

St John of God Research Foundation Job Description for Chief Executive Officer Full Time, Permanent

Who We Are

St John of God Research Foundation clg provides a research infrastructure and develops a culture of inquiry across the St John of God Group (SJOG Group). The Research Foundation is uniquely placed as a research company embedded within health services. As the key enabler of research across the SJOG Group, the Research Foundation is the gatekeeper of research standards across the organisation, and the point of contact for all staff and external researchers who wish to engage in research.

Our mission is to support the St John of God Hospitaller Services Group (HSG) in achieving a service informed by research which will identify, respond to and support the needs of all individuals in the manner of St John of God. The Research Foundation funds research into mental health, intellectual disability and old age. The Company also supports research throughout SJOG Services through its Research Support Service and Library & Information Services. We advocate for the men, women and children who use our services, we share research findings, and we facilitate professional training through our annual conferences and seminar series.

Role Description

The CEO provides strategic, operational, and values-led leadership to advance the Research Foundation's mission of improving the lives of people experiencing mental health difficulties, intellectual disability, and dementia through high-quality, impactful research. The CEO is responsible for delivering the Research Foundation's strategic plan, strengthening research governance and ethics, and ensuring excellence across all programmes, partnerships, and funded activities.

The CEO leads the development of a Research Excellence Framework, oversees implementation of the PPI Strategy, and drives organisational learning, inclusion, and evidence-based practice. The CEO builds strong relationships with academic partners, funders, government bodies, and sector organisations, positioning the Research Foundation as a national leader in research impact and collaboration.

The CEO ensures robust governance, financial stewardship, and compliance with all statutory and regulatory requirements. They foster a positive, compassionate, and high-performing culture, support staff development, and champion co-production and lived experience involvement across all research activities. Reporting to the Board of Directors, the CEO provides clear, timely, and strategic advice to guide decision-making and ensure the Research Foundation delivers measurable value and meaningful outcomes.

Key Areas of Responsibility

Leadership

- Lead the Research Foundation as the singular research pathway for all research conducted across SJOG Services.

- Provide strategic leadership to deliver the Research Foundation's mission to advance research excellence in mental health, intellectual disability, and dementia care across Ireland, the UK, and Malawi.
- Ensure that all activities are in accordance with the philosophy, ethos, and values of HSG and the policies established by its Board.
- Guide the implementation of the Research Foundation's Strategy with a focus on maximising the impact of research. Report to the Board on progress against the strategy on a quarterly basis.
- Provide expert leadership, guidance, and performance development to the Research Foundation team and wider staff, fostering a culture of learning, inclusion, compassion, and evidence-based practice.
- Mentor staff at all levels, promoting CPD, research capacity building, and a values-led organisational culture.
- Represent the Research Foundation nationally and internationally with stakeholders, funders, academic partners, and the public.

Strategic

- Lead and report to the Board on the implementation of the Foundation's strategic plan, ensuring alignment with organisational values and sector priorities.
- Prepare submissions, position papers, and evidence-informed contributions to national policy, research funding calls, and sectoral initiatives.
- Analyse and advise on the impact of new research opportunities, partnerships, and regulatory changes.
- Develop and lead a robust evaluation framework to demonstrate the impact, quality, and value of the work of the Research Foundation.
- Ensure the Research Foundation is a thought leader in research governance, PPI, inclusion, and values-based practice.

Organisational

- Maintain strong relationships with the Board, providing timely, accurate, and strategic information to support decision-making.
- Provide oversight and support to the Research Support Service, the Library & Information Service, PPI function, and Psychosis Research Centre.
- Chair the Research Advisory Committee and ensure streamlined and appropriately governed research pathways.
- Oversee the SJOG Research Grant Scheme, ensuring the integrity of the process and allocation of funding.
- Work in partnership with the Research Ethics Committee in safeguarding the reputation and values of St John of God and assuring ethical research practices.
- Embed co-production and lived experience involvement across all research initiatives, governance structures, and evaluation processes.
- Foster an organisational ethos that recognises and celebrates the contribution of peer researchers, volunteers, and lived experience partners.

Governance

- Design and implement operational policies and procedures to support good research governance, ensuring these procedures are compliant with data protection and health research legislation, and are in accordance with the philosophy, ethos and values of HSG.
- Ensure compliance with all statutory reporting requirements (Companies Office, Charities Regulator, Lobbying Register).

- Ensure delivery of contractual commitments to funders, partners, and collaborators.
- Lead operational and fiscal planning, ensuring effective performance, risk management, and internal controls.
- Ensure appropriate internal audit processes are in place.
- Promote a positive, inclusive, and psychologically safe workplace environment.
- Undertake additional projects as required by the Board.

Finance

- Provide support to the Research Grants Committee in the planning and oversight of the annual research grant scheme.
- Provide accurate analysis of budgets, financial trends, and operational performance to support Board and Executive decision-making.
- Work closely with the HSG Group Director of Finance to optimise financial stewardship and strategic financial planning.
- Develop cash-flow projections, budgets, and reporting mechanisms to meet operational and strategic needs.
- Work with funders, donors, and partners to maximise value for money and investment in the Research Foundation's research programmes.
- Maintain best-practice standards in accounting, audit, and financial governance.

Stakeholder Management

- Contribute to the senior leadership of the SJOG organisation by participating in the CEO Group, the HSG Executive team, and working closely with Boards of Directors.
- Represent the Research Foundation publicly, enhancing visibility and awareness, and demonstrating impact.
- Build and maintain strong relationships with NGOs, research networks, universities, and sectoral collaborators.
- Establish and maintain relationships with key stakeholders including public representatives, policy makers, media, and external agencies.
- Promote the Research Foundation as a leader in research excellence, inclusion, and values-based practice.

Person Specification

Essential Criteria

- Qualifications: PhD or relevant third-level qualification
- Minimum 3 years' senior management experience in a research, NGO, health, or social care setting.
- Minimum 3 years' experience in financial governance and compliance.
- Significant experience research management.
- Strong understanding of the Charities Governance Code, governance obligations, and statutory reporting.
- Demonstrated senior leadership experience with a coaching/mentoring approach.
- Excellent analytical, written, verbal, and ICT skills.
- Knowledge of national and international research, policy, and sector developments.
- Proven track record of successful research grant funding applications at a national and international level.
- Excellent communication skills across all organisational levels and with external stakeholders.
- Experience working with external funders, partners, and collaborators.
- Personal integrity and understanding of the reputational responsibilities of a CEO.

- Full clean driving licence.

Desirable Criteria

- Experience working with a Board of Directors.
- Experience in mental health, intellectual disability, social care research, or related fields, will be an advantage.
- Experience engaging with Government Departments, policy makers, and funders.
- Knowledge of collaborating with fundraising teams and philanthropic groups to generate funds for research.
- Flexibility to work occasional unsocial hours.
- Independent, creative, and innovative thinker.
- Experience representing an organisation in national media or public forums.

Other Requirements

- Garda vetting
- Appropriate references

Pay & Benefits

Contract & Salary

- €75k-85k
- Permanent
- 6-month probation period
- 35 hours per week (exclusive of lunch)

Annual Leave

- 30 days per annum

Benefits

- Company pension scheme
- Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)
- Hybrid working a possibility
- Parking
- Bike to work scheme
- Company laptop and mobile phone

This job description will be subject to review in the light of experience and / or changing circumstances and will include other duties appropriate to the post as may be determined by the Board of Directors.

Start date: Position is available from July 2026 (Dates TBC)

Deadline for applications: Friday, 22nd May 2026 @ 5pm

Interview date: Week commencing 8th June 2026

Informal queries can be addressed to Louise Syms, Research Funding & Administrative Executive of the SJOG Research Foundation on louise.syms@sjog.ie

SJOG Research Foundation is an equal opportunities employer and welcomes applications from all sections of the community. If you have a disability and require accommodations to be made during the recruitment process, please contact us in advance and we would be happy to assist.