



ICC-CTN Early Career Researcher Seed Funding Awards

Guidance Document 2024

KEY DATES

Call Opens	12 th March 2024
Call Closes	23 rd April 2024 @ 18:00
Awardee Announced	11 th June 2024 (ICC-CTN Summer Meeting)
Report Due	11 th June 2025, 2026, 2027 Presentation at ICC-CTN Summer Meeting June 2027

Contents

Introduction	3
Why Early Career Researcher Seed Funding Awards?	3
Governance, Review and Application Process	6
Assessment Criteria	7
Who is Eligible to Apply?	8
Budget	8

Introduction

The Irish Critical Care Clinical Trials Network (ICC-CTN) Early Career Researcher Seed Funding Awards (ECR-SFA) provides a new flexible funding source for Early Career Clinical Researchers working in Ireland's Intensive Care Research field. This initiative aims to support research proposals with the potential to improve patient care and research design. The focus of this award is to support applications with obvious potential for growth toward National or International funding calls with the goal of developing a larger scale, sustainable Research program. Our objectives involve facilitating innovative new research discoveries and ensuring the application of this novel knowledge to have the strongest possible impact on Health and Healthcare.

Why Early Career Researcher Seed Funding Awards?

A major strategic objective of the ICC-CTN is to function as a focal point for researchers, offering support and guidance (See Figure 1.). As part of our 2021-2026 phase, our programme includes a dedicated Work Package focused on developing Clinical Trials and Trialists of the Future. We have allocated funding to support this initiative in the form of annual Seed Funding Awards for Early Career Researchers – the ICC-CTN Early Career Researcher Seed Funding Awards. This will help to develop a pipeline of future trials/studies and researchers in Critical Care Research.

ICC-CTN Objectives

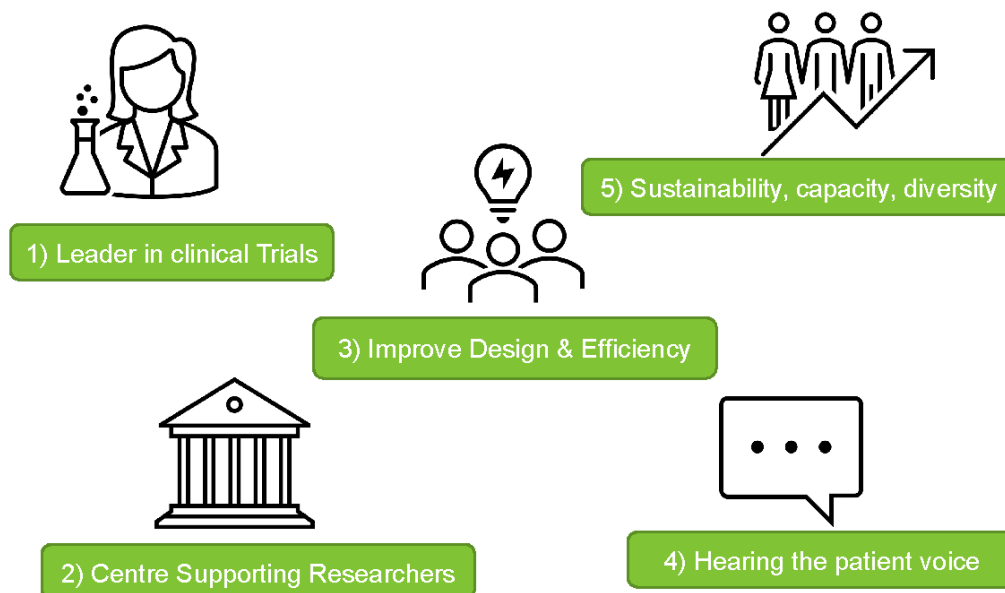


Figure 1. ICC-CTN Strategic Objectives

Each year for 4 years (Figure 3.), we will fund an early career researcher project in the field of Critical Care that is aligned with our strategic objectives (Figure 1.) and is of relevance to one of the ICC-CTN’s research priority areas, through this awards process (see Figure 2.)

The maximum available is €10,000 per year (plus overheads of 25%). We may offer additional and/or smaller (€5,000 per year plus overheads of 25%) SFAs in a given year depending on available funding sources. Such awards would follow the same application and review process described here within, with the view to enhancing ECR involvement and capacity building across the network e.g. in Nursing and Allied Health and Trials Methodology among other disciplines.

Successful projects and candidates will be selected through a Review Process described below. Assessment criteria can also be found below.

ICC-CTN Research Priorities

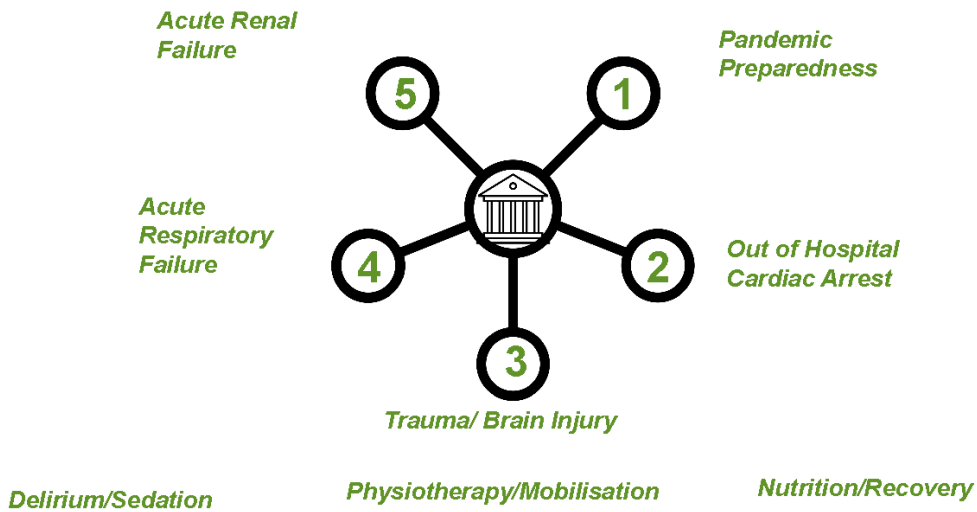


Figure 2. ICC-CTN’s research priority areas

Call number	Call Announcement
Call 1	Q2 2023
Call 2	Q2 2024
Call 3	Q2 2025
Call 4	Q2 2026

Figure 3. ICC-CTN Early Career Researcher Seed Funding Awards – Annual call schedule overview

Governance, Review and Application Process

1. **Parent ICC-CTN Work Package:** this programme forms part of ICC-CTN Work Package 4: Clinical Trials and Trialists of the Future
2. **Review Panel:** an independent review panel consisting of 3 intensivists who are based outside the island of Ireland will be appointed. This panel will review and assess all submissions according to a set of criteria and weightings (see below). The applicant with the highest average total score will be awarded.
3. **Documents for submission:** applications will consist of a completed **application form** (in accordance with the instructions contained in the ICC-CTN Early Career Researcher Seed Funding Application Form template), **applicant CV** (including confirmation that this is an Early Career Researcher), and a **signed supervisor statement** which details supervisor's key research outputs and supervisory experience.
4. **Open call for submissions:** the call for submissions will open in Q2 (mid-March) of each year and close in late-April. Timeframe is now six weeks to apply and approximately one month for independent panel review and subsequent announcement of awardee.
5. **Submission Process:** this is a single stage written submission process. Submissions will be made via email to the ICC-CTN via icctn@ucd.ie. Late submissions will not be accepted.
6. **Awardee announced:** successful candidates will be publicly announced at the ICC-CTN Summer Meeting each year (mid-June). Awardees must be available to present their project at this meeting (they will be notified 1-2 weeks in advance but the result will remain under embargo until the meeting).
7. **Post Award Reporting requirements:** awardees must submit a brief 2-page annual report to the ICC CTN for the next 3 years (or earlier if the project is completed) and will present the results on year 3 at the ICC-CTN summer meeting. The project must be deliverable within this timeframe.

Applicants must be available to present at the annual ICC-CTN Summer meeting in Belfast on the 11th of June 2024, if applicable.

Assessment Criteria

Excellence in the proposed research and project methodology will be the key metric in the ranking of submissions. Applicants will be expected to demonstrate how the proposal has the potential to achieve significant impact and can lead to the submission of a competitive grant application within 12 months of the project end. A well formulated plan on how the research has the potential to improve outcomes in health and/or healthcare or improve research design is also key.

The independent 3 person reviewer panel will assess each applicant’s submission and assign a score based on the following criteria. Weightings apply.

<p>Application Relevance to ICC-CTN Portfolio Does the proposed project align with the objectives of the ICC-CTN and the research priorities of the ICC-CTN?</p>	20%
<p>Importance and Design of the Proposed Study Have the applicant(s) proposed a study that aims to address an important health or research design related problem in critical care? A well-articulated explanation of the expected translational/(clinical) impact of the research is essential. Do they plan to employ appropriate methodology, including novel methods? Have they considered all stakeholders in the design?</p>	20%
<p>Expertise in Critical Care Research and track record Do the applicant(s) have experience and expertise and a suitable track record including access to adequate support?</p>	20%
<p>Scalability of the Proposed Study Have the applicant(s) demonstrated how this study can be scaled up for a future large-scale trial or research study and secure further funding?</p>	20%
<p>Feasibility of the Proposed Study Have the applicant(s) demonstrated the feasibility of the study including appropriate resources needed and sufficient budget to carry out the study? What is the impact of the proposed study and how do the applicant(s) intend to measure that?</p>	20%

Who is Eligible to Apply?

1. Applicants must be a new or Early Career Researcher based on the island of Ireland.
2. Applicants must be working in the field of critical care research (i.e., conducting research in this area) such as a medical professional in the first five years of a permanent appointment, or a non-consultant hospital doctor employed at registrar level, research scientists (with a clinical focus), physiotherapists, nurses, dietitians, methodologists or other related field. The main SFA will focus on clinical research while additional awards may focus on other areas such as Allied Health and Trials Methodology.
3. Applicants must list a supervisor. Supervisor must have sufficient expertise and experience to contribute to the proposed study.
4. Supervisor must be an investigator on an ICC-CTN study (e.g., SPRINT SARI).
5. Applicants and supervisors must be employed within a recognised clinical site (hospital) and/or academic host institution.
6. Applicants do not have to be actively engaged in a research degree.

Budget

We will fund a clinical research project to a maximum of €10,000 (plus institutional overheads at 25% where applicable, in accordance with the HRBs policy on overhead use) each year. Additional and/or smaller projects (€5,000 per year plus institutional overheads of 25%) may be awarded in a given year depending on available funding sources.

Allowable costs include (where justifiable and essential to the proposed study);

- Running costs,
- Equipment costs,
- Travel/Dissemination costs and fees (maximum 50% of award can go towards fees).

Salary costs are not permitted.

Applicants will need to provide a budget breakdown according to these headings and a brief justification of each for review.