



Future Leadership in ICT Standards in Europe "ELITE-S"

ELITE-S PROGRAMME

Guide for Applicants

Call 3 – 2021/2022

Please read this document **CAREFULLY** before registering as an applicant

Important dates

Open date of Application	15 th July 2021
Application deadline	15th October 2021 @ 17:00hrs IST (Irish Standard Time)
Peer review	October - November 2021
Interviews*	December 2021 – January 2022
Fellowships to be awarded*	January 2022

* Please note these dates are indicative and subject to change

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Glossary

The following table provides the definition for acronyms and terms relevant to this document.

Term/Acronym	Definition
SFI	Science Foundation Ireland
Recruitment Date	Actual fellowship start date, the date in the contract.
MSCA	Marie Skłodowska-Curie Action
SDO	Standards Development Organisations
NSAI	National Standards Authority in Ireland
ISO	International Standards Organisation
W3C	World Wide Web Consortium
OGC	Open Geospatial Consortium
ERC	European Research Council
PCDP	Personal Career Development Plan
Researcher at Risk	Researchers who have been away from their research career due to conflict in their countries
FAQ	Frequently Asked question
WP	Work Package – Structure containing part of the work to be carried out during the fellowship, including deliverables and milestones associated to each WP.
ELITE-REC	ELITE-S Research Ethics Committee
MS	Member State – Countries belonging to the EU.
TC	Third Country – Countries which are neither EU Member States (MS) nor Associated Countries (AC)
AC	Associated Country – A third country which is party to an international agreement with the Union. (EU Regulation no 1291/2013)

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1. Purpose of the Guide for Applicants

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

Applicants can also consult the ELITE-S website (<http://elite-fellowship.eu/>). Applicants will also submit their application via the link on the ELITE-S website.

2. The ELITE-S Programme

2.1 About ELITE-S

ELITE-S is a postdoctoral fellowship programme that will offer a total of 16 prestigious two-year fellowships in technology and standards development for the European Commission standardisation priority areas of 5G, Internet of Things, cloud computing, cybersecurity and data technologies. ELITE-S is a Horizon 2020 Marie Skłodowska-Curie COFUND Action. It provides intersectoral training, career development and mobility fellowships for researchers moving to Ireland (see mobility rule below). The programme is based at the ADAPT Centre in Dublin City University and its academic partners (who will be the host institutions for fellows):

- DCU - Dublin City University
- TU Dublin- Technological University Dublin
- UCD - University College Dublin
- TCD - Trinity College Dublin
- MU - Maynooth University
- MTU – Munster Technological University
- AIT – Athlone Institute of Technology

The technologies, application areas and ICT standards areas addressed by ELITE- S are:

RegTech/Regulations Technology	Open and Big Data	Smart Cities
Security/Cybersecurity	Interoperability	Smart Buildings
Trust and e-Signatures	Data and Process management	Smart Transport
Machine Learning	Content Analytics and Preservation	PayTech
Semantic Web	Regulations and Compliance	Manufacturing
Long Term Data Preservation	Digital Health	Data Quality and Master Data
Data Governance	Digital Government	Cloud Computing
IT Service Management	Digital Content	5G
FinTech	Internet of Things	Data Technologies

Table 1 - ELITE-S Research Topics and Technologies and Application Areas

Fellowship applicants have the freedom to choose among these research topics to propose where they'll develop ground-breaking research and an impact on standards. Fellows will conduct their research in one of the academic partners, undertake career development (e.g. training, coaching, workshops) focused on becoming standardisation leaders, take part in a secondment period in industry, and work with Standards Developing Organisations (SDOs) such as the ISO, W3C, OASIS, OGC and NSAI.

2.2 The ADAPT Centre and Academic Host Institutions

The ADAPT SFI (Science Foundation Ireland) Research Centre for Digital Media Technology, was founded in 2014 with the vision to be a ‘world-leading **international hub of scientific expertise** that supports collaborative innovation to unlock the potential of digital content, **empower and enhance online engagement** between people, and **promote creativity, competitiveness and entrepreneurship**’. The Centre currently comprises 7 academic partners: Dublin City University (DCU), Trinity College Dublin (TCD), University College Dublin (UCD), Technological University Dublin (TU Dublin), Maynooth University (MU), Athlone Institute of Technology (AIT), and Munster Institute of Technology (MTU) (Figure 0).



ADAPT is an **international hub of scientific expertise** in areas such as data and regulation technologies, data privacy and protection, content analytics, machine learning, preservation, personalisation and interoperability, data and process management. Key industry partners include Deutsche Bank, Microsoft and IBM (examples of industry partners which have indicated an interest in the project and are relevant to the ELITE-S programme. Research projects include sectors such as

Financial Services, Health Technology, Software Engineering, Manufacturing and Media.



Figure 0 – ADAPT academic partners

Fellowships will be awarded so the Fellow will be hosted in one of the academic partners of the ADAPT Centre, usually the host institution of the fellowship supervisor.



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.



As Ireland's university on the world stage, Trinity 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.



Technological University Dublin (TU Dublin) has been an integral part of the Irish Higher Education system for more than a century. In that time, it has continued to adapt and expand its provision to reflect a changing society and the wider economic environment. TU Dublin is now one of Ireland's largest and most innovative university-level institutions. A comprehensive, dual-sector doctoral-awarding institution, TU Dublin combines the academic excellence of a traditional university with professional, career-oriented learning, preparing graduates for productive leadership roles.



University College Dublin 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.



Maynooth University is an internationally recognised and is Ireland's fastest growing university. One of four constituent universities of the National University of Ireland, Maynooth University in 2019 placed #50 in the global top 100 universities under 50 years old in the Times Higher Education World University Rankings. 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. The University's research institutes and centres consolidate and deliver this impact as vibrant communities of learning, discovery and creation. Research at Maynooth also is very much central to its teaching, and the University prides itself on placing equal value on its research and teaching missions.



MTU, former CIT, has gone through many changes to bring it to a matured, modern, third level institution offering a range of awards in a variety of disciplines. Research is a core dimension of MTU activity through its collaboration with a wide range of organisations including Higher Education Institutions, Industry, State and Voluntary Bodies. MTU's Research mission is to continue building on niche strengths and to develop sustainable and productive research, innovation, technology transfer and postgraduate education across all its faculties. All developments are designed to help the Institute to fulfil its mission as a provider of high quality student-centred, career-focused, education opportunities for Cork, the greater Cork region and the country as a whole.



Situated in the heart of Ireland, Athlone Institute of Technology (AIT) offers students an education that equips them for career success. With a focus on real-world engagement, AIT's approach to teaching and learning gives students the knowledge and skills sought by employers. This professional orientation is embedded across all faculties, through placements, project work and an applied research focus. AIT offers more than 100 full-time programmes from two-year sub-degree courses through to PhD, across its four schools of business, humanities, engineering and science. This modern higher education institution has a state-of-the-art campus, the benefit of a €100 million investment since 2000. In addition to cutting-edge laboratories and lecture theatres, AIT's sporting infrastructure boasts Olympic-standard indoor and outdoor facilities. Students from more than 50 different nationalities call AIT home, small wonder given the personal welcome they receive and the attention to

ensuring that all students receive the very best education possible.

2.4 About Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA)

Internationally respected in industry and academia, a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship is a recognised mark of research excellence. The European Commission Horizon 2020 Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA), are named after the double Nobel Prize winning Polish-French scientist famed for her work on radioactivity. They 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. (ELITE-S is focused on post-doctoral researchers, other MSCAs focus on other career stages.)

Mobility, training and personal development are key factors in any MSCA scheme.

What are the long-term benefits of an 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 the 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.

Links to more information on MSCA are given in Section 10.

ELITE-S as a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Action

ELITE-S is a COFUND Action, in the MSCA programme. This means that ELITE-S fellowships are part funded by the European Commission, and part by the ADAPT Centre. While the prestige and long-term benefit of the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship remains for our fellows, the disciplinary field of the programme is focused on the technologies, application areas and ICT standards developed within ADAPT (Table 1 - see section 2 and 4).

In contrast to the European Commission MSCA Individual Fellowship schemes, where the candidate is required to propose and execute their own training and development programme alongside their technical project, in ELITE-S this support will be designed, facilitated and monitored by the ELITE-S Management team. The Fellows will therefore benefit from a network of peers across Ireland and in the international standardisation domain.

3. Working in Ireland

Why Choose Ireland?

The Irish Government invests over €782 million annually in research in Ireland's higher education institutions. The result is that, despite being a small country, Ireland's higher education institutions are in the top 1% of research institutions globally for research impact in 19 fields, spanning natural sciences, social sciences and the humanities.

Many of the world's biggest and best companies have located strategic research facilities here in Ireland. The top 10 ICT companies all maintain a presence, with several choosing to base their European, Middle Eastern and African (EMEA) operations from Ireland. The

driving factors are typically economic, but companies frequently cite access to world class innovation, alongside the flexibility and adaptability of the population, as reasons to stay and expand. In Irish research and innovation, you'll find a friendly ecosystem that sees academic researchers working hand-in-hand with small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) as well as large multinational companies, and funding agencies who are extremely willing to support them.

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

Visas & Work Permits

If you are a citizen of an EU/EEA (European Economic Area) nation, except for Bulgaria and Romania, or a Swiss national, you do not require a permit to work or study in Ireland.

Otherwise, you will be required to fulfil several conditions to seek permission to work or study in Ireland. The eligibility requirements and contractual terms of the ELITE-S programme are designed to fulfil these conditions and access the 'Hosting Agreement Scheme'. **However, it is the candidate's responsibility to review all information on visas and work permits to ensure you can work in Ireland before applying.**

The Hosting Agreement 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 work in Ireland. Under the Scheme visas are issued rapidly and work permits are not required. Researcher's 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.

For more information about visas and work permits visit <https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/information#information-assistance-tab-component-tab-2-name>

Living in Ireland

Ireland is renowned for its friendly citizens and warm welcomes and has 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, conversation, time to relax, listen and make friends are all important.

For more information about Ireland as a place to live and work including travel, food, shopping, accommodation, climate and practicalities see www.livinginireland.ie

4. About the Fellowships

ELITE-S Fellowships are for experienced researchers¹ of any nationality, seeking a prestigious career developing position in Ireland (see Mobility Rule); developing research, technical and other skills, including the ability to interact, collaborate and engage with industry.

¹ An "experienced researcher" is defined as one that has already achieved a PhD in a relevant discipline or has at least 4 years of equivalent research experience since achieving their undergraduate degree, see Eligibility Criteria.

ELITE-S Fellows will be researchers who are technically strong in their own discipline, and capable of performing high-value, interdisciplinary research, complementing and supporting their peers.

ELITE-S welcomes 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 who may not have gained a doctoral qualification (see Eligibility Criteria).

ELITE-S adheres to the COFUND principle of ‘**individual-driven mobility**’ meaning that the applicants have freedom to choose their research project within the broad remit of the programme aims (see Research Themes, Technology and Application Areas – Table 1), supervisor goals and secondment organisation goals. Each fellowship will consist of three phases:

1. **An initial phase at the academic host.**
2. A secondment period in the **non-academic** sector (may be international).
3. **A final return phase at the academic host organisation.**

Research Themes, Technology and Application Areas

The Fellowship proposals must be aligned to one or more of the research themes, technology and application areas in the ELITE-S programme:

RegTech/Regulations Technology	Open and Big Data	Smart Cities
Security/Cybersecurity	Interoperability	Smart Buildings
Trust and e-Signatures	Data and Process management	Smart Transport
Machine Learning	Content Analytics and Preservation	PayTech
Semantic Web	Regulations and Compliance	Manufacturing
Long Term Data Preservation	Digital Health	Data Quality and Master Data
Data Governance	Digital Government	Cloud Computing
IT Service Management	Digital Content	5G
FinTech	Internet of Things	Data Technologies

Table 1 – ELITE-S Research Themes, Technology and Application Areas

Training & Development

The ELITE-S programme is designed as a full research training and career development programme, with a series of training and career development activities and opportunities offered to the Fellows during their fellowship. At the start of the fellowship, each fellow will develop a PCDP (Personal Career Development Plan). This is mandatory for all fellows and aims to support them in their current role as well as to prepare them for their future career trajectory. Integral parts of the PCDP, will be (1) the composition of the Supervisory Team (ST), (2) a plan for all supervision activities and (3) a skills audit (a self-assessment of training and development needs). This will take into account the fellow’s existing research skills and desired research skills. The PCDP will have two interlinked sections: a research skills section, and a transferable skills section with clear objectives for both sections. Fellows will be expected to maintain a continuous learning log.

The PCDP will form the basis for all supervision meetings and will be reviewed on a six monthly basis by the fellow’s supervisory team and the Fellow, to reflect changes or

additions to the scientific project and career development objectives, and will indicate new and/or changed concrete activities to reach these objectives. Supervisors will support fellows in writing and submitting annual reports to the ELITE-S Project Manager, outlining their progress in the implementation of the PCDP. Fellows' PCDPs will be reviewed and monitored 6-monthly by the supervisory team and annually by the ELITE-S Supervisory Board (SB), and by HR of the host institution to ensure adherence with the Charter and Code.

The ELITE-S training programme is structured along domain-specific and transferable skills, and offers a wide range of training elements for Fellows, that includes:

- Supervised Interdisciplinary and intersectoral research project
- Complementary advanced research and transferable skills training
- ELITE-S Summer/Winter Schools based at any of the host institutions
- Intersectoral and interdisciplinary transfer of knowledge (through secondments and/or short visits to ADAPT industry partners) that showcase the intersectoral transfer of knowledge that complements each fellow's training experience
- Specific training in communication and outreach activities (i.e. Summer/Winter school) and mandatory participation in dissemination, public engagement and outreach activities)
- Compulsory induction training delivered by ADAPT that includes research ethics, gendered innovations training, Open Science and research practices at the start of all fellowships.

Secondments

All ELITE-S Fellows are required to undertake a secondment with an industry partner that suits their research, training and development needs. Fellows will be supported by their Supervisors and the ADAPT Commercialisation team in selecting and shaping a secondment that best suits their scientific training goals. **Secondments must be planned in the research proposal by the applicant** (See eligibility criteria for secondments in section 5.3).

5. Eligibility Criteria

5.1 Applicant Eligibility

- Applicants may be of any nationality
- Applicants must agree to the programme's Terms & Conditions (Separate document).
- Applicants must at the time of the call deadline, possess a doctoral degree or have at least four years of full-time equivalent (FTE) research experience in academia or industry. FTE research experience is measured from the date when a researcher obtained the degree which would formally entitle him or 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 or seconded, irrespective of whether or not a doctorate is or was ever envisaged.
- ELITE-S will support applications from researchers at risk. Those are displaced by conflict, or whose situation makes it difficult to pursue their research careers, both during the application process and once on the Fellowship in Ireland. Such support will be addressed on a case by case basis and researchers at risk will be able to discuss these supports with the ELITE-S management team. Supports will include, but will not be limited to: 1) submission of applications by post where online

application requirements discriminate against the researcher's circumstance 2) Application of eligibility criteria appropriately to ensure researchers who have suspended their activities while seeking refugee status are not disadvantaged. For applicants who are applying for refugee status in Ireland, time spent in that process will not count as time resident in Ireland.

- Applicants must comply with the Relevant ELITE-S Mobility Rule (Table 2). A relaxed mobility rule is used to encourage applications from 'Career Restart' or 'Reintegration' fellows. Compulsory national service and/or short stays such as holidays are not taken into account for mobility.

Research Experience	Fellowship Status	Additional Eligibility Considerations	Mobility Requirement
Incoming fellows must be in possession of doctoral degree or have at least four years full-time equivalent research experience	Standard	----N/A----	may not have resided or carried out their main activity in the Republic of Ireland for more than 12 months in the 3 years prior to call deadline.
	Career Restart	The applicant must have undertaken a career break in research	Applicants may not have resided or carried out their main activity in the Republic of Ireland for more than 3 years in the 5 years immediately prior to the call deadline.
	Reintegration	The applicant must be a national or long-term resident of a MS or AC and must move or have moved from a TC directly to the Republic of Ireland	

Table 2. Research experience and mobility requirements for fellows

5.2 Project Eligibility

- The proposal must be complete and in English.
- The proposal must be received on or before the call deadline **(15th October 2021 @ 17:00pm Irish Time)** through the online application system which will be hosted on the ELITE-S website.
- Only one application per applicant may be submitted per call (resubmissions for the second call from unsuccessful applicants are encouraged).
- Proposals must describe a research project to be implemented during a 2-year period.
- Projects must adhere to the ethical standards applicable to the MSCA and ELITE-S programme, as stated in section 8.
- The Supervisor named for the project must agree to act as supervisor for the duration of the Fellowship, evidenced by letter of support or e-mail to be included in the application Part A – Administrative information.
- **The proposal topic must be in line with ELITE-S research technology and application areas** and applicants must prepare the proposal in liaison with the proposed academic supervisor.
- Proposals must include a planned secondment period in the non-academic sector.

5.3 Secondment Eligibility

- Secondments must be planned in the research proposal (including the timing, duration and technical objective) including a possible secondment host.

- At proposal stage, supervisors will provide support in designing the secondment period. **If a company is not defined, at least the kind of company, outcomes of the secondment and the timing needs to be defined at this stage.**
- Selected fellows will be supported in securing a specific secondment host by the academic supervisor and the ADAPT team.
- Candidates can suggest a secondment. Eligible secondment hosts are research performing non-academic organisations located anywhere in the world. Secondments must be between 3 and 6 months in duration, 6 months' secondment may be split into shorter stays.

5.4 Supervisor Eligibility

Successful applicants will have two supervisors: a main academic supervisor and one secondment supervisor from the non-academic sector. In addition, an independent panel member or career mentor will form part of the supervisory team (ST). The applicant must identify a suitable academic supervisor at the application stage. The names of eligible academic supervisors will be listed on the ELITE-S website. A letter or e-mail of support from the proposed academic supervisor must be included in the application (Part A – Administrative information). All supervisors must align with the principles and requirements outlined in the European “Charter and Code” for Researchers (Section 10) and must have proven expertise in the research area.

6. How to apply

- Each applicant may submit one application per call. Resubmissions for later calls are encouraged.
- Applications must be submitted in English only.
- Applications should be made through the ELITE-S website (except where the ‘Researchers at Risk’ policy applies; section 5.1). Only applications that are complete and submitted before or on the call deadline will be included in the selection process. Applicants will receive an automatic acknowledgement of receipt of the submitted proposal; however, this is no guarantee of eligibility of their proposal.

A complete application consists of:

- Completed Parts A, B and C available on the ELITE-S website. **Part D is only required for applicants who have indicated potential ethical issues in Part A. Templates must be followed.**
 - Part A – Administrative Information (contains Ethics Issues Table and email/letter of support from supervisor)
 - Part B – Proposal (max. 10 pages)
 - Part C – CV (max. 5 pages)
 - Part D – Ethics Self-Assessment
- Applicants must confirm that they have considered and reported all ethical issues and agree to the programme Terms & Conditions. Applicants must indicate the project’s thematic area (from the table of ELITE-S Research themes, technology and application areas), and indicate up to 5 keywords. Part B will contain a 2000-character proposal summary.
- All documents must be uploaded as a PDF file using the template available on the ELITE-S website which **applicants must follow**. These are based on the MSCA Individual Fellowships (IF) template. Instructions are included in each of the

templates to assist you when writing your proposal to make sure you include all the necessary information required in the programme.

- Letter or e-mail of support from the academic supervisor to be included in Part A.

6.1 Application and Selection Process

Applicants for the ELITE-S Fellowships will be first required to submit Parts A, B, C and D. These templates refer to administrative information, CV, proposal and ethics self-assessment. Once eligibility is confirmed, the proposal will be reviewed for ethics issues, and after that evaluated by an international independent group of experts. Top ranked submissions will pass to the next stage, where **the top 12 candidates will be invited for an interview**. If you are not among the top 12 candidates but have achieved a score above 70%, you will be placed in a reserve list. Those successful at the interview stage will be informed of intent to offer a Fellowship position at one of the ELITE-S institutions.

The actual start of the fellowship will occur after an employment contract is issued by the institution, and right to work in Ireland has been obtained.

6.2 Overview of the Process

Publication of the Fellowship Call

The application process starts with the publication of the ELITE-S Fellowship Call, along with this document and templates for the proposals. An online application system, accessed from the ELITE-S website (<http://elite-fellowship.eu/>) will be open for the duration of call, approximately 16 weeks. The online application system will close at 17:00hrs Irish Time on the date of the application deadline – **15th October 2021**.

Preparation for Applying

Applicants are encouraged to start preparation as early as possible. **In our experience it takes at least 6 weeks to develop a successful proposal with a supervisor, hence we recommend that you have contacted a supervisor before the 03rd of September 2021.** Review all relevant documentation, including this Guide, FAQs and Application Templates published on the ELITE-S website in the Application Documents section.

At the outset, applicants must contact the ELITE-S Supervisor with whom they would like to work with on their research project should they be successful. Contact details can be found on the ELITE-S website. The Supervisor will confirm (letter or e-mail) whether they are happy to work with the ELITE-S applicant on their chosen topic, and may offer advice on developing the research plan. Applicants must have supervisor's consent in supervising the project prior to submitting an application.

At any stage, applicants may contact the ELITE-S project manager via the contact details at the end of this document for support.

The Research Proposal

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 (this page count includes the abstract and Gantt chart). Any content above the limit will not be evaluated. A template is provided on the ELITE-S website which applicants must follow.

In the best effort to present only the research and your capacity to perform it to the review panel, proposals should be presented in a neutral manner. Therefore, you should avoid giving personal details such as gender, age or nationality in this

document. First names, for example in publications should be only listed as a single letter, e.g. R. Brennan, to de-gender them.

The research proposal must address three sections: EXCELLENCE, IMPACT and IMPLEMENTATION.

1. EXCELLENCE	
1.1 Quality and credibility of the research plan (level of novelty, appropriate consideration of inter/multidisciplinary and gender aspects)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Introduction, state-of-the-art, objectives and overview: the research question that will be addressed, the starting point and expected finish point / goal ▪ Research methodology and approach ▪ Originality and innovative aspects of the research programme ▪ The gender dimension in the research content (if relevant). This refers to any gender aspect of the research, not the gender of the applicant or supervisor ▪ The interdisciplinary aspects of the action, with particular note to the ELITE-S research themes, technologies and application areas (Table 1). How will your research benefit from interaction with other disciplines and are there any specific groups that you could approach? ▪ The secondment(s) to industry that have been agreed or are proposed ▪ The desired outcome, in terms of career possibilities for you as an independent researcher and new collaboration opportunities for the research group you will join.
1.2 Quality of transfer of knowledge between the applicant and the host	<p>Training in a variety of technical and non-technical skills will be provided as part of the ELITE-S programme. In this section you should describe briefly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How you as an experienced researcher hope to take advantage of the fellowship period, including the training aspect, and any skill areas you want to improve on during the execution of your proposal. ▪ Outline any previously acquired knowledge or capability that you may transfer to the research group you will join, the wider group of ELITE-S institutions
1.3 Quality of the supervision and of the integration in the team/institution	<p>Relevance of the experience of the Supervisor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide details of the Supervisor relevant to your research proposal: their track record in the field, including any international collaborations, projects or publications. ▪ Provide evidence of the match between your research proposal and the capabilities of the laboratory and group you will join. ▪ If you require additional resources and support outside of your supervisor's network, explain where they can be found.
2. IMPACT	

<p>2.1 Enhancing the potential and future career prospects of the researcher</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Explain the expected impact of the planned research and training on your career prospects after the fellowship. Which new competences will be acquired? ▪ You should describe how the proposed research and training will contribute to your further professional development as an independent/mature researcher, or the relevance of the proposed research if you have alternative goals.
<p>2.2 Quality of the proposed measures to exploit and disseminate the action results</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Describe how the new knowledge generated during your fellowship will be disseminated and exploited, e.g. communicated, transferred into other research settings or, if appropriate, commercialised. ▪ Describe how the proposed research will generate an impact on standards eg.: New standards development, standards studies, recommendation for new standards, engagement with SDO, etc. ▪ What is the dissemination strategy - targeted at scientists, potential users and/or to the wider research and innovation community - that will achieve the optimal impact? ▪ You may make reference to the "Dissemination & Exploitation" section of the H2020 Online Manual. ▪ Concrete planning for proposal section 2.2 must be included in the Work Plan (proposal section 3.1).
<p>2.3. Quality of the proposed measures to communicate the action activities to different target audiences</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Describe how and why your research should be communicated to various stakeholders – peers, industry or interested public ▪ Refer to the H2020 guidelines “Communicating EU research and innovation guidance for project participants” as well as to the "communication" section of the H2020 Online Manual.² ▪ Concrete planning for proposal section 2.3 must be included in the Gantt Chart
<p>3. IMPLEMENTATION</p>	
<p>3.1 The Work Plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The proposed research work plan should be designed so that the desired impact can be achieved in a measurable way. 3 Work Packages (WP) are mandatory: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Management 2) Communication, Dissemination and Public engagement 3) Standards Studies. ▪ You must include the main tasks required to complete the work package (bullet point format preferred), and describe each task, highlighting new knowledge learned or developed, and stating clearly the endpoint and relation to the other tasks or work packages. ▪ Linked deliverables or milestones. ▪ Linked dissemination or public engagement activities.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Elapsed time should always be in terms of number of months from the start of the fellowship.
3.2 Risk planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ We seek ambitious research plans, and therefore a degree of uncertainty will be present in any successful proposal. Risks should be anticipated and prepared for ▪ Describe the potential risks associated with the implementation of your plan, and propose preventative and/or mitigating actions to reduce the likelihood of them occurring. ▪ Should there be any severe risks in the execution, (for example, a challenging intermediate goal that if cannot be achieved prevents any further progress), describe contingencies (alternative goals or workarounds) that could allow you to complete your fellowship.
Gantt Chart	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A Gantt Chart should be included (example given in the template) that gives the schedule for Work Packages, Deliverables, Milestones, Dissemination and Public Engagement activities and proposed Secondments
Ethics table and Ethics Self-assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Please complete the Ethics table in Part A and fill out Part D if applicable; refer to section 8 of this guide

Notes on the expected content of each section are given in the templates available on the ELITE-S website. You should also refer to the evaluation criteria in section 7.

Please abide by the following formatting rules:

- All text must be readable and following formatting rules as described in the templates. References will 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 printed in black and white

Submission of the applications

Applications must be submitted via the ELITE-S website. To Submit an application, upload Parts A, B, C and D and click send. You will receive an e-mail confirming receipt of the application.

Eligibility Checking

After the call closes, all applications will first be checked for completeness and eligibility, using their eligibility statement and cross-check to the CV, any misstatement given will disqualify the application or may result in dismissal if employed by the University at any stage of the fellowship. All applicants will be informed about the results of eligibility checking via email. If an application is found ineligible, an explanation will be given.

Those applications that indicated one or more ethical issues in their review will be checked to see if the ethics statement is present.

Ethics Review

If the applicant answers 'yes' to any of the questions in the ethics table Part A (see section 8), they must provide additional information in an Ethics Self-Assessment (Part D of the proposal). In this case, a Research Ethics Committee (Elite-REC) will check whether these issues have been adequately addressed by the applicant. The intent of the ethics review is to help applicants to understand and manage ethical issues - proposals given ethical clearance may proceed to the next stage; proposals without ethical clearance can be asked to add additional measures, or in extreme cases declared ineligible. The Elite-REC may ask for additional information before coming to a decision.

Where Ethics Review is required, applicants will be informed of the outcome.

It should be noted that formal ethical approval for the project must be obtained by the applicant in conjunction with the host institute from the relevant ethics committee prior to the start of any project activity which requires ethics clearance and compliance.

International Peer Review and Ranking

All eligible applications will undergo independent and international peer review. Each proposal will be evaluated by three reviewers. Applications will be scored and ranked according to the ELITE-S Assessment Criteria (Section 7). All applicants will be informed about the final score they achieved, how they ranked, and summary feedback from the assessors.

Interviews of Top Ranking Applicants

The top 12 applicants will be invited to the next phase – an interview lasting up to 45 minutes. The applicant will be asked to give a brief 10-minute presentation on his/her research proposal. The presentation should include an overview of the proposal, the motivation of the applicant to take up the Fellowship, and details of specific career and training objectives of the applicant. The presentation will be followed by questions from the interview panel.

The interview may be attended in person or via teleconferencing facility. No advantage is conferred to those that attend in person, as we expect applications from all over the world.

The final mark for each application will be comprised of the score for the written proposal and the interview, see section 7 for further details on how the final score is composed. Candidates will again be informed of their final score, ranking and feedback on their interview outcome.

Fellowship Offers for Successful Applicants

A maximum of 7 fellowships are available in call 3, the last call in ELITE-S, and these will be offered to the top ranked applicants above the threshold. Upon selection, successful applicants will be informed that they have passed evaluation, and will therefore be made an offer of an employment contract by one of the academic host institutes of the ELITE-S programme (the institute which the applicant's supervisor is affiliated to) and particularly abide by the rules of each institution in regards to Code of Conduct and Open Science. Prior to the institution giving a firm offer of a contract, the ELITE-S management and the institute may contact the Applicant's referees and request further documentary evidence to verify their eligibility. Should this check fail, the award may be withdrawn.

It is expected that successful Fellows will start the Fellowship at the earliest convenience considering any periods required to gain permission to work in Ireland. Given that mobility is a key feature of the programme, ELITE-S recognises that additional time may be required

to allow a Fellow to complete their previous activities before moving to Ireland, and obtain visas if required. Consequently, the starting date for each Fellow will be negotiated on an individual basis with the respective institution.

Those who score above the threshold but not high enough to be selected may be placed on a reserve list at the discretion of the management panel, always in order of ranking. All applicants will be informed of their status.

7. Assessment Criteria

ELITE-S will use the evaluation criteria set out in Table 3 for the peer review process, which mirror those used by the MSCA Individual Fellowship program. Reviewers will be instructed to assess all elements of the complete application when assessing a proposal, based on the proposal text, and not on any assumptions. Reviewers will be instructed to assess the project quality based on the applicant’s research experience and the merits of the applicant on career level considering non-scientific issues, such as management experience, IPR, risk management, career development planning, teaching experience etc. Reviewers will be instructed to take into account any breaks from research a candidate may have taken, and which may affect, e.g. his/her publication list; this is of particular relevance to Career Restart applications. **Criteria in Table 3 will apply for the interview stage.** Applicants may be interviewed on any aspect relating to Excellence, Impact or Implementation of the fellowship. In addition, the interview panel will focus on the match between the applicant, the project and the host and on the applicant’s motivation and potential to reach professional maturity and leadership positions in their area.

Excellence	Impact	Implementation
Quality, innovative aspects and credibility of the research	Enhancing research and innovation related human resources, skills, and working conditions to realise the potential	Overall coherence and effectiveness of the work plan including appropriateness of allocation of tasks/resources
Intersectoral aspects of the research (academic, industry, societal)	Potential of the fellow to take up leading positions in academia and industry in Ireland or EU	Support (mentoring and offering of sectoral or industry expertise) for enhancement of research, via international collaboration
Clarity and quality of transfer of knowledge/training for the development	Effectiveness of the proposed measures for communication and results dissemination. Quality of plan for research	Appropriateness of the management structures and procedures, including quality management/risk management
Quality of the supervision and hosting arrangements	Potential for increased impact of research via industry collaboration	Appropriateness of the institutional environment (infrastructure)
Capacity of the researcher to reach professional maturity		Competences, experience and complementarity of the organisations

Table 3. Evaluation Criteria for the Fellowship programme

All eligible applications will be evaluated by three international independent reviewers and will be given a score from 0 (very poor; superficial addressing of evaluation criteria) to 5 (outstanding in all criteria) in accordance with criteria (Excellence, Impact and Implementation) and sub-criteria outlined in the table below, which are based on the Horizon 2020 Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions criteria.

Score	Description
0	Very Poor. Proposal fails to address the criterion or cannot be assessed due to missing data
1	Poor. The criterion is inadequately addressed, or there are fundamental weaknesses
2	Fair. Proposal broadly addresses the criterion, but there are significant gaps
3	Good. Proposal addresses the criterion well but a number of flaws are present
4	Very Good. Proposal addresses well the criterion but a small number of flaws are present
5	Excellent. Proposal addresses all relevant aspects of criterion and any shortcomings are minor

Table 4. Scoring system to be applied to the ELITE-S applications evaluation criterion

A remote consensus meeting will be held between the 3 reviewers to agree the final application score (consensus) based on the evaluation criteria and scoring. In cases where proposals have exactly the same score, they will be ordered on the ranked lists following the priority as outlined in Table 5. If the priority in case of *ex aequo* measure does not resolve the situation, then all concerned proposals will go through to the next selection stage. There will be no thresholds per individual evaluation criterion or for individual stages. **However, an overall threshold of 70% (3.5/5) will be applied to the final weighted score and therefore proposals with a score lower than 70% will not proceed to the interview stage, regardless of the number of proposals received and/or budget available.**

	Excellence	Impact	Implementation
Weighting of scores	45%	35%	20%
Priority in case of <i>ex aequo</i>	1	2	3
Overall threshold of 70% applied to total weighted score			

Table 5. Fellowship scores and priority weightings

As for the interview, the interview panel will reach a consensus score using the same evaluation criteria, priority weighting and threshold as the remote review (Tables 3 to 5). In addition to providing a score for each of the evaluation criteria, reviewers and interviewers will be asked to give comments that underpin their score (taking into account all aspects of the sub-criteria) in a constructive and transparent manner.

The final mark for the applicant will be composed from the peer review of the written proposal (40%) and the interview (60%). This will lead to a final score between 0 (very poor) and 5 (excellent) with an inbuilt overall threshold of 3.5 (70%).

7.1 Redress Procedure

Applicants who think that their proposal has been unjustly evaluated may submit a request for redress. Requests can be made with regards to procedural issues or received incorrect application of eligibility criteria. Requests with regards to the scientific judgement of reviewers at any stage will not be taken into consideration. Applicants must submit their request within 30 consecutive days of being notified of their eligibility outcome.

Applicants must fill out the Redress Form and send via e-mail directly to the ELITE-S Project Manager (contact details at the end of this document). A Redress Committee will review the submission, and applicants will be informed by e-mail within 30 days if their redress request is accepted. If the redress is accepted, a new remote peer review (with ethics check if necessary) will be arranged. Redress Committee decisions are final.

8. Ethical Issues

The ELITE-S 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:

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

Research areas excluded from funding include:

- Research activities aiming at human cloning for reproductive purposes
- Research activities intended to modify the genetic heritages or human beings which could make such changes heritable
- Research activities intended to create human embryos solely for the purposes 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

All applicants to the ELITE-S Fellowship Programme are required to complete an Ethics table (Part A) and an Ethics Self-Assessment (Part D if applicable), which is part of the online application form. These partially address the above list of ethics issues. The following questions are asked:

- Does your research involve Human Embryonic Stem Cells (hESCs)?
- Does your research involve the use of human embryos?
- Does your research involve the use of human foetal tissues / cells?
- Does your research involve human participants?
- Does your research involve physical interventions on the study participants?
- Does your research involve human cells or tissues (other than from Human Embryos/ Foetuses as covered above)?
- Does your research involve personal data collection and/or processing?
- 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 processing of genetic information?
- Does it involve tracking or observation of participants?
- Does your research involve further processing of previously collected personal data (secondary use)?
- Does your research involve animals?

Other issues (Third countries, Environment & Health and Safety, Dual use, Misuse) are complex in nature and not suitable for self-assessment. They may be identified during the evaluation process by any expert reviewer, or during the execution of a project by anyone involved. For more information on ethical issues please refer to the links listed in Section 10 of this Guide.

9. Employment as an ELITE-S Fellow

9.1 Contracts

ELITE-S 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. Consequently, all employment contracts will be offered under Irish law. The basic content of the employment contract is in line with the Terms of Employment (Information) Acts 1994–2012, Ireland, which ensures provision of pensions, holidays/maternity/parental and carers leave, accident insurance cover and access to health insurance. Further details are given in the Terms and Conditions document.

In addition to the general terms and conditions the employment contract will specify the following:

- The total duration of the Fellowship.
- Details of the names of the Supervisor(s) with overall responsibility for the project.
- The salary provided for the Fellow, including any additional payments such as mobility allowance etc.
- Working hours, vacation and other leave entitlements, such as sickness and maternity leave.
- Arrangements between the institute and the researcher relating to IP rights, confidentiality and any other policies of the institute.

This employment contract will remain in place during any industry secondments conducted during the Fellowship. The host organisation will sign a partnership agreement with the secondment organisation, meaning that Irish law will apply for the entire duration of the fellowships. In some cases, the Fellow may be required to sign additional agreements (non-disclosure, safety documentation etc.) due to their interaction with an industry partner, in a secondment or otherwise.

9.2 Financial Aspects

The indicative allowances that a Fellow will receive as gross salary for the Fellowships is detailed in the table below. These may vary from institute to institute depending on their treatment of employee and employer deductions, so this table is for guidance only. Please see the terms and conditions for information.

€/Year	
Category	ELITE-S Fellowship
Living Allowance	45 120
Mobility Allowance*	7 200
Family Allowance**	6 000

Please note that all or part of the allowance received by the Fellow will be liable for taxes or other deductions (see www.revenue.ie).

In addition, the ELITE-S Fellowship provides contributions towards the cost of conducting the research proposal (i.e. consumables, publications, travel, specific workshop or training activities). Programme-wide management, training and development activities are all provided by ELITE-S.

* The mobility and family allowances are a constituent of the Fellow's salary in addition to the living allowance, and is provided to compensate for the cost of the required personal and household relocation of the Fellow and their dependents.

** Family is defined as persons linked to the Fellow by (i) marriage, or (ii) a relationship with equivalent status to a marriage recognised by the legislation of the country where this relationship was formalised; or (iii) dependent children who are actually being maintained by the Fellow. At **recruitment date (contract date)**, proof must be provided to qualify for this allowance.

9.3 Other benefits

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

ELITE-S fellows will be able to avail flexible working hours and flexible working conditions. While each Fellow will have workspace in their host institution, they may also work from other locations including home as it suits their research, with the consent of their Supervisor.

Fellows will be given induction and health and safety training in their host institutions, including an induction pack. This will give Fellows information on their rights as employees, employee services and a practical guide to living in Ireland. In Ireland, Fellows can avail of travel schemes such as the Annual Travel Pass and Bike to Work (Travel Pass: <https://www.taxsaver.ie/> Bike to Work: <https://www.biketowork.ie/>).

10. Relevant Links

European Charter for Researchers

<http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/index.cfm/rights/europeanCharter>

Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers

<http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/index.cfm/rights/codeOfConduct>

H2020: How to complete your ethics self-assessment

http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/grants_manual/hi/ethics/h2020_hi_ethics-self-assess_en.pdf

European Textbook on Ethics in Research

http://ec.europa.eu/research/science-society/document_library/pdf_06/textbook-on-ethicsreport_en.pdf

Toolkit "Gender in EU-funded research"

http://www.yellowwindow.be/genderinresearch/index_downloads.html

Marie Curie researchers and their long-term career development: A comparative study (2014)

http://ec.europa.eu/research/fp7/pdf/mca/marie_curie_researchers_and_their_long-term_career_development.pdf

Testimonials from Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellows

http://ec.europa.eu/research/mariecurieactions/media-library/testimonials/index_en.htm

11. Contact Details

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