



Foras na Mara
Marine Institute

Marine Research Programme

National Research Vessels 2026 Ship-Time Programme

Grant-Aid Guidelines

Ship-Based Training on the RV Tom Crean and Dulra na Mara

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Introduction

The Marine Institute operates the national marine research vessels (RV Celtic Explorer and Tom Crean), and associated research infrastructure, on behalf of the Government of Ireland and the Irish marine community on a charter basis. The Marine Institute also has recently acquired an inshore research vessel, 'Dulra na Mara' that is a 12-meter vessel with capacity for up to 12 passengers and can operate for 12 hours, making it an ideal vessel for student training.

Access to the national research vessels via structured training programmes provides undergraduate and postgraduate students with hands-on training, which is invaluable experience to assist them in entering the workforce, across a wide range of activities (e.g. research and monitoring). Under *Marine Research Infrastructures* the [Ocean Knowledge 2030 Ireland's Strategy for Marine Research, Knowledge and Innovation, 2025-2030 \(Draft\)](#)¹ acknowledges the importance of the national research vessel fleet and states that these vessels "are critical to providing access to coastal and oceanic environments for academic and government scientists."

Applications are now being invited for grant-aid for ship-time for higher education institutions and public research bodies within the island of Ireland, to provide **dedicated on-board training programmes for postgraduate and/or undergraduate students**.

Applicants for ship-based training are advised to consult the Strategic Marine Alliance for Research and Training (SMART) based in the Atlantic Technological University, Galway. SMART aims to standardise and optimise ship-based training for undergraduate and post-graduate students and develop nationally accredited ship-based training activities for national Higher Education Institutes (please email John Boyd john.boyd@atu.ie).

The expected ship availability for training programmes in 2026 is 60 days approximately (circa 40 days Tom Crean, circa 20 days Dulra na Mara).

Who May Apply?

Applications for grant-aid for ship-time to conduct training programmes on-board the research vessels will be accepted from Higher Education Institutions and Public Research Bodies (Annex 1) on the island of Ireland with relevant undergraduate/postgraduate courses and/or postgraduate research students.

Technical Information

RV Tom Crean

Applicants are advised to refer to the *Vessel Users' Guidelines* on the [RV Operations webpage](#)² for further operational and technical information on the RV Tom Crean, including logistical information for the organisation of surveys.

RV Dulra na Mara

The Dulra na Mara is a versatile 12-meter research vessel which can take up to 12 passengers and operate for 12 hours. It is designed for a wide range of scientific operations, including oceanographic sampling; hydrographic surveys; beam trawling; benthic research; ornithology and marine mammal observing; side scan sonar operations and drop camera and mini ROV deployments. Equipped with a real-time winch and a 1.5 Ton A-frame allows for efficient deployment and retrieval of sediment sampling gear, ensuring high-quality data collection for geological and environmental studies.

¹ <https://oar.marine.ie/handle/10793/1994>

² <http://www.marine.ie/Home/site-area/infrastructure-facilities/research-vessels/research-vessels>

The vessel will primarily be based out of Galway docks but can work out of other west and southwest locations.

Items to note:

- Seafaring certificates are not required for sailing on the Dulra na Mara.
- The lab space is not equipped with refrigerators or freezers. Samples collected offshore must be removed after the training or research survey.
- Tea/coffee making facilities and microwave are available on-board. Participants must bring lunch and snacks as required.



Evaluation of Proposals

A panel established by the Research Funding Office will evaluate eligible proposals. Eligible applications will be evaluated using the following criteria:

- Nature of the training programme, including multi-disciplinarity;
- Number of students (undergraduates and postgraduates);
- Consideration of gender equality/equal opportunities within the programme;
- Utilisation of the data acquired during the training for undergraduate projects or postgraduate programmes;
- Experience of the lead applicant/chief scientist; and
- Benefits, learning outcomes, impact and contribution of the programme to marine education and research, including impact on research capability building in Ireland.

Applicants should ensure that sufficient information is provided in the application to allow a thorough evaluation.

Applications Procedure and Deadline

All applications must be submitted using a **two-step procedure**, as follows:

Step 1: Apply for Ship-Time via the Marine Facilities Planning (MFP) system

- The Marine Facilities Planning (MFP) online system is used to assist Research Vessel Operations with vessel planning and logistics, from application through survey planning and execution. The MFP online application process is designed to capture information on the proposed use of the vessel: e.g. survey dates, mob/de-mob locations, area of operations, no. of personnel and equipment requirements.
- Please 'Request an account' to access the MFP, via the following [login page](#)³.
- Once you have entered and submitted all the required details via the MFP you will receive email confirmation with a unique Application Code (e.g. 26/01). This Application Code must be referred to in Step 2.

Please ensure you complete this step in sufficient time to allow you to complete Step 2 within the deadline.

Note: The ship-time application process for Dulra na Mara in 2026 is not via Marine Facilities Planning (MFP) but will be via the following Microsoft form: [Dulra na Mara ship-time application – 2026 survey period](#).

Step 2: Apply for Grant-Aid via the online Research Information Management System (RIMS)

- Create a Ship-Time Funding Application via RIMS:
 - ▶ If you are already a registered user of RIMS please go directly to the [login page](#)⁴.
 - ▶ To register as a new user please email rim.support@marine.ie with a password request, and include your organisation details.
 - ▶ Once you are logged in, click on the 'Open Calls Tab' and select 'Ship-Time' from the drop-down list.
 - ▶ Complete the on-screen fields and follow the on-screen instructions to download the Application Form. **Please ensure you download and complete the correct Application Form (Ship-Based Training).**
- The Application Form seeks additional information on the proposed Research Survey to assist in the evaluation of the proposal; e.g. context and rationale, benefits and impacts of the survey.
- Evaluation of the applications for grant-aid will be based on the information provided in this Application Form. The information provided should be consistent with that provided via the MFP application but should include additional information.

For assistance with registration on the Marine Institute Research Information System (RIMS) and the application process please email rim.support@marine.ie.

Applications (PDF version) must be submitted via RIMS by:

15:00 HOURS ON FRIDAY, 30TH MAY 2025

All applications will be acknowledged.

³ <https://mi.marinefacilitiesplanning.com/>

⁴ <https://marine.smartsimple.ie/>

Terms and Conditions

Grant-Aid

- Funding is provided for ship-time on the R.V. *Tom Crean* or *Dulra na Mara*. It may be awarded in lots of single or multiple days, depending on the evaluators' recommendations.
- Applicants may apply for funding to cover all or part of the vessel charter costs. The leveraging of funds from other sources for a portion of the total amount of ship-time applied for is strongly encouraged and should be clearly stated in the application form.
- Grant-aid covers use of the vessels, full crew, fuel (at economical service speed), victuals and other standard operating costs. Grantees will not invoice the Marine Institute for any third party costs, such as salary costs, equipment manufacture, repair, transport or rental, consumables, travel and subsistence costs, sub-contracting and assistance, publication costs, and overheads.
- The allocation of ship-time is dependent upon the availability of ship-time and funding.
- If the number of grant-aided days are reduced by the Marine Institute for any reason or if the vessels are prevented from working (e.g. by poor weather or technical difficulties) no cash or any other form of compensation shall be payable in respect of any time lost.
- If a training programme has to be cancelled because of poor weather, technical difficulties or other reasons, or postponed at the request of the applicant, then the Marine Institute may facilitate re-scheduling of ship-time to the following year wherever possible.

Grant-Aid Amount/Rate

- The grant-aid allocations are as follows:

Vessel	Rate (per day)
RV Tom Crean	€17,500
RV Dulra na Mara	€2,000

Note: Should the daily rate be revised following a review of costs (e.g. in case of increasing fuel costs), then the grant-aid allocation will be adjusted accordingly by the Marine Institute.

DPER Circular on Grant Management

Successful applicants will have to adhere to the relevant requirements contained in circular 13/2014 *Management of and Accountability for Grants from Exchequer Funds* issued by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform on 26th September 2014. These requirements, dealing with reporting of grant expenditure, publication of the award details in the grantee's financial statements and disposal of assets, will be detailed in the grant award letter. For ship-time grantees the requirements only relate to the publication of the award details in their financial statements.

Reporting

- Successful grantees must complete a **Report** on the Training Programme to the Marine Institute. This should be submitted, **within three months** of completion of the programme (online via RIMS), using a template provided by the Marine Institute.
- The Marine Institute may require the Grantee to provide clarifications and/or make changes to the Report. The Grantee shall co-operate in revising or amending the final report prior to its completion and before signing off by the Marine Institute.
- If deemed suitable, the Report, or a Synthesis Report, may be published by the MI.
- Failure to comply with this requirement may disqualify grantees from seeking future ship-time grant-aid.

Sustainability

- Grantees are requested to engage in efficient survey planning to minimise the carbon footprint of the training programme.

Images

The successful grantee must upload a **minimum** of three digital images captured during their training programme in JPEG format on RIMS. These images will be uploaded on the understanding that they may be used in Marine Institute reports and promotional materials. Please ensure that the copyright owner and the photographer are identified, as this details will be included if the images are used.

Acknowledgements

- All publications/presentations/publicity arising from the Training Programme should carry an acknowledgement of the funding source (as per Appendix 2).

Outreach

- Grantees are requested to participate in outreach activities or any other publicity organised by the Marine Institute.

Datasets

- It is the responsibility of the Grantee to submit a full description of the dataset(s) acquired during the Training Programme (if applicable) to the Marine Institute in ISO 19115 standard format. A template will be provided by the Marine Institute for this purpose (MIKADO). This metadata is additional to any formal project reports, and will be made publicly available. The Grantee is required to provide details of how such datasets will be maintained and how other researchers can access and make use of them.
- Oceanographic datasets captured will be published on completion of the Training Programme (if applicable).
- However, the Chief Scientist at the time of the pre-cruise meeting can request **in writing** that oceanographic datasets be held and temporarily not be made publicly available (other than to the Grantee and Marine Institute staff). If written request received, then the period of embargo is a maximum of 12 months from the completion date. After this period all datasets will be made publicly available.

- Datasets provided to the Marine Institute are available to access from the [Marine Data Centre](#) on the Institute's website. The Marine Institute supports funding for quality and responsible research with the results widely disseminated preferably via open access routes.
- Track/CSV file showing vessel track/data acquired and/or CSV file showing locations and data acquired should be submitted to the Marine Institute one month after the training takes place.
- If requested, the Grantee may be required to provide digital copies of all data to the Marine Institute at no additional cost.

Freedom of Information

Information supplied to the Marine Institute may be disclosed in response to a request under the Freedom of Information Act, 2014. It is the responsibility of the applicant to indicate at the time of making an application which information should not be disclosed and the reasons for non-disclosure. The Marine Institute will consult with applicants about this information before making a decision on any Freedom of Information request.

Data Protection

Personal information supplied to the Marine Institute will be stored by electronic means (e.g. database) for use only in connection with applications for grant-aid. The provisions of the Data Protection Act 2018 will be fully complied with. The Marine Institute and the Applicant will comply with the EU General Data Protection Regulation (2016/679) from the regulation enforcement date of 25th May 2018.

Appendix 1: Public Research Body

For the purpose of this call a public research body is defined as “a public sector body or a legal entity governed by private law with a public service mission providing adequate financial guarantees, who are undertaking research and are based on the island of Ireland”. A public research body must be a legal entity with their registered office address in the Republic of Ireland or Northern Ireland.

Therefore, there are two clear cases of entities that are considered public bodies:

1) Public sector bodies

Any public authority or entity set up under public law by a state or one of its authorities (e.g. government). Even if such an entity has a legal personality, it acts on behalf of the State with regard to and within the limits of its specific areas or competencies. Activities carried out by such authorities or entities may be of a commercial nature.

2) Legal entities established under private law with a public service mission and providing adequate financial guarantees

With respect to the "public service mission":

a) Where an entity established under private law is owned by a public sector body or the state, it can be deemed to have a public service mission.

b) For an entity established under private law that is not owned by a public sector body, the entity must be explicitly granted such a mission through a decision by a public sector body. Secondary and higher education establishments that deliver diplomas recognised by a public authority according to criteria established by the state or perform research with public funding and in accordance with objectives agreed by the state would meet this criterion. In cases of doubt proof of the public service mission can be required from the potential contractor showing that it falls into one of the two categories above.

With respect to the "adequate financial guarantees":

a) If the entity is owned by the state then it can be presumed to provide adequate financial guarantees as the state will honour its obligations.

b) If the entity is not owned by the state or a public sector body then it must prove that it will provide adequate financial guarantees (except for the secondary and higher education establishments that are presumed to provide such guarantees). In cases of doubt proof of the existence and adequacy of a financial guarantee can be required from the potential contractor showing that it falls into one of the two categories above.

The following organisations are considered to be eligible Public Research Bodies:

- Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI)
- Atlantic Technological University (ATU)
- Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM)
- Commissioners of Irish Lights (CIL)
- Dublin City University (DCU)
- Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies (DIAS)
- Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT)
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI)
- Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI)
- Marine Institute (MI)
- Maynooth University (MU)

- Met Éireann
- Munster Technological University (MTU)
- Queen's University Belfast (QUB)
- Sea Fisheries Protection Authority (SFPA)
- South East Technological University (SETU)
- Teagasc
- Technological University Dublin (TU Dublin)
- Technological University of the Shannon (TUS)
- Trinity College Dublin (TCD)
- Tyndall National Institute
- Ulster University (UU)
- University College Cork (UCC)
- University College Dublin (UCD)
- University of Galway
- University of Limerick (UL)

The list above includes organisations who have previously been funded to undertake marine research in Ireland, but this list is not exhaustive and if any applicant is unsure whether they are eligible, then they should clarify with the Marine Institute by sending an email to funding@marine.ie.

Appendix 2: Ship-Time Publicity Guidelines

All published materials relating to the training programme should carry full acknowledgement of Grant-Aid funding, as follows:

“This training programme is supported by the Marine Institute, and is funded under the Marine Research Programme by the Government of Ireland.”

In addition to the above wording, the Marine Institute **logo** should be displayed:



Presentations/Posters

Presentations (Overheads/PowerPoint/Slides) and Posters should carry the full acknowledgement of Grant-Aid and the Marine Institute logo also. In a Presentation, this acknowledgement should come at the beginning of the presentation (e.g. after the introductory slide).

Further Information

Further information on publicity requirements can be obtained from the Research Funding Office:

Email: funding@marine.ie

Tel.: 091-387200