the fellows to identify, record (lab notebooks) and protect IP, and exploit commercially valuable results, with due consideration of inventorship by the contributory supervisors.

8 Employment Conditions

8.1 Contractual Arrangements

Following each evaluation cycle, successful candidates will receive a letter of offer from the University of Galway, typically within four weeks of their interview. When the Fellow formally accepts the fellowship, the University of Galway will sign a contract with the relevant CÚRAM host organization, and the Human Resources office of that host Organization will sign an employment

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contract with the successful candidate. The University of Galway will be the Paymaster for all employment contracts, but the fellows will be employed by their host organisations under identical employment conditions. The contract between the University of Galway and the host Organization obliges the host Organization to offer a fixed-term employment contract to the Fellow for the entire duration of the fellowship.

In addition to the general terms and conditions, in line with the Terms of Employment (Information) Acts 1994 and 2001, the employment contract will specify the following:

- nature of the appointment and type of fellowship
- start date and total duration of the fellowship
- guarantee that the employment contract with the host Organization will be maintained for the total duration of the fellowship
- details of the secondment organization
- names of the supervisors in charge of supervising the project and place of work
- salary level of the fellowship, including any additional payments, such as mobility allowance etc. and payment information for the Fellow
- annual leave and other leave entitlements (e.g. maternity leave)
- IPR arrangements between organizations and the Fellow.

For secondments, the host Organization will sign a partnership agreement with the secondment organization, meaning that Irish law will apply for the entire duration of the fellowships.

By signing employment contracts, the Fellows' rights are determined in Irish law under the Fixed Term Workers Act 2003, meaning that the Fellows have equal rights as other employees, such as entitlement to annual leave, maternity leave, and payslips. Social security (10.75%) and employer pension (20%) contributions will be automatically deducted from the Fellow's salary. Social security contributions qualify the fellows for several benefits, including free annual dental examinations, free eyesight test, 26 weeks paid maternity benefit, 24 weeks paid adoptive benefit, 3 days paid paternity leave, careers benefit, occupational injuries benefit etc.

Employer pension contributions over the 24 months duration of the fellowship qualify the fellows to receive a pension from the Irish host Organization upon retirement. If they move to a job in another Irish public body or the civil service, they can transfer their fund to the new pension fund. Under Irish law, all host organizations are responsible for providing appropriate accident insurance for all fellows. All fellows are directly covered for public health care through the Health Act 2004 and can opt for additional private health insurance through one of the Irish private health insurance companies e.g. VHI.

8.2 Fellowship Funding Breakdown

The total gross remuneration costs for a Level 1 researcher without a family per month is €3703, and for a researcher with a family per month is €4271. The total gross remuneration costs for a Level 2 researcher without a family per month is €4351, and for a researcher with a family per month is €4920. Please note that all or part of these allowances will be liable for taxes and other deductions. e.g. deduction of PRSI (employer social security (11.05%)), and if applicable, pension (20%) contributions.

For Level 1 researchers, the annual gross salary to be offered to the researchers is within the range €44,432- €51,256.

For Level 2 researchers, the annual gross salary to be offered to the researchers is within the range €52,213- €59,037.

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Amounts provided for the benefit of the researcher are as follows:

	Amount (€/ month)	
Cost categories	Level 1 Fellows	Level 2 Fellows
Living Allowance	3,186	3,834
Mobility Allowance*	517	517
Family Allowance**	569	569

Please note that annual gross salary is subject to taxes and other deductions. e.g. deduction of PRSI (employee social security) and income taxes. For more information about tax entitlements, please go to www.revenue.ie.

* mobility allowance is provided to cover expenses linked to the personal household and relocation of the Fellow.

** paid when the Fellow has family obligations. Family is defined as persons linked to the Fellow (i) by marriage; (ii) a relationship with equivalent status to a marriage recognized by the legislation of the country where this relationship was formalized; (iii) dependent children who the Fellow is maintaining.

9 Career Guidance and Training

Training and career development are core aspects of the MedTrain+ fellowships, and it is a condition of the fellowship that fellows actively and fully engage in the career development process. Fellows will have access to the support offered by the host organization's Career Development Centre, which provides professional career education, information, and guidance service to support postdoctoral researchers in making effective career decisions and managing an effective transition to the next phase of their career development. All fellows recruited to the MedTrain+ programme will receive induction training and will be expected to participate in the mandatory training programme for postdoctoral researchers.

9.1 Supervision Arrangements

All Fellows will be appointed two supervisors: host and Secondment supervisors. During the application stage, the MedTrain+ host supervisor will help the Fellow to identify an appropriate secondment Organization and supervisor in the non-academic sector. The host supervisor will act as the main supervisor for the entire duration of the fellowship and will liaise with the secondment supervisor for the duration of the secondment to monitor the project progress, ensure that the Fellow is adequately supported, and facilitate the return of the Fellow to the Irish host organization.

9.2 Personal Career Development Plan

MedTrain+ supervisors will support the Fellow with designing their Personal Career Development Plan (PCDP). Developing and implementing the PCDP is mandatory for all MedTrain+ Fellows and aims to support the Fellows in their current roles and prepare them for their future chosen careers. This plan will be personalized to suit each Fellow's academic background, research and professional needs, and career goals.

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Fellows are responsible for their development and are supported by their supervisors, who, with the support of the Programme Manager and the University of Galway and the relevant host organization's Career Development Centre, will assist the Fellows in realizing their PCDP. The PCDP should be devised with the final outcome to develop and significantly widen the competencies of the Fellow, particularly in terms of multi/inter-disciplinary expertise, inter-sectoral experience, and transferable skills. In addition to research objectives, this PCDP comprises the researcher's training and career needs, including dissemination and public engagement activities.

The PCDP should include the availability of mentors involved in providing support and guidance for the personal and professional development of researchers, thus motivating them and contributing to reducing any insecurity in their professional future. The PCDP should aim at reaching a realistic and well-defined objective in terms of career advancement (e.g. by attaining a leading independent position) or resuming a research career after a break. To ensure that a balance between the demands of the Fellow's role and the desire for development is maintained, it is recommended that the Fellow will plan for up to three development objectives over a 9–12-month period. The plan will act as a reference for the Fellow to monitor the progress of their research, training, and publications and to take corrective measures if deviations and delays are observed in order to achieve the professional development targets.

9.3 Training

The MedTrain+ training programme will include (a) a supervised inter-disciplinary research project; (b) scientific and complementary transferable skills through hands-on training activities; (c) intersectoral or interdisciplinary transfer of knowledge (e.g. through secondment or short visits); (d) summer schools; (e) gender issues training; (f) communication, public engagement and outreach activities.

Arrangements will be made for Fellows to complete relevant complementary and transferable skills training offered by the secondment organizations if of benefit to the Fellow.

10 Secondments

Secondment to suitable research-performing Organization in the non-academic sector located anywhere in the world is a mandatory requirement of MedTrain+ Fellowships. CÚRAM includes more than 35 industry partners ranging in size from start-ups, SMEs to multinationals and includes Irish and international companies – examples are listed here. The candidate's host supervisor will support the candidate in choosing the most relevant secondment Organization to include in your application. Your host supervisor and the CÚRAM Industrial Liaison Officer will also support you with obtaining the mandatory letter of commitment from the secondment Organization to include in your application.

11 Work Environment

11.1 Infrastructure and Technical Support

Each host Organization is committed to providing Fellows with research support services, including technology transfer and intellectual property management support, to capture, protect, and appropriately exploit the knowledge derived from the proposed research. In particular, a Commercialization Executive in the University of Galway TTO will partner with their

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counterparts in other universities to identify, manage, and commercialize the IP generated by the MedTrain+ programme. Additional services and support structures each host organization provides include research support, human resource support, computer services, procurement, post award finance support, infrastructure, and technical support (Table 5).

Table 5: Infrastructure and technical support available for Fellows in the host organizations.

Institute	Location within	Equipment/facilities/technical support
Ollscoil na Gaillimhe University of Galway	State-of-the-art 8,000 m^2 Biomedical Sciences Building	State of art biomaterials synthesis and characterization facilities, Centre for Microscopy and Imaging, Stem cell manufacturing, preclinical and molecular biology suites, HRB Clinical Research Facility
UCD Dublin	State-of-the-art UCD Science Centre	Conway Institute of Biomolecular and Biomedical Sciences Centres of Synthesis and Chemical Biology and Nanomedicine School of Agriculture and Food Science facility
RCSI	RCSI Research Institute	Drug Delivery Core Peptide and Organic Chemistry National Biophotonics Imaging Platform RCSI's Clinical Research Centre Polymer Chemistry facilities
TUS Technological University of the Shannon: Midlands Midwest	Bioscience Research Institute	Materials Research Institute: Polymer Processing
Trinity College Dublin	Biomedical Engineering	Ongoing projects to develop a new class of regenerative implant to treat arthritic hips. 3D Bioprinting lab, novel tissue engineering, Trinity Biosciences Institute, testing machines, flow cytometry facility, qRT-PCR, microscopy suites, small and large animal facilities.
University of Limerick Ollscoil Luimnigh	Biomedical Engineering	Bernal Institute: Electron Microscopy (Titan S/TEM platform, FIB-SEM), Spectroscopy, X-Ray diffraction, FTIR, TOF SIMS, XPS, Automated Tape Placement, Crystallization research pilot, Microfluidics facilities (Particle-Image Velocimetry, Laser-Doppler Anemometry).
Dublin Technological University Dublin	Technical University Dublin (TUD)	Expertise in Regulatory affairs
DCU Ollscoil Chathair Bhaile Átha Cliath Dublin City University	Medicinal Chemistry and School of Chemical Sciences	Nano Research Centre (NFR) for the design, development, and biological characterisation of hybrid biomaterials. National Centre for Sensor Research
UCC University College Cork, Ireland Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh	School of Pharmacy and Biological Services Unit	School of Pharmacy Biological Services Unit UCC's Clinical Research Centre
nibrt National Institute for Bioprocessing Research and Training	National Institute for Bioprocessing Research and Training	Innovative glycoanalytical research with full technical support

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The partnership agreement with the secondment Organization will include a section where it is affirmed that any necessary equipment and resources are available to the Fellow to progress the work. The host and secondment organizations will provide technical conditions, including access to the office and laboratory space needed to carry out the research project. Fellows will have the same rights of access to space as regular staff. Office space will contain the usual facilities, such as a personal computer, internet connection, email facilities and telephone, and access to general office equipment. The secondment organizations will offer similar technical conditions, as documented in the partnership agreement signed by both parties.

11.2 Human Resources

In 2013 the University of Galway was awarded the HR Excellence in Research Logo by the European Commission in recognition of their commitment to implementing the principles of the European "Charter and Code" for Researchers. The MedTrain+ programme will align with the HR and working condition principles guidelines of the European Charter for Researchers and Code for the Recruitment of Researchers to ensure research freedom, ethics, professional responsibility and attitude, contractual and legal obligations, accountability, dissemination, outreach, public engagement, supervisory duties, and excellent working environments for all recruited fellows.

12 Support Services

12.1 MedTrain+ Helpdesk

The MedTrain+ Programme Manager will run a support helpdesk for applicants and Fellows throughout the programme via email (manish.biyani@universityofgalway.ie). Helpdesk support will include the provision of information on:

- the application
- eligibility criteria
- the submission procedure
- suitability of a research topic (whether it fits within the remit of CÚRAM)

The MedTrain+ Programme Manager will also facilitate technical support for any problems associated with the online application system.

12.2 Career Development Services

Fellows will have access to the support offered by the host organization's Career Development Centre, which provides professional career education, information, and guidance service to support postdoctoral researchers in making effective career decisions and managing an effective transition to the next phase of their career development.

12.3 EURAXESS Ireland

Applicants and Fellows can avail of a range of services the EURAXESS Ireland office offers. EURAXESS.ie provides information on various issues and areas affecting researchers, including immigration, visas, employment law, healthcare, childcare, social services, and life in Ireland.

12.4 Hosting Agreement (Researcher Visa Scheme)

Ireland is a signatory of the Hosting Agreement (researcher visa scheme). This scheme offers a free and fast-track service for visa applications for higher education institutions and the private sector who wish to recruit non-EU researchers to the country. Under the scheme, visas are issued rapidly, and

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work permits are not required. Researchers' families can accompany them immediately and use public schooling. Family members have access to the job market, and the researchers can stay on to look for a job after their contract ends. The scheme is operated by the EURAXESS Ireland office and is supported by the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation.

13 Data Protection

The personal data of applicants submitted as part of the application for the MedTrain+ Fellowship Programme will be processed only for the present call and the possible signing of the employment contract with the host organization. The processing of personal data will adhere to the University of Galway's Data Protection Policy.

For information on the security and privacy of your data within the online application system, please refer to Ex Ordo's Participant Terms of Service and Privacy Policy.

14 Equal Opportunities

14.1 Equal Opportunities Policy

All Fellows will be employed by an Irish University, so Irish law will apply. Irish Universities are committed to the continued development of policies, procedures, and practices that comply with the Universities Act 1997, Equality Employment Acts 1998 and 2004, and the Equal Status Act 2000. Under the Equality Employment Act 2004, discrimination in various employment-related areas is prohibited. The prohibited grounds of discrimination are gender, marital status, family status, age, race, religious belief, disability, sexual orientation, and membership in the Traveler community. The Act also prohibits sexual and other harassment. The Equality Authority was set up as a result of the Equality Employment Act 1998, the predecessor of the 2004 Act. Recruitment and selection will be based on the University of Galway's Equal Opportunities policy which provides that candidates will be selected based on meritocracy (quality and competency) and monitored by the Equality Commissioner.

14.2 Gender Equality

The MedTrain+ programme aims to raise gender awareness and promote gender equality in research and innovation, in line with the gender equality strategy outlined in Horizon Europe. CÚRAM's view is that females and males are equally able to perform excellent research. Moreover, CÚRAM aims at considering and confronting structural gender differences, to enable it to fulfil its mission to support excellent international researchers, irrespective of gender, nationality, age, marital and family status, religious belief, sexual orientation, or disability.

14.3 Career Restart and Reintegration

The MedTrain+ programme aims to encourage experienced researchers who have taken career breaks to apply to the programme and, to resume/start their scientific careers. Career breaks will be considered in MedTrain+ applications and the evaluation criteria will acknowledge all relevant non-academic experience. Applicable career breaks include parental leave, sick or family care leave, military service, humanitarian aid work or periods of working in an industrial setting where the applicant could not publish peer-reviewed publications**.** For any documented leave, the time between obtaining the doctoral degree and the moment of application will be extended with a period of the same length.

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15 Useful Links

The European Charter and Code for Researchers:
Horizon Europe Programme Guidance 'How to complete your ethics self-assessment':
Toolkit "Gender in EU-funded research"

16 Contact Details

MedTrain+ Programme
CÚRAM, SFI Research Centre for Medical Devices
Biomedical Sciences, University of Galway, Ireland

Programme Manager:
Email: manish.biyani@universityofgalway.ie Website: www.medtrainplus.eu

17 Application Templates for Call 1 (2023)

All applications for the MedTrain+ Fellowship Programme must be submitted via the online application system (https://medtrainplus2023.exordo.com/login), which can be accessed from the MedTrain+ website (www.medtrainplus.eu).
Below you will find the templates for the documents you are required to submit. A MedTrain+ Online Application System Help Manual is also available on the website.

17.1 Online Forms

17.1.1 Application Registration

Before applying, all applicants are required to register with the online system. To register, the candidate is required to enter the following details:

Email	
First Name	
Last Name	

The candidate will be then asked to enter a password, which will be needed to log in on subsequent occasions.

17.1.2 Title and Abstract

After selecting call 1 (in Step 1 'Track'), the candidate will need to input the following information on the proposal (in Step 2 'Title & Abstract'):

Title	*The title should be no longer than 200 characters (with spaces)*
Proposal Summary	*A summary of the proposal of up to 120 words*
Abstracts	*The title should be no longer than 200 words (with spaces)*
Keywords	*Maximum 5 words*

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17.1.3 Personal Details

The next (in Step 3*) will be prompted to enter your applicant details as follows:

Title	
University/Company/Organization	
Country	
Address line 1	
Address line 2	
Address line 3	
Phone number	
Gender	
Nationality	

* Note that Step 3 is labelled 'Authors' in the online application system, however these details relate to the applicant. The candidate then selects a Principal Investigator (PI) from within the list of research themes (in Step 4, 'Topics'), in case the applicant has not identified a PI from the PI list, please contact: manish.biyani@universityofgalway.ie

The candidate will be asked (in Step 5, 'Additional Info') to confirm whether they meet the research experience and mobility eligibility criteria. They will then be required to upload their Academic CV (see the template in Section 17.2.1.

17.1.4 Ethics

Step 5, 'Additional Info' also includes the following ethics questions:

1. Does your research involve human Embryonic Stem Cells (hESCs)?	
If Yes to question 1:	Will they be directly derived from embryos within this project?
	Are they previously established cell lines?
2. Does your research involve the use of human embryos?	
If Yes to question 2:	Will the research lead to their destruction?
3. Does your research involve the use of human foetal tissues/cells?	
4. Does your research involve human participants?	
If Yes to question 4:	Are they volunteers for human sciences research?
	Are they persons unable to give informed consent?
	Are they vulnerable individuals or groups?
	Are they children or minors?
	Are they patients?
	Are they healthy volunteers for medical studies?
	Does your research involve physical interventions on the study participants?
	Does it involve invasive techniques?
	Does it involve the collection of biological samples?
5. Does your research involve human cells or tissues (other than from human embryos/foetuses)?	

If Yes to question 5:	Are they available commercially?
	Are they obtained within this project?

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	Are they obtained from another project, laboratory or institution?
	Are they obtained from a biobank?
6. Does your research involve personal data collection and/or processing?	
If Yes to question 6:	Does it involve the collection and/or processing of sensitive personal data (e.g.: health, sexual lifestyle, ethnicity, political opinion, religious or philosophical conviction)?
	Does it involve the processing of genetic information?
	Does it involve tracking or observation of participants?
7. Does your research involve further processing previously collected personal data (secondary use)?	
8. Does your research involve animals?	
If Yes to question 8:	Are they vertebrates?
	Are they non-human primates?
	Are they genetically modified?
	Are they cloned farm animals?
	Are they an endangered species?
	Please indicate the species involved.
9. Does your research involve non-EU countries?	
If Yes to question 9:	Please specify the countries involved
	Do you plan to use local resources (e.g. animal and/or human tissue samples, genetic material, live animals, human remains, materials of historical value, endangered fauna or flora samples, etc.)?
	Do you plan to import any material- including personal data- from non-EU countries into the EU?
	Please specify the materials and countries involved.
	Do you plan to export any material- including personal data- from the EU to non-EU countries?
	Please specify the material and countries involved.
	If your research involves low and/or lower middle income countries, are benefit-sharing actions planned?
	Could the situation in the country put the individuals taking part in the research at risk?
10. Does your research involve the use of elements that may cause harm to the environment, animals or plants?	
11. Does your research deal with endangered fauna, flora, or protected areas?	
12. Does your research involve the use of elements that may cause harm to humans, including research staff?	
13. Does your research have the potential for military applications?	
14. Could your research raise concerns regarding the exclusive focus on civil applications?	
15. Does your research have a potential for malevolent, criminal or terrorist abuse?	
16. Are there any other ethics issues that should be taken into consideration?	

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The numbered questions are mandatory. If the answer is YES to any mandatory question, then its required to answer the follow up questions in that section and provide further information on how these issues will be addressed in the "Ethics Self-Assessment" part of the research proposal (see Section 17.2.3).

Please consult Horizon Europe's Programme Guidance 'How to complete your ethics self-assessment' (version 2.0 13 July 2021) for further information.

The applicant will then be asked to make declarations in relation to ethics, research integrity, confirmation of information, terms and conditions, and fellowship offer.

In the final step (Step 6 'Paper'), a research proposal must be uploaded (see Section 17.2.3 for template).

17.2 PDFs to Upload

17.2.1 Academic CV

Maximum of five pages including publications; Arial font, size 11. Include details of the applicants academic and research record, clearly explaining any gaps or unconventional paths in their research career. Any information provided in Parts A and B of the proposal should be consistent. Always mention full dates (using the format: dd/mm/yyyy). The CV should include the standard academic and research record.

At a minimum, the CV should contain the following:

The name of the researcher

Professional experience (most recent first, with exact dates in format dd/mm/yyyy)

Education, including PhD award date (most recent first, with exact dates in format: dd/mm/yyyy)

The CV should include information on the following:

- Publications in peer-reviewed scientific journals, peer-reviewed conference proceedings, and/or monographs
- Invited presentations to internationally established conferences and/or international advanced schools
- Organization of international conferences, including membership in the steering and/or programme committee
- Research expeditions led by the researcher
- Granted patent(s)
- Examples of participation in industrial innovation
- Prizes and Awards
- Funding received so far
- Supervising and mentoring activities
- Other items of interest.

Applicants who have successfully defended their doctoral thesis *before* the call deadline but who have not yet formally been awarded the doctoral degree must indicate the date of the successful PhD defense ("viva"). Researchers having their last thesis defense *after* the call deadline will be automatically declared ineligible for this call.

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17.2.2 Research Proposal

Maximum of 12 pages; Arial font, size 11 for main text and 10 for tables; literature references listed in footnotes, font size 8 or 9. All literature references will count towards the page limit.

Please develop and present the proposal according to the following guidelines, considering the criteria for evaluating the proposal ('Excellence', 'Impact' and the 'Quality and efficiency of implementation', as described in Section 5.1). A rough indication of the length for each section is shown, but this does not have to be strictly adhered to.

Cover sheet (1 page)	
Applicant Name	
Project Title	
Project Summary	*Summary approx. 120-250 words*
Project Rationale, Aims and Approach (approx. 3 pages)	
Background and State-of-the-Art	
Project Objectives	• How does the project ensure high quality and relevance in its objectives? • Are the objectives measurable, verifiable, and realistically attainable? • In what ways does the project surpass the current state of the art, showcasing ambition and introducing innovative elements?
Research Methodology	Describe Methodology • Ensure the proposed methodology is robust and well-founded. • How does the project consider interdisciplinary approaches and incorporate diversity aspects, if applicable? • Does the project adhere to high-quality open science practices? Describe Overall Methodology Outline the methodology, including the underlying concepts, models, and assumptions? • How is the chosen methodology aligned with the project's objectives? • In what ways does the methodology effectively address the identified challenges?
Originality and Innovative Aspects	Describe how the project will advance the state-of-the-art, including any novel concepts, approaches or methods.
Gender Dimension and Diversity Aspects:	• Describe how the project integrate gender dimensions and other diversity aspects into its research and innovation content. • If the gender dimension is deemed irrelevant to the project, what is the justification for this decision?

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Interdisciplinary Aspects	• Describe how expertise and methods from diverse disciplines are integrated to facilitate achieving project objectives. • Is there a justification for adopting an interdisciplinary approach? If so, what are the specific requirements of the project that support this decision?

Implementation (3-4 pages)

Present your Work Plan, including Work Packages, deliverables, and milestones. Outline the allocation of tasks over time (using a Gantt Chart) and the allocation of resources.
Describe the potential risks associated with project implementation and propose contingency plans.

Career Development (1-2 pages)

Personal Career Development Plan
Outline immediate and long-term career goals. Candidates should describe plans for the acquisition of new knowledge and skills during the period of this Fellowship in the context of one's long-term goals.
Explain how this Fellowship programme will contribute to reaching these goals.
Detail how the Fellowship will enable the candidate to gain skills relevant to employment outside the traditional academic sector.
Detail how the Fellowship will enable the candidate to acquire competencies that improve the prospects of reaching and/or reinforcing a position of professional maturity, diversity and independence.

Secondment (approx. half a page)

Secondment and Transfer of Knowledge
Include a table describing the capacity of the secondment organization.
Describe how the candidate will gain new knowledge/skills from the academic host and secondment Organization during the fellowship.
Explain how both hosting organizations may benefit from the proposed secondment and describe how you intend to share your knowledge with the host organizations.

Research Proposal needs to capture the following aspects if relevant.

A) Excellence

1. If using Technology such as AI, ML, Robotics etc.:

- How do the techniques demonstrate technical robustness, accuracy, and reproducibility?
- How do they appropriately address potential failures, inaccuracies, and errors based on the assessed risk?
- In what ways do the systems/techniques consider the social context and operating environment?
- What measures are implemented to ensure reliability and minimise unintended harm, safeguarding the physical and mental well-being of individuals?
- How are decision-making processes that significantly impact people's lives accompanied by suitable explanations?

2. Open Science Practices:

- How does the proposed methodology integrate appropriate open science practices tailored to the nature of the work, aiming to enhance the project's chances of achieving its objectives?

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- What specific activities are implemented to enable early and transparent sharing of research, research output management, reproducibility, open access to research outputs, participation in open peer-review, and involving relevant stakeholders in the co-creation of R&I agendas?
- How does research data management adhere to the FAIR principles (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable) for data and other research outputs?

3. Supervision, Training, and Knowledge Transfer:

- What are the qualifications, expertise, and experience of the supervisor(s) in relation to the proposed research topic?
- Provide information about the supervisors' track record, including international collaborations and experience in supervising/training at an advanced level?
- What are the planned training activities for the researcher, covering scientific aspects, management/Organization skills, and transferrable skills?
- How does the knowledge transfer occur in the context of Fellowships (three-way transfer between researcher, host organisation, and secondment during the outgoing phase)?

4. Quality and relevance of the researcher's professional experience, competencies, and skills in relation to the proposed research project.

- How much of the educational background, work experience & research proposal is pertinent to CÚRAM research priorities, network & infrastructure?

B) Impact (approx. 1 page)

1. Impact of the Fellowship and Research:

- Considering the Career Training and Development plan, how will the Fellowship impact the applicant's career path?
- Please summarize how the potential research outcomes will advance science and technology and address present and future social/economic needs (e.g., industry needs, clinical needs).
- Outline the plan for communicating and disseminating the research results.

2. The credibility of Measures to Enhance Career Perspectives and Employability:

- What measures are in place to enhance career perspectives and employability, both within and outside academia?
- Evaluate the suitability and quality of the measures proposed to maximize expected outcomes and impacts, as outlined in the dissemination and exploitation plan, including communication activities.
- Discuss the strategy for intellectual property management and any foreseen protection measures, such as patents, design rights, copyright, trade secrets, etc., and how these will support exploitation.

3. Magnitude and Importance of Project's Contribution to Expected Impacts:

- Explain how the project's results are expected to have a significant impact beyond the immediate scope and duration of the project. Specify the target groups that would benefit.
- Identify the scientific, economic/technological, and societal impacts the project aims to achieve. Ensure the described impacts are specific to the project and not generic to the field.
- Indicate the magnitude and importance of the project's contribution to the expected outcomes and impacts, quantifying them where possible and meaningful. Consider the size of the target group and the value of the benefits.

C) **Quality and Efficiency of the Implementation**

- Assess the quality and effectiveness of the work plan, including the allocation of effort to work packages and the assessment of risks.

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- Present an overview of the work plan's structure, including deliverables and milestones.
- Describe the timing of different work packages and their components.
- Explain the mechanisms in place to assess and mitigate research-related and administrative risks.
- Whether the research can create licensing or spin-out opportunities?

Host Institutions and Participating Organizations:

- Discuss the hosting arrangements, including the integration of the researcher into the team/institution and the support services available.
- Evaluate the quality and capacity of the participating organizations, considering factors such as infrastructure, logistics, and facilities.

If applicable, also include your ethics self-assessment:

Ethics Self-Assessment ***(Max. 2 pages)*** Please seek advice from proposed host supervisor on completing this section and consult the HE Programme Guidance.	*If answered YES to any mandatory ethics question in the online form, explain in detail how one intends to address these ethical issues.* *Candidates must consider and address any of the following ethics issues, if they arise: human embryos/foetuses; humans; human cells/tissues; personal data; animals; third countries; environment, health and safety; dual use; exclusive focus on civil applications; misuse; other ethics issues.*
How to complete ethics self- assessment' (version 2.0 13 Jul 2021). Further reference documents are also available from the EC website: http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/docs/h2020-funding-guide/cross-cutting-issues/ethics_en.htm	*Describe how the proposal meets the EU and national legal and ethical requirements of Ireland and other countries (secondments) where the task raising ethical issues is to be carried out.* *If not already applied for/received the ethics approval/required ethics documents when submitting the proposal, indicate the approximate date when missing approval/any other ethics documents will be provided to the University of Galway (scanned copy).* *The candidates must state explicitly that they will not proceed with any research with ethical implications before the University of Galway has received a scanned copy of all documents proving compliance with existing.* *EU/national legislation on ethics.*

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