



**Icelandic Research  
Fund**

# **THE ICELANDIC RESEARCH FUND HANDBOOK**

**Rules for the grant year 2025**

**The Board of the Research Fund has approved the Handbook for the grant year 2025.**

**The following are the main changes from the last version:**

- The IRF Board appoints expert panel members.
- Expert panel members cannot be participants in an application to the IRF.
- Project Leaders and Project Investigators who received a Project grant or Grant of excellence during the last allocation are not eligible to apply for a project grant in grant year 2025.
- A letter of recommendation, from two individuals not participating in the project, shall accompany applications for postdoctoral fellowship grants and doctoral student grants.
- Approval is required for the transfer of amounts more than 10% of the yearly granted amount (without overhead) between different cost items.
- Approval is required without exception for changes in the use of resources allocated to the salaries of doctoral and master's students and postdoctoral fellows.
- The approved maximum amount for purchase of equipment is 3.000.000 ISK.
- It is further clarified that suggestions of preferred and non-preferred reviewers are not binding for the expert panel.
- The submission deadline is June 14<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

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# 1 Introduction

The Icelandic Research Fund (IRF) is an open competitive fund. The role of the IRF is to support research and research-based postgraduate studies. To this end, the Fund awards grants to students pursuing research-based post-graduate studies and for defined research projects that promote scientific research in Iceland.

The IRF awards grants in accordance with the general emphasis of the Science and Innovation Policy Council and based on a professional assessment of the quality of research projects, the skills and facilities of the individuals executing the research.

The Fund operates according to the Act on Public Support for Scientific Research no. 3 from 2003.<sup>1</sup> The Fund's budget is determined via the annual state budget law.

The English version of the IRF Handbook is a translation of the Icelandic version. The original Icelandic text is the authoritative text. Should there be discrepancies between this translation and the authoritative text, the latter prevails.

# 2 Timeframe

The call for proposals is announced at least six weeks before the submission deadline. No documents are accepted after the submission deadline. The expected timeframe for processing applications is described in Table 1.

<b>June 14th, 2024</b>	Submission deadline
<b>July - December 2024</b>	Expert Panel work and meetings
<b>January 2025</b>	Funding decision

**Table 1. The estimated timeframe for the grant year 2025**

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.althingi.is/lagas/nuna/2003003.html>

## 3 Rules and instructions for applicants

### 3.1 Who can apply?

Applicants, project leaders and principal investigators must have completed graduate studies at an internationally accredited university. Applicants for Grants of Excellence, Project Grants and Postdoctoral Fellowship Grants must have completed a doctoral degree or equivalent.

A Project Leader/Principal Investigator may submit only one application for each grant type. However, it is allowed to apply as Project Leader/Principal Investigator in different grant categories, even if the objectives of the applications overlap. The same Project Leader/Principal Investigator can only be awarded one grant.

Members of the IRF Expert Panels cannot be participants in applications to the fund.

**Universities:** The Project Leader must hold a position at the accounting institution designated in the application, i.e., a university in Iceland, during the proposed grant period.

**Other institutions and legal entities:** The Project Leader must have dedicated facilities at the accounting institution designated in the application, i.e., a legal entity in Iceland, during the proposed grant period.

### 3.2 Types of grants

Four types of grants are offered through the fund: Grants of Excellence, Project Grants, Postdoctoral Fellowship Grants and Doctoral Student Grants. Grants are awarded for up to 36 months. A 25% overhead to finance common/joint operating costs and facilities is automatically calculated for all expenses, excluding contracted services. See Table 2.

Grant type	Maximum grant amount	Overhead (25%)*	Total grant amount including overhead
Grant of Excellence	140.000.000 kr	35.000.000 kr	175.000.000 kr
Project Grant	59.000.000 kr	14.750.000 kr	73.750.000 kr
Postdoctoral Fellowship Grant	34.000.000 kr	8.500.000 kr	42.500.000 kr
Doctoral Student Grant	24.000.000 kr	6.000.000 kr	30.000.000 kr

Table 2. Grant types, maximum length of grant period and maximum grant amount and the calculated overhead.

A relatively even distribution is expected over the grant period. \*Overhead is not calculated on contracted services.

#### 3.2.1 Grants of Excellence

Grants of Excellence are intended for extensive research projects likely to deliver Icelandic research to the forefront of the international arena. Grants of Excellence are intended for research groups, and the application shall include co-proposers and other participants in addition to the Project Leader and Principal Investigators. Training of young researchers is a vital component of Grants of Excellence through the participation of graduate students and/or postdoctoral fellows.

Project leaders of Grants of Excellence are expected to have a high level of experience in managing research projects.

A Project Leader/Principal Investigator may submit only one application for a Grant of Excellence.

If the Project Leader or Principal investigator has previously received an IRF Grant of Excellence, that project must be completed, and the final report approved before a contract for a new Grant of Excellence can be signed by the IRF. If this has not been finalized by April 1<sup>st</sup> after allocation, the new grant will not be awarded.

Project Leaders and Project Investigators who received a Project grant or a Grant of excellence in the latest allocation of the Fund are not eligible to apply for a project grant in grant year 2025.

Applications for Grants of Excellence go through a two-stage review process. Firstly, the Expert Panels evaluate and rank applications. Subsequently, the IRF Board invites the representatives of the top-ranked applications to a meeting to discuss the proposals, after which the Board decides on funding. The number of Grants of Excellence awarded per year is limited.

Grants of Excellence are awarded for up to 36 months; see detailed grant amounts in Table 2.

### 3.2.2 Project Grants

The project grant category is the largest of the four grant categories of the IRF. Research projects cover all fields of science and disciplines; the IRF is an open competitive fund and does not emphasize one discipline over others. Training of young researchers with the participation of graduate students and/or postdoctoral fellows strengthens the application.

A Project Leader/Principal Investigator may submit only one application for a Project grant.

Project Leaders and Project Investigators who received a Project grant or a Grant of excellence in the latest allocation of the Fund are not eligible to apply for a project grant in grant year 2025.

Project Grants are awarded for up to 36 months; see detailed grant amounts in Table 2.

### 3.2.3 Postdoctoral Fellowship Grants

Postdoctoral Fellowship Grants are intended to help young scientists further their academic careers within the research community. Applicants must have completed their PhD no more than seven years before the application deadline.<sup>2</sup> A confirmation from the Icelandic host institution shall be submitted with the application. It strengthens the application if the host institution is not the same as the one that awarded the doctoral degree. A copy of the doctoral degree certificate shall be submitted with the application or no later than December 1<sup>st</sup> after the application deadline.

Applicants for Postdoctoral Research Grants are, in the on-line submission system, required to name two individuals, who are specialists in the relevant field and are not participants in the proposed project, to submit a letter of recommendation.

Postdoctoral Fellowship Grants are awarded to individuals, and the postdoctoral position is 100% (equivalent to full-time). If the grantee is hired into a salaried position during the grant period, the grant will be revoked from the start date of employment, regardless of whether the salaried position is full-time or part-time.

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<sup>2</sup> Special circumstances, such as parental leave or illness that affected research activities and are specified in the applicant's CV, are taken into account.

Eligible expenses are salary and travel expenses for the postdoctoral fellow, as well as operating and publication expenses.

Postdoctoral Fellowships Grants are awarded for up to 36 months; see detailed grant amounts in Table 2.

### 3.2.4 Doctoral Student Grants

Doctoral Student Grants are intended for doctoral students who apply in their own name under the guidance of their supervisor. The applicant must have an approved doctoral project (with or without a funding) at an Icelandic university. A confirmation from the graduate studies office of the relevant department/field, or equivalent, must accompany the application. An Icelandic university must award the doctoral degree, but a joint degree with a foreign university is allowed.

Doctoral Student Grants are awarded for up to 36 months; see detailed grant amounts in Table 2.

Applicants for doctoral Student Grants are, in the on-line submission system, required to name two individuals, who are specialists in the relevant field and are not participants in the proposed project, to submit a letter of recommendation.

Doctoral Student Grants cover salary costs and travel expenses for the doctoral student, see Table 3; the grant does not cover other expenses relating to the project.

## 3.3 Approved expenses

Approved expenses include salaries, operating expenses, travel and publication expenses, purchase of equipment and contracted services. On behalf of the IRF Board, the fund's staff reserves the right to review cost items, including salary, during the contracting process.

Own contribution is not required, but it is necessary to account for the project's total cost.

Grant type	Operational expenses	Travel expenses	Publication expenses	Purchase of equipment	Contracted services
<b>Grant of Excellence</b>	yes	yes	1.000.000	3.000.000	yes
<b>Project Grant</b>	yes	yes	500.000	3.000.000	yes
<b>Postdoctoral Fellowship Grant</b>	yes	yes	500.000	no	yes
<b>Postdoctoral Student Grant</b>	no	300.000/year	no	no	no

**Table 3.** Approved maximum expenses (other than salaries) for each grant type

### 3.3.1 Salaries

IRF grants cover the salaries of researchers, graduate students, and research assistants with facilities at Icelandic institutions or legal entities. The fund does not cover the salaries of participants working abroad, including graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, and other participants.

Applicants must consider general collective bargaining- and institutional agreements when calculating wages. Salary cost is based on a full monthly salary in addition to salary-related fees. Contracted wage rates cannot be used as a reference for calculating wages.

Postdoctoral fellows, graduate students and assistants need not be named in the application, but their work contribution must be defined.



The salary applied for each master's student is for a maximum of 12 person-months. If the salaries of doctoral students or postdoctoral fellows are applied for in more than one application, the same individual cannot receive salaries for more than 12 person-months per year.

The IRF does not cover the salaries of participants receiving full wages for other work (including pensioners), overtime payments, or payments to cover release (buy-out) from teaching duties.

### 3.3.2 Operating expenses

Cost of operating expenses relating to the project are acceptable budget items (except for Doctoral Student Grants). All operating expenses must be itemized in the application.

Operating expenses cannot include overhead to finance common/joint operating costs and facilities, including general office equipment such as computers. Unexplained expenses will not be accepted.

Travel expenses do not fall under general operating expenses.

Contracted services do not fall under general operating expenses.

### 3.3.3 Travel expenses

Expenses related to travel necessary for the project can be applied for direct participants in the project. All travel expenses and how they relate to the project must be justified.

The IRF does not cover travel expenses for individuals who are not direct participants in the project; this includes those listed in the application as "*Other participants*". If applicants regard covering such travel expenses necessary for the project's progress, the travel cost can be specified under contracted services. Note that the IRF does not cover per diem for "*Other participants*".

Postdoctoral Fellowship Grants cover only travel expenses for the postdoctoral fellow, and Doctoral Student Grants can cover only travel expenses for the doctoral student.

#### 3.3.3.1 *Travel expenses for conferences and short meetings*

The Fund supports travel expenses for conference participation and shorter meetings for direct participants in the project. Travel expenses must be in accordance with, and not exceed, the guidelines of the Government of Iceland on travel expenses for public employees.<sup>3</sup>

#### 3.3.3.2 *Travel expenses for research trips and longer meetings*

Actual travel cost due to longer research trips, e.g., fieldwork, is paid according to invoices and transaction lists, in accordance with the guidelines of the Government of Iceland: "*Attention is drawn to the fact that the general rule is to pay the cost of domestic travel, e.g., fares, food and accommodation, according to the invoice.*"

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.stjornarradid.is/verkefni/mannaudsmal-rikisins/kjarasamningar-laun-og-starfskjar/ferdakostnadur/>

### 3.3.4 Publishing expenses

Publication expenses up to 500.000 ISK can be applied for in Project Grants and Postdoctoral Fellowship Grants, and up to 1.000.000 ISK for Grants of Excellence. The total amount can be distributed over the grant period.

### 3.3.5 Purchase of equipment

Equipment for up to 3.000.000 ISK can be applied for in Project Grants and Grants of Excellence. A price quote from the supplier/manufacturer shall be obtained before IRF signs a contract. Equipment costing over 3.000.000 ISK can be applied for through the Infrastructure Fund.<sup>4</sup>

### 3.3.6 Contracted services

Contracted services include work necessary for the project and carried out by others than direct participants in the project. All contracted services shall be itemized and explained in the application. The cost of contracted services shall not exceed 20% of the total project grant.

A price quote for contracted services must be available before the IRF signs a contract.

Joint ventures and facilities do not apply to contracted services.

### 3.3.7 Overhead expenses and facilities

The online submission system (see Table 2) automatically calculates a 25% overhead for all expenses, excluding contracted services.

Overhead includes expenses relating to office and research facilities, such as rent, heating, electricity, support and auxiliary functions, purchase of books and magazines, and purchase and maintenance of IT equipment and infrastructures such as computers.

### 3.3.8 Transfer of funding between cost items

Prior approval is required for transfers amounts in excess of 10% of the total amount of each grant year (without overhead) between different cost items.

Approval is required without exception in the use of resources allocated to salaries of doctoral and masters students and postdoctoral fellows. Such requests are reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.rannis.is/sjodir/rannsoknir/innvidasjodur/>

## 4 Application and supporting documents

### 4.1 Electronic application form

All applications must be submitted through Rannís' online application system. Submitting an application is not possible unless all mandatory fields have been filled in.

### 4.2 Disciplines of Expert Panels

Seven Expert Panels evaluate applications submitted to the IRF (Table 4). The IRF Board appoints up to seven active scientists to each Expert Panel. Expert Panel members are appointed based on their expertise in the relevant field.

Applicants designate the Expert Panel they prefer their application to be evaluated by. Up to three sub-disciplines can be chosen, as well as keywords. IRF staff, in consultation with the Expert Panel chairperson, reserve the right to transfer applications between Expert Panels if recommended by the chairperson.

Expert Panel	Scientific disciplines
<b>Physical sciences and mathematics</b>	Physical science Chemical science Earth science Mathematics
<b>Engineering and technical sciences</b>	Engineering Computer science Technical science
<b>Natural sciences</b>	Biological science Other natural science (except earth science)
<b>Biomedical sciences</b>	Molecular biology Cellular biology General medicine and veterinary medicine
<b>Clinical sciences and public health</b>	Public health Health science Other medical science
<b>Social and educational sciences</b>	Social science Law and economics Educational science Psychology (other than clinical and physiological)
<b>Humanities and arts</b>	Philosophy and religion History and archaeology Arts and design Languages and literature Other humanities

**Table 4.** Disciplines of IRF Expert Panels for the grant year 2025.

Applicants may under no circumstances contact the Expert Panel members during the evaluation process. All inquiries shall be directed to IRF staff. If an applicant contacts an Expert Panel member regarding an application, the application will immediately be withdrawn from further evaluation.

### 4.3 Project description and bibliography

The fund's template for the project description must be used. The template changes between years and is available in the fund's online application system.

To ensure equal treatment of all applicants, applications that do not use the correct project description template will be rejected; this also applies if changes have been made to the project description template and in cases of incomplete applications. Such rejections may occur at any time during the review process.

The project description is divided into the following sections, which may not be changed:

- Project objectives, research questions/hypotheses, feasibility, novelty, and impact
- Present state of knowledge in the field
- Research plan (time and work plan, methods, milestones, present status of the project, etc.) and deliverables.
- Project management and collaboration (domestic and/or foreign)
- Proposed publication of results and data
- Contribution of doctoral and master's students (does not apply to Doctoral Student Grants)
- Career development plan (applies to Postdoctoral Fellowship Grants)

Before the project description is uploaded to the online application system, the reference list shall be detached and saved as a separate document. These two documents are uploaded separately as .pdf files.

A cover page and an instruction page are added to the project description template. The maximum number of pages that can be uploaded differs for the different grant categories; see Table 4. There is no limit to the number of pages in the bibliography.

Grant type	Maximum number of pages of entered text in the project description template	Maximum number of pages uploaded - including title page and instruction page
Grant of Excellence	20	22
Project Grant	15	17
Postdoctoral Fellowship Grant	12	14
Doctoral Student Grant	5	7

**Table 4.** The maximum number of pages of the project description; there is no limit to the number of pages in the bibliography.

## 4.4 Other supporting documents

### 4.4.1 Curriculum vitae

The CV should be concise and no more than three pages. Websites and homepages can be linked for publications, e.g., [orcid](#). The CV must include information on the following:

- the applicant's current employment
- education and training
- supervision of graduate students
- prior positions and awards
- up to five articles or book chapters relevant to the project
- h-index or similar
- Post-doctoral fellow: Any gaps in career development due to parental leave, sick leave, or other reasons shall be reported.

#### 4.4.2 Letter of recommendation

Applicants of Postdoctoral Fellowship and Doctoral Student Grants are required to provide the names and e-mail addresses of two individuals, who are willing to provide letters of recommendation. Individuals providing letters of recommendation may not be participants in the proposed project.

#### 4.4.3 Letter of intent of other participants

A signed and dated (in the year of application submission) letter of intent from individuals listed as "*Other participants*", specifying their role in the project, shall accompany the application.

The letter of intent shall not exceed 1 page.

Undated letters of intent and declarations of support from individuals not directly involved in the project are removed, and their names are removed from the application.

#### 4.4.4 Doctoral degree certificate

A Doctoral degree certificate must be submitted to the IRF no later than December 1<sup>st</sup> after the application deadline if applying for a Postdoctoral Fellowship Grant.

#### 4.4.5 Confirmation of the host institution for Postdoctoral positions

If a grant is awarded, confirmation of the applicants' access to facilities at the host institution must be submitted. The confirmation must not exceed 1 page.

#### 4.4.6 Confirmation of Doctoral studies

Confirmation that the applicant has an approved doctoral project from the graduate studies office of the relevant faculty/department, or equivalent, at an Icelandic university must accompany the application. The confirmation must not exceed 1 page.

Grant type	Curriculum vitae	Letter of intent	Doctoral degree certificate	Declaration from host institution	Confirmation of doctoral studies	Letter of recommendation
Grant of Excellence	x	x	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Project Grant	x	x	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Postdoctoral Fellowship Grant	x	x	x	x	N/A	x
Postdoctoral Student Grant	(x)	N/A	N/A	N/A	x	x

Table 5. Supporting documents of the participants. Brackets (x) mean that a document is optional.

## 5 Handling of applications

### 5.1 Withdrawal of applications

All applications are screened by IRF staff at Rannís. Incomplete applications and applications where the fund's rules have not been followed are withdrawn without further review, and the applicant is notified of the decision.

Among the main reasons for the withdrawal of applications are the following (the list is not exhaustive):<sup>5</sup>

- Correct project description template not used.
- The project description template has been changed.
- Incomplete application.
- Applicants for Grants of Excellence, Project Grants or Postdoctoral Fellowship Grants have not completed a doctoral degree or equivalent (Postdoctoral Fellows have until December 1<sup>st</sup> to submit their doctoral certificate).
- An applicant for a Doctoral Student Grant does not have an approved doctoral project at an Icelandic university.
- The applicant has not confirmed access to dedicated facilities and/or project accounting at an Icelandic research institute or legal entity.
- The applicant is the Project Leader/Principal Investigator on more than one application in the same grant category.
- The applicant has contacted the IRF Expert Panel.
- Suspicion of misconduct.

### 5.2 Expert Panel evaluation of applications

Valid applications are evaluated by the relevant Expert Panel, which seeks the opinion of two or more external experts for applications for Grants of Excellence and Project Grants. External experts do not review Postdoctoral Fellowship Grants and Doctoral Student Grant applications. The Expert Panel processes each application with a reasoned, written review and ranks the applications based on the panels' overall review.

#### 5.2.1 External experts

Applicants can specify external experts to evaluate their application. Applicants can also request that certain external experts not be contacted to review their application, provided the reason is substantiated. Please note that such suggestions are not binding for the Expert Panel.

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<sup>5</sup> "Applicant" refers to both the Project Leader and the Principal Investigator.

## 5.2.2 Evaluation of resubmitted applications

Resubmitted applications are not prioritized over other applications and are evaluated by the Expert Panel and external reviewers with other submitted applications.

For resubmitted applications, the prior recommendations and comments of the Expert Panel shall be addressed and specified in the application form. If this is not done satisfactorily, the Expert Panel reserves the right to use previous Expert Panel reviews and previous external reviews.

## 5.3 Funding decision

When the Expert Panels have reviewed and ranked all applications, the chairperson of each panel meets with the IRF Board and reports on the Panel's deliberations and if any concerns arose during the assessment process. The IRF board makes decisions on funding after receiving the reports from the Expert Panel chairs. If necessary, the IRF Board can seek advice beyond that which the Expert Panel chairs can provide. In addition to the Expert Panel review, the IRF Board must consider the general policy of the Science and Technology Policy Council and financial contributions to the fund.

Applications for Grants of Excellence go through a two-stage review process. First, Expert Panels evaluate and rank the applications. Subsequently, the IRF Board invites the representatives of the top-ranked applications to a meeting to discuss the proposals, after which the Board makes a decision on funding.

Project Leaders are notified of the Boards decision on allocation. Project leaders receive the final assessment of the Expert Panel. A list of funded projects is published on the Rannís website.

The Board's decisions on funding from the IRF are final. Under Art. 4 of Act no. 3/2003, the funding decisions of the IRF Board are not subject to administrative complaints.

## 6 Grant: contracts, payments, and administration

### 6.1 Contract

Contracts are between the Project Leader and Rannís. A signed contract must be submitted by April 1<sup>st</sup> of the year the grant is awarded. The grant will be revoked if the contract is not finalized by then. Payments are only made to bank accounts of Icelandic institutions or legal entities.

### 6.2 Obtaining required permits and approvals

A contract is not finalized until all required permits or approvals have been obtained.

Applicants shall detail in the application whether questions of ethical conduct of research are likely to arise throughout the project. How such issues will be handled shall be addressed in the application.

Relevant permits/approvals must be obtained (Scientific Ethics Committee, Personal Data Protection, MAST, etc.). It shall be noted in the application if a permit/approval is being processed at the submission deadline, and the permit/approval shall be submitted to the IRF as soon as it is obtained.

Applicants must recognize international agreements and regulations, e.g. regarding access to, utilization of, and exchange of biological material for research purposes and intellectual property rights.

### 6.3 Distribution of annual payments

- The first payment (40%): upon signing of contract.
- The second payment (40%): in September.
- The third payment (20%): when the annual report/final report has been approved.

### 6.4 Reports

The Project Leader is responsible for the submission of annual and final reports. In the annual and final report, all significant changes to the project (including the participants' parental or sick leave) must be explained, and changes to the research plan must be justified. IRF Board approval is required to transfer funds between different cost items if the transfer exceeds 20% of the total yearly amount of the grant. The fund's staff can request further information and explanations from beneficiaries and consult with the relevant Expert Panel if necessary. The final payment of each grant year (20%) is paid upon approval of the annual or final report. If the report is not approved, the fund's Board can revoke the contract with the grantee and request a refund of the grant.

Annual and final reports' templates can be found on the fund's website.<sup>6</sup>

The Project Leader is responsible for submitting annual reports no later than February 1<sup>st</sup> after the end of the grant year, and a final report no later than February 15<sup>th</sup>, a little over a year after the end of the last grant year. A transaction list must accompany reports (does not apply for Doctoral Student grants).

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<sup>6</sup> Templates for annual reports and final reports:  
<https://www.rannis.is/sjodir/rannsoknir/rannsoknasjodur/upplýsingar-til-styrktheega/>



## 7 Publication, open access, dissemination, and data management

### 7.1 Dissemination and publication of results

The results shall be published in a forum that complies with international requirements in the respective field. Grantees are expected to present the project and its results to the public. Target groups and media shall be defined in the application.

### 7.2 Open access to results

According to the Act on Public Support for Scientific Research no. 3/2003 with later amendments, research results funded by public funds shall be published through open access. Researchers who receive funding from the IRF must guarantee that their research findings will be made available by either publishing in open-access journals or open, searchable digital repositories along with publication in a traditional subscription journal. The final peer-reviewed manuscript shall be returned to the repository immediately after the article has been accepted for publication. If the journal requires a waiting period prior to open access, the article shall be made available for public access automatically when the waiting period expires. Please familiarize yourself with the rules of Rannís regarding repositories<sup>7</sup>.

The website [opinvisindi.is](https://opinvisindi.is) provides repositories for Icelandic universities.

The rules on open access currently apply to peer-reviewed articles published in scientific journals, not books or book chapters.

### 7.3 Acknowledging the grant

Grantees shall explicitly acknowledge the IRF grant and grant number in all publications based on the project's results. For example:

„This project/study/work/publication was supported by the Icelandic Research Fund grant no. xxxxxx.“

„Þetta verkefni/rannsókn/útgáfa er unnið með styrk nr. xxxxxx úr Rannsóknasjóði.“

### 7.4 Data Management

In the application it shall be described, as appropriate, how data resulting from the project or collected during the project will be stored and access provided, according to FAIR criteria (findable, accessible, inter-operable and re-usable). Data entails for instance tools, software, or algorithms.

For funded projects, a data management plan shall be submitted, as appropriate, which complies with international standards (i.e. FAIR criteria), the Icelandic, and EU data protection rules (General Data Protection Regulation) and the code of conduct on data management. The Project Leader is responsible for submitting a data management plan to the IRF before April 1st of the grant year. The plan is to be sent to the Fund's e-mail address ([rannsoknasjodur@rannis.is](mailto:rannsoknasjodur@rannis.is)) and specify the respective grant number.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://en.rannis.is/activities/open-access/>

## 8 General information

### 8.1 Role of the Icelandic Research Fund

The Icelandic Research Fund (IRF) is an open competitive research fund that operates according to the Act on Public Support for Scientific Research ([no. 3/2003](#)). The role of the Research Fund is to support research and research-based postgraduate studies. To this end, the Fund provides grants to students pursuing research-based postgraduate studies and for defined research projects that promote scientific research in Iceland. Grants are awarded in accordance with the general priorities of the Science and Innovation Policy Council and on the basis of a professional evaluation of the quality of the research projects, the competence of the persons carrying out the research and the resources at their disposal to execute the project.

### 8.2 Board of the Research Fund

The Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation appoints a five-member Board for three years following nominations of the Science and Innovation Policy Council, thereof one member of the Council. The Minister appoints the chairman and vice-chairman of the Board. The names of the Board members are published on the website of the Icelandic Centre for Research (Rannís). The Board issues rules and guidelines for the IRF and makes funding decisions based on the evaluations by Expert Panels.

### 8.3 Ethics for administrator

Members of the IRF Board, members of Expert Panels, external experts, IRF staff and others that administratively handle applications to the IRF are bound by strict confidentiality. Applications, including all enclosed materials and review sheets, are confidential. Confidential information is not to be used for any other purpose than the review process and may not be disclosed, published, or otherwise made available to a third party. No copies of confidential information shall be made available in any format except for review purposes. After completion of the review, a copy of the application and review documents will be stored in the electronic registry of Rannís. IRF Expert Panel members understand and acknowledge that any disclosure or misappropriation of this confidential information may cause the owner irreparable harm. The owner of the confidential information has the right to apply to a court of competent jurisdiction for specific performance and/or an order restraining and enjoining any further disclosure or breach and for such other relief as the owner shall deem appropriate. Such ownership rights are in addition to the remedies otherwise available to registered owners or parties that derive rights from the owner.

### 8.4 Rules regarding conflict of interest

With regard to individual applications, the following leads to the disqualification of external experts, Expert Panel members and Board members of the IRF:

- General rules on conflict of interest as listed in [the Administration Procedure Act \(no 37/1993\)](#)
- If an Expert Panel member, Board member or external expert is a spouse, close relative, or close friend of the applicant.

- Personal conflicts exist between a panel member, a Board member or external expert and an applicant.
- If an external expert, Expert Panel member or Board member is in professional competition with the applicant.
- Expert Panel members cannot be Principal Investigators of an application to the IRF.
- External experts cannot be a party to an IRF application in the same year they serve as external experts.
- If a Board member participates in an application, they must resign from discussing the allocation of grants in the relevant grant year, and a deputy Board member will take their place.

In the event of a conflict of interest, Expert Panel members and Board members must recuse themselves from the assessment of an application. External experts cannot undertake to assess the relevant application. Expert Panel members and Board members must recuse themselves from meetings while the relevant application is discussed, and a decision is reached regarding funding. Their absence shall be recorded in meeting minutes.

If the relevant party is an employee of an institution or company, and an application from other employees of the same institution or company is under discussion, the relationship between employees involved with the project and the directors of the relevant institution must be assessed. By default, this type of relationship does not lead to disqualification due to a conflict of interest.

Board members, Expert Panel members and external experts are responsible for pointing out circumstances that might create a conflict of interest.

## 8.5 Misconduct

Should suspicion of research misconduct, fabrication, falsification, plagiarism, or misappropriation in connection with an application or a funded project arise during the application process, during the funding period, or after the funding period of the project, the relevant party's institution and the IRF Board will be notified, without exception.

Suspicion of research misconduct during the review phase will result in the withdrawal of an application from the review process. At the same time, the principal investigator's institution is given an opportunity to investigate. Should allegations of research misconduct be found to be baseless, the application will be reviewed following standard review procedures. If evidence of research misconduct is found, the application will be withdrawn without review, and the applicant's institute will be held responsible for taking appropriate actions.

The IRF Board can initiate an independent investigation into cases of research misconduct.

## 8.6 Information regarding the IRF the Research Fund

General questions regarding the fund and applications under evaluation shall be addressed to the Research Fund's experts. The fund's email address and website are: [rannsoknasjodur@rannis.is](mailto:rannsoknasjodur@rannis.is) and [rannsoknasjodur.is](http://rannsoknasjodur.is)