



IRISH EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSESSMENT SCHEME CLG

IEQAS Research Bursary 2026

Introduction/Background

IEQAS is offering one annual €1000 bursary for research in laboratory medicine, specifically in the area of External Quality Assessment (EQA) and quality to advance knowledge and/or practice in Ireland.

What will this Bursary support?

The bursary may be used to support an individual or team to conduct research on an ongoing study or initiate a new study in their laboratory. If it is used to support an ongoing study, applicants will be asked to specify what aspect of the study the bursary will support. The bursary may be used to support costs relating to running costs (including small items of equipment), salary-related costs, student stipends, or dissemination costs (excluding conference attendance).

Exclusion criteria:

1. The bursary may not be used to support a completed study
2. The bursary may not be used to support costs relating to conference attendance solely or other continuous professional development
3. Research not deemed related to the area of External Quality Assessment (EQA) or quality to advance knowledge and/or practice in Ireland as part of the initial review

Who can apply for this Bursary?

Laboratory personnel working in Ireland whose laboratory is an associate member of IEQAS. Associate members of IEQAS CLG are hospital laboratories and other testing sites that subscribe to one or more EQA schemes (IEQAS National or Partner Schemes).

What are the conditions of the Bursary?

The successful member/ laboratory will be required to give a progress report to IEQAS on the activities associated with the bursary awarded.

Recipients of the Bursary may be required to present the findings at the annual IEQAS Members Conference. Recipients will receive free registration to attend the conference to present their findings.

Presentations and publications arising from the research must acknowledge the support of a Bursary from IEQAS.

Are repeat applications permitted?

Applicants who have previously received a research bursary may apply again. However, preference may be given to first-time applicants, subject to available funding and application quality.

Application, Review Process, and Review Criteria

Applications can only be made via our online submission system which you will find on our website www.ieqas.ie - see Appendix II for guidance (**Research application guidance**)

Following an initial eligibility check, applications will be sent to TU Dublin School of Biological, Health and Sports Sciences to independently review the applications. Reviewers are asked to outline the strengths and weaknesses of the application in relation to the criteria (Appendix I). Only applications receiving an average (mean) score of 7 or higher from reviewers will be considered for funding. If more than one application receives the same score, the IEQAS Scheme makes the final decision regarding which of the applications is awarded.

How long does the Bursary period run?

The bursary period runs for one year from the date of receipt. Monies must be allocated or spent during the bursary period or returned to IEQAS. The research does not need to be completed within the bursary period. The research should be completed within the timeframe outlined in the application, to a maximum of three years.

How will the Bursary be paid?

The bursary will be paid to the relevant bank accounts outlined by the laboratory manager/ chief medical scientist or into the members bank account.

General Data Protection Regulation

When applying, you agree for IEQAS to use the information you provide to consider your application, contact you about your application if required, and, if you are successful, to manage your bursary throughout its lifetime. This will include contacting you with regard to monitoring of progress through written reporting and other means, e.g., interim review. We may publish some basic information on successful awards on our website/ social media platform and may highlight individual awards or researchers in more detail (with specific consent). We will also use the

information you have provided to generate general statistics around our current funding portfolio and to evaluate our funding mechanisms and investments. After your bursary has ended, we may continue to keep your information on file to allow us to evaluate the outcomes, outputs, and impacts of IEQAS investment in your research and CPD. Please note that we will also use information associated with unsuccessful applications for a number of the purposes outlined above, such as generating general statistics around our current funding portfolio, and to evaluate our funding mechanisms and investment, e.g., including demographics of applicants, topics.

Ethical approval

All research that involves human participants requires ethical approval. Ethical approval is not required prior to submission of a research bursary. All research funded by the IEQAS must obtain ethical approval (if required) before the study commences. Recipients of a research bursary must be able to provide evidence of ethical approval to IEQAS on request.

Conflict of Interest

Bursary reviewer(s) are requested to inform IEQAS immediately where a conflict of interest exists, so that an alternative reviewer(s) may be appointed. Reviewers must respect the intellectual property of applicants and may not appropriate or use as their own, or disclose to any third party, ideas, concepts or data contained in applications they review.

Contact: info@ieqas.ie

Appendix I: Scoring system for Research Bursaries. Each application will be scored against the criteria outlined below.

0-2 Not suitable for funding at present. No evidence of research knowledge or understanding, multiple flaws in the design and methods, review of the literature inadequate, writing and presentation style

3-4 Borderline. Evidence of some research knowledge but lacks essential information relating to the design and methods. The aim is unclear or inconsistently stated. Relevance to research is not addressed or unclear. Project management and budget details are missing or inadequate.

5-6 Satisfactory. Evidence of research knowledge, but some essential information relating to the design and methods is missing. Clear aim. Professionally presented. Relevance is well described. Details on project management and budget were provided, and mostly adequate. The study has potential but needs revision in most areas.

7-8 Good. Good evidence of research knowledge. All essential information relating to design and methods is provided. Clear aim. Relevance is well described. Project management and budget description appear appropriate. Professionally presented. Minor amendments and/or clarification needed, but suitable for funding.

9-10 Excellent. Evidence of in-depth research, knowledge, and experience. All essential information relating to design and methods is provided. Clear aim. The relevance is well described, and the study has clear value. Project management and budget description are excellent, and the study is feasible to complete as described. Very professionally presented. No amendments or clarifications required

Appendix II- Research application guidance

Study Details

Provide a succinct summary of the proposed research, including the below

Title: Provide a title that clearly and concisely describes the study.

Study duration and start date: Please indicate the expected length of the study in months and the proposed start date.

Project Overview:

- The aims and objectives of the study
- Background to the area- describe the background to the research study, including evidence from literature where available. Summarise the need for the research in this area
- Research design and methodology- provide details of the study design and method that will be used to address the aim of the study, e.g. sample size, intervention (if relevant), data collection method, quantitative and/ or qualitative data analysis
- Impact- summarise the potential impact of the proposed research
- Ethical consideration: address any potential risks of the study, if applicable
- Budget - provide a summary and justification of the costs being requested under the following headings: Salary-related costs; postgraduate student stipend; student fees; running costs; equipment; dissemination costs such as publication fees, webinars/seminars, dissemination materials

References Up to 10 references may be included. Any standard referencing style may be used

Word Count: maximum 800 words