



Road Safety Authority Bursary Awards

Background

The Road Safety Authority (RSA) is tasked with improving safety on our roads in order to reduce death and injury resulting from road collisions. The legal basis for the Authority is set out in the Road Safety Authority Act 2006. The Authority formally came into existence on 1st September 2006.

An objective of the RSA is to bring Ireland's road safety record into line with "best practice" countries throughout the World.

The achievement of this objective will involve cooperation with many stakeholders working in the area of road safety, including the Gardaí, education sector, health sector, local authorities, National Roads Authority, the media and of course the general public.

The RSA will have responsibility for the delivery of functions across four critical areas of road safety - Education, Enforcement, Engineering and Evaluation. Under the evaluation function the Road Safety Authority will;

- Develop a comprehensive road safety research programme;
- Monitor road safety interventions for effectiveness;
- Prepare data for Irish and International bodies on road safety

Research Remit

The remit of the Road Safety Authority encompasses research as cited in Section 8(1) of the Road Safety Authority Act:

The Minister may direct the Authority to collect, compile, prepare, publish or distribute to such persons (including the Minister) such information and statistics relating to road safety and the functions of the Authority, as the Minister considers appropriate, for national or international planning, policy research and development, monitoring and reporting purposes and may specify any matter concerning the collection, compilation, preparation, publication and distribution of such data and statistics, as the Minister considers appropriate.

Road Safety Strategy 2007-2012

The Road Safety Authority takes responsibility, in accordance with the Road Safety Authority Act 2006, for producing and formally reporting on the implementation of

the third Road Safety Strategy 2007 – 2012, which has received Ministerial and Government approval.

Research Programme

The RSA has set a number of objectives under this heading and will achieve them over the lifetime of this Strategy. It will:

- Improve the availability of accurate, relevant and timely data / information to support policy decisions
- Apply cost-benefit analysis and evaluation techniques in all decisions relating to the commitment of public funds in the prevention of and response to collisions, deaths and injuries and in follow up recovery and rehabilitation of the people injured in a collision.
- Engage in collaborative and partnership projects with the EU, international agencies and with all stakeholders.

The Road Safety Authority is committed to the development of a long-term road safety research programme. To facilitate this, the Road Safety Authority has decided at Board level to initiate a Research Bursary Award Programme as part of an on-going research strategy. The Programme will enable universities and institutes to apply for financial support for theses at PhD level covering subjects that are relevant to the aims of the Road Safety Authority. The Research Bursary is intended to facilitate research in road safety related areas for the general good. Access to the conclusions of the research will be widely disseminated in journals and conferences and reports will be made generally available.

In achieving this objective, the programme promotes practical measures that will contribute to enhancing innovation in regard to the Authority's functions in area of road safety. The measures take cognisance of the Authority's responsibility for the promotion of standards, having regard to efficiency, economy and quality, of road safety measures and interventions.

The Road Safety Authority has established an internal organisation structure for the management of its research programme. A dedicated Research Manager has been appointed and an internal network of research mentors drawn from across all the key areas of interest for the Authority is being established.

The principal medium term tasks for the research function are to:

- a) establish principal research themes that will contribute in the long-term to the Road Safety Authority's strategic goals as laid out in our Road Safety Strategy 2007-2012. All individual research tasks will then be structured to contribute to these themes, and all proposed research tasks will be judged against their potential contribution to these themes,
- b) establish the contracting methodology with research centres, including procurement and assessment, and put framework contracts in place

- c) commence assessment of research underway elsewhere that would contribute to our needs or eliminate a need for further research in particular areas.
- d) establish key assessment parameters and timescale deliverables to ensure congruence of research findings with overall Road Safety Authority objectives and strategic goals.

Invitation for Research Proposals

The Road Safety Authority are now commissioning a number of PhD / Post Doctoral bursary awards for the beginning of the 2011/2012 academic year to allow commencement of work on priority topics that can be anticipated to form part of the research programme resulting from the process described above.

The research can relate to any aspect of road safety but must address a demonstrated need for new knowledge. While research topics are not specified, proposals may focus on one or more of the following broad objectives.

- better understanding of the factors involved in road crashes
- development of improved road safety countermeasures
- identification of best practice in road safety
- development of evidence-based material for public education activities
- scientific evaluation of existing road safety measures/programs
- development of improved road safety research techniques.

Applications, for the Road Safety Authority 2011/2012 bursary award scheme, are invited from full-time academic staff in third levels colleges. Bursary award programme will be of three-year duration, subject to satisfactory progress.

The Bursary will be supervised by appropriate experts in the host university / institute and by relevant Road Safety Authority personnel.

Grant awards for the bursary award will be made to the academic institution or equivalent following Road Safety Authority evaluation.

Applications will be reviewed under the following headings:

- (a) Track record of supervisors
- (b) Quality of applications
- (c) Relevance of application to goals identified in topic descriptions

Applicants are required to give consideration to resource needs (e.g. computer equipment, software, etc.) associated with setting up the project. An annual budget for each bursary award comprising fixed stipend of €15,000 plus other costs must be provided as part of the application.

Call for proposals

Proposals will be invited through an open Call for Proposals made by the Authority. The Call will be specific to research topics or themes identified by the RSA, although other topics outside those specified may be invited for consideration. The Call will be publicised in national newspapers, technical journals and on the RSA website. Further information on the Call, including a technical description for particular research topics and themes identified by the Call, will be available on application to the Road Safety Authority. The Call will be made on an annual basis, but this may change depending on the requirements of the Authority. This call will be initiated in June 2011.

Form of submission

The submissions will be made on a standard form devised by the Road Safety Authority: this is to facilitate the submission and evaluation of projects. Each submission will include the following:

- Description of project including objectives, justification, work plan and timescale;
- Methodology;
- Expected outcomes;
- Breakdown on funding;
- CVs of relevant staff (main applicant, supervisor, student, etc).

The application must be made by a third level institution that has relevant experience and a proven track record in the selected area. Applications by individuals seeking funding for their own post-graduate are not acceptable. The theses will be supervised by appropriate experts in the post university/institute and by relevant Road Safety Authority personnel where appropriate.

Acceptable costs

Submissions can include costs directly associated with setting up the project. An annual budget for each thesis comprising will be provided as part of the application. The RSA will decide on what costs are acceptable. Acceptable costs might include:

- Stipend
- Equipment required to carry out the project
- Travel and subsistence for presentation of research results
- Conference fees (subject to the approval of the RSA)
- Overhead expenses incurred by the university/institute.

Evaluation and selection

Awards for the Bursary will be made to the academic institution or equivalent following RSA evaluation of quality of applications. Applications will be reviewed and assessed under the following headings:

- (a) Track record of supervisors
- (b) Quality of applications
- (c) Relevance of application to goals identified in topic descriptions

Project costs will also be considered in relation to the available Road Safety Authority budget.

The assessment of the projects will be co-ordinated by the Road Safety Authority Research Manager. Technical evaluation will be carried out by appropriate RSA staff: external review may also be carried out at the discretion of the Road Safety Authority. On the basis of this review, the submissions will be ranked and selected for inclusion in the programme.

Applicants wishing to familiarise themselves with the current road safety priorities and challenges in Ireland are encouraged to consider the Road Safety Strategy 2007-2012

Each application will be assessed by an evaluation panel comprising Road Safety Authority personnel. The evaluation panel may obtain expert advice from outside the Road Safety Authority and may contact applicant referees for additional information.

Initial meeting

Following this selection process, an initial meeting with the first ranked project team will be held to discuss the details of the project, clarify the project objectives and agree the project costs and timescales. The RSA may invite other interested parties to the meeting if appropriate. Following the meeting, the research proposal will be revised. Projects will only be included in the programme if they conform to RSA requirements in terms of quality, cost and timescale.

Agenda for initial meeting

- Technical content of project
- Financial resources
- Other resources
- Timescale
- Nature of contract
- Payment schedule
- Reporting, progress meetings
- Involvement of third parties
- Other

Nature of Contract

The nature of the contract between the RSA and the university/institute will be devised following the initial meeting. Terms and Conditions for the Contract have been produced in a separate document.

Payment will be made by the RSA to the university/institute according to an agreed schedule, subject to adequate progress being made. It is envisaged that payment will be made every six months in advance on application to the RSA: the format of the invoice/cost statement will be agreed.

Payment will be made following assessment of progress, based on a Progress Meeting and/or Progress Report. The Project may be terminated if progress is not to the satisfaction of the RSA. In exceptional cases, the project may be extended.

A condition of participation in the Road Safety Authority Bursary Award Programme will require successful applicants to carry out part of their research at the Road Safety Authority headquarters in Ballina, Co. Mayo for a minimum period of four weeks. Library facilities are available for research. While at the Road Safety Authority headquarters the candidate, may be required to carry out specific research tasks as determined by the research manager.

Deliverables

The project deliverables will be agreed at the start of the project. These will include reports and papers or thesis required by the student to fulfil the requirements of the university/institute in addition to any other reports specified by the RSA.

Intellectual Property Rights

In general, Intellectual Property Rights (IPR), developed as part of the Bursary, will remain with the university/institute. The university/institute must establish rules and procedures such that any IPR arising from the research work will be protected and managed appropriately.

All proposals will be assessed against the following criteria.

- *scientific merit:*
 - clear objectives and focus
 - addresses a demonstrated research need (supported by a review of related research)
 - sound research design and analytical methods
 - innovativeness.
- *potential benefit to road safety in Ireland:*
 - addresses a demonstrated road safety need or seeks to assess the extent of an identified road safety problem
 - contributes to the development of effective countermeasures
 - applicability is not limited to a single state, city or narrow set of circumstances.
- *cost:*

- value for money.
- *project autonomy:*
 - funding of the research must not commit the RSA to another project
 - the project has the scope to deliver meaningful results without the need for subsequent research
 - the project will be completed within the agreed time-frame and budget
 - the project does not duplicate work funded by the RSA or being undertaken elsewhere in the European Union.
- *capabilities and professional standing of the applicant and chief investigator:*
 - demonstrated ability to manage the project effectively
 - appropriate academic/professional qualifications and demonstrated research experience.

Reporting requirements

The project must have a maximum duration of 36 months. A draft final report is to be submitted to the RSA within 34 months of the commencement of the grant. Applicants are required to submit a realistic project schedule with their applications.

Applicants should note that the draft final report will be considered by the RSA and returned with comments as soon as possible.

A brief report summarising progress is also required mid-way through the project, or at a time agreed with the RSA.

Research reports are to be prepared to a standard suitable for publication in a reputable scientific journal. Report writing must be clear, concise, non-repetitive, accurate and able to withstand technical scrutiny. Grant recipients will be responsible for applying appropriate editorial and quality control before the draft final report is delivered to the RSA.

The RSA reserves the right to publish and disseminate grant reports, and to make them available for download from the RSA website (www.rsa.ie). An electronic report template will be supplied to grant recipients at the commencement of the project so that reports can be prepared and delivered in the standard RSA publication format.

Grant conditions

Applicants should ensure they understand the conditions under which funding is provided and be aware that grants may be terminated if any conditions are breached. The awarding of a grant will not be confirmed until a funding agreement between the RSA and the recipient organisation has been fully executed. A draft funding agreement incorporating standard Commonwealth terms and conditions are included in the application package. Given the strict timing requirements for project

completion, applicants or their organisations should contact the RSA with any concerns or questions about the funding agreement before submitting a grant application.

The following should be noted:

- specified deadlines for reports are grant conditions
- there are specific requirements for insurance cover, indemnity, intellectual property and the management of grant moneys
- the Road Safety Authority must be advised in advance of any proposed variations to the study
- public release of findings during the project requires prior approval by the Road Safety Authority
- the grant agreement vests intellectual property rights in the researcher or research organisation but grants allows the Road Safety Authority to use the research
- health-related research involving human subjects will require approval from an established ethics committee. It is not necessary to obtain ethics approval prior to submitting an application. However if your application is successful and the research requires it, ethics approval will need to be obtained before the research commences.