

## Apply to the SPHeRE Programme 2026

**The SPHeRE Programme is now accepting applications for the 2026 academic year. Mandatory Orientation will take place in person Wednesday 23rd-Friday 25th September 2026 in RCSI and TCD, and in person teaching will begin on Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> September 2026 in RCSI.**

The SPHeRE PhD Programme in Population health, Policy and Health-services Research (PHPHSR) aspires to cultivate world-class researchers through a four-year structured PhD Programme. SPHeRE means 'Structured Population health, Policy and Health-services Research Education.

The SPHeRE Programme can also be undertaken over a longer time period on a part-time, self-funded basis or on an alternatively-funded basis. In person teaching takes place each Wednesday in Year 1.

The Programme is led by nine universities in Ireland. We welcome applicants with an interest in carrying out research on population health and/or health services in the Irish context and from a wide range of academic and clinical disciplines, including public health, health psychology, health economics, health policy, general practice, biostatistics, health geography and social science, among others.

Six HRB SPHeRE Scholarships are available. Applicants who wish to apply for a SPHeRE funded Scholarship must submit an application form and select their preferred project (or a maximum of three projects) from the ten advertised projects that come under the following project areas:

- Health policy and systems research
- Health service and technology evaluation
- Population health research

If the Scholar is offered a project, they may be registered at one of the nine HEIs below in which the project is based. It will not be possible for Scholars to move a project to their preferred institution

- Dublin City University (DCU)
- National University of Ireland, Maynooth (MU)
- RCSI University of Medicine and Health Sciences
- Technological University Dublin
- Trinity College Dublin (TCD)
- University College Cork (UCC)
- University College Dublin (UCD)
- University of Galway
- University of Limerick (UL)

The full-time 4 year structured PhD Programme features:

- 6 taught modules completed in the first year of the Programme
- A workshop programme which runs over four years
- Opportunities for multidisciplinary research
- Supervision by internationally renowned Principal Investigators

In addition, SPHeRE HRB funded scholars benefit from:

- 8-week specialist rotation in Irish health related agencies in the first year
- Placement with a prestigious overseas agency to further PhD project development in the second or third years
- Professional skills training allowance
- Travel funds to national training days and international conferences
- Annual stipend of €25,000, plus laptop computer, plus PhD fees

This Programme provides excellent training for Scholars in core health services and population health research skills.

### **How to apply?**

HRB SPHeRE Funded Scholarship applications are submitted online through

[www.sphereprogramme.ie/apply](http://www.sphereprogramme.ie/apply)

Individual applicants are asked to complete an online application form and submit a one-page cover letter and a two-page Curriculum Vitae (including degree grades and contact details for two referees). In your cover letter, please discuss your education, training, and experience (research and/or practice) in population health, policy and health services research (PHPSR) and provide evidence of leadership (in an academic and/or non-academic capacity).

Please note that HRB SPHeRE funding is not available for part-time PhD students on the SPHeRE Programme. Self-funded Scholars are liable for fees at their host institution and all equipment, data collection & dissemination costs.

Successful non-EU applicants for funded positions will be liable for fees above that for European applicants. Fees vary, but further information on fees can be found on the websites of the individual institutions.

The deadline for applications for a HRB funded SPHeRE Scholarship is **12 noon, Monday 20<sup>th</sup> April**. **Incomplete applications or late applications will not be considered.**

**Interviews for SPHeRE Scholarships will take place on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> May and Monday 18<sup>th</sup> May 2026 online.**

We will not be able to facilitate requests for alternative interview dates.

The operation of the SPHeRE Programme is subject to funding by the HRB.