



2017 Government of Ireland Postdoctoral Fellowship Scheme:

Frequent Asked Questions (FAQs)

FAQ Deadline – 4pm (GMT) Monday 21st November 2016

Please note that the deadline for receipt of FAQs is **16:00 (GMT) Monday 21st November 2016**. FAQs must be submitted no later than this date.

FAQs that have been added to this document since the last version was published are in red font.

Similar questions have been grouped below in the following themes:

1. Eligibility;
2. Application Form;
3. Applying to the Scheme.

1. ELIGIBILITY

An Applicant is interested in applying for the 1 year GOI post doc scheme. This person meets eligibility requirements in terms of PhD graduation etc. This person is currently employed with the University on a short term contract basis in a part time teaching role. If successful the applicant will have completed this role in advance of taking up any award. Would this have any bearing on the individuals' eligibility for this scheme?

No, this will not have any bearing on their eligibility for the scheme. Applicants employed on a short term contract basis are eligible to apply as long as the contract has come to an end prior to the commencement of the Fellowship (should the application be successful).

I applied last year for the fellowship but my application was deemed ineligible. Am I required to complete the section "Description of modifications made to this proposal if the proposal has been previously submitted, but was unsuccessful under an Irish Research Council scheme"?

No. If the application was not evaluated then it is not counted as an unsuccessful application.

If an applicant applies and then decides to withdraw from the competition, does he/she lose out on another opportunity to apply for the Grant?



As outlined in the terms and conditions, applicants may only re-apply to each scheme on one subsequent occasion. If an application undergoes evaluation, then that application counts as one of the two opportunities an applicant has to apply to an individual Irish Research Council scheme.

I recently applied for the 2016 Enterprise Partnership Scheme and was unsuccessful. I am hoping to resubmit this application to the upcoming Government of Ireland Scheme 2017. If I am unsuccessful this time am I ineligible for future schemes or do I have another opportunity to submit to both schemes (1 additional time each) in future?

As outlined in the terms and conditions applicants may re-apply to each scheme on one subsequent occasion. The EPS Postdoctoral Fellowship and the Government of Ireland Postdoctoral Fellowship Scheme are two different schemes.

We have an applicant who had to perform a mandatory period of military service immediately after the award of his doctoral degree. Can you please confirm whether the IRC will grant an extension in this case and what documentary evidence would need to be supplied to support the extension?

The IRC may grant an extension if the applicant can provide independent certified written evidence of the mandatory service at the award offer stage if the proposal is recommended for funding.

The Applicant should confirm that he/she requires an extension to this 5-year period on grounds of a career break in the application form. The Applicant should then confirm the details and the dates in the available free text box.

Is it applicable to candidates with Masters Degree experience in Industrial R&D?

No, as per the 2017 Terms and Condition, candidates with a Master's degree but no doctoral degree are not eligible to apply.

Is it possible to apply twice - as I have two areas of research that I would love the opportunity to pursue. They are very different in scope and I am unsure which one is more likely to meet with approval for funding and so would like to submit two proposals. Is that possible?

As per the Guide for Applicants, applications to this scheme will be deemed ineligible and will not be considered for funding if the applicant submits more than one application.



For the purposes of 'career break', how long does the IRC consider one term of parental leave to be? How long does the IRC consider one term of maternity leave to be?

The Irish Research Council will allow up to a maximum of 42 weeks (paid 26 weeks and unpaid 16 weeks) per child in relation to maternity leave. In terms of documentary evidence, copies of birth certs and evidence of employment during the unpaid 16-week period will be required should an offer of funding be made.

In relation to parental leave, the Council will allow up to a maximum of 18 weeks. In terms of documentary evidence, copies of birth certs and evidence of employment during this period will be required should an offer of funding be made.

I would like to apply for the GOIPD fellowship but I do not know if I am eligible. My PhD was awarded on 16th January 2012 and my thesis defence was on 13th December 2011. But my research career is broken from 1st January 2014 because I moved from France to Ireland with my family and had to take care of my two boys at home. Can I still apply?

As per above, the IRC allows for parental leave of up to 18 weeks. However, applicants must have been in registered employment at this time and must be able to provide documentation to support them as having been on parental leave.

The application asks "Do you currently hold or have you previously held an Irish Research Council Award (including awards made under IRCSET and IRCHSS)?", and underneath this it says "Applicants to the Government of Ireland Postdoctoral Scheme must not hold, or have previously held, a Council fellowship." Can you please clarify this statement?

I previously won an IRCHSS Postgraduate Student Award - I am assuming this does not mean that I am not eligible for the Postdoctoral Fellowship scheme?

Applicants are only disqualified from participating in the fellowship if they have previously been in receipt of an IRC (or IRCHSS/IRCSET) postdoctoral fellowship. Possession of an IRC (or IRCHSS/IRCSET) postgraduate scholarship does not disqualify an applicant from participating in the scheme.

Applicants are, however, required to list any previous IRC awards in the specified question. The IRC requires this information for its records.

We understand that an applicant to the GOI post-doctoral fellowship call one only gets two chances to apply.

We would like to know if an application to the separate Caroline scheme uses up one of those two 'chances'?



Concurrent applications to the GOI Postdoctoral Scheme and CAROLINE are not allowed i.e. it is not possible to apply to both scheme at the same time. However, as outlined in the Terms and Conditions, applicants may re-apply to each scheme on one subsequent occasion (provided that all other eligibility requirements are met by the applicant).

One of our researchers wants to propose publishing a monograph. However this work would not stem from their PhD, but from research conducted as part of a postdoc. Are they eligible to apply for the one year fellowships, or can they only apply for the two year fellowship?

As per section 3 of the Terms and Conditions, the aim of the Irish Research Council Government of Ireland Postdoctoral Fellowship is to support suitably qualified applicants in all disciplines intending to pursue a research project. These Fellowships can be held for either:

- one year, in order to prepare a doctoral dissertation for publication through a variety of high quality published outputs: e.g. monographs, peer-reviewed articles, edited volumes;

or

- two years, in order to develop either a new research project or a research project that demonstrates a significant development of the subject of the doctorate through a variety of appropriate, feasible and clear published outputs.

It is at the discretion of the applicant to determine which fellowship is most appropriate for the research project proposed.

My proposal is not exactly a continuation of my thesis. But the application form states: "Please outline how the proposed research is a significant development, differing from your doctoral thesis, if appropriate". How does IRC determine appropriate here? Only if my proposal is an actual continuation of my thesis? Can I leave this blank if this is not my case? Will this weight on my application points?

This question is intended for applicants who are applying for a two year fellowship. It is not mandatory in the form and can be left blank if it is not relevant to the applicant. As long as it not relevant to the applicant, leaving this section blank will not weigh against the applicants score.

If I have publications that I think is not significant, can I still send a chapter of my thesis or some of the other items?

Yes.

I am a Swiss national currently undertaking an 18 month postdoctoral research project in Ireland. I live in Ireland during this period but am still



registered in Switzerland. Should I select EU or non-EU in the "ordinarily resident" section, i.e. is it the country where one is currently living or the country where one is registered that is asked for?

Applicants ordinarily resident in the EU for a minimum of 3 of the 5 years prior to starting the fellowship should select EU. All other applicants should select non-EU.

I'm just wondering if the IRC post-candidates can apply for a one-year post-doc two years in a row? Or, must they use their second application for the two-year application (having already applied for the one year post-doc)?

Applicants, if unsuccessful in their first application, can apply in their second application either for a one-year or two-year fellowship. However, applicants who have previously accepted a GOI fellowship cannot apply again to the scheme.

"4.3.2 [candidates] must not have been employed as a Postdoctoral Researcher for more than 5 years at the 31st March 2017"

By March 31st 2017 I will have been employed as a post-doc research in Spain for 1.5 years, and, before that, I was a post-doc in London for 3 years. The uncertainty is around my time at Oxford. I was a PhD student there and, while doing my PhD, I also became a 'Junior Research Fellow'. A Junior Research Fellow is a bit like post-doc in that you can get it after you've done a PhD, but you can also get it before, as in my case. So, my question is whether my time as a Junior Research Fellow counts towards the calculation of the five years. If it is, I amn't eligible for the IRC post-doc.

The terms and conditions specifically refer to employment as a "Postdoctoral Researcher". A "Junior Research Fellow" is a separate position and, as such, does not count towards the five year limit.

A potential applicant from the US has examiners appointed for his viva which is scheduled for 15 March 2017. He has submitted a preliminary thesis document which has been agreed upon by all the committee members. In the US, it would be very unusual for him to submit his thesis until around the same time as his viva. Is this acceptable for meeting the requirements for the award of a doctoral degree including viva but not yet graduated?

Yes, as long as the applicant would have been certified as having fulfilled within the five-year period before the 31st March 2017 all the requirements for the award of a doctoral degree.



A potential applicant is Irish but has spent the last 10 years in the USA and Australia for PhD and postdoctoral research. She is now a permanent resident of Australia due to a spousal visa. She is moving permanently back to Ireland next year. As her time abroad has been for education, postdoc or family reasons, is she deemed to be EU for 'Area where you are ordinarily resident'?

In this instance, the applicant would be qualify as 'non-EU'. It should be noted that applicant's place of residence has no impact on the selection process. The data is only being collected for the IRC's metrics.

One of our perspective applicants will be defending his thesis in March 2017, and is envisaging submitting his thesis for examination in February. Is he eligible to apply? The terms and conditions suggest so, but the actual application form mentions the thesis submission – is there a date by which the thesis must be formally submitted, or is it enough to have the Viva scheduled before 31st March 2017?

Yes the applicant would be eligible to apply. The applicant must be planning to submit their thesis before the 31st March 2017.

I am in the process of application for an IRC Postdoctoral Fellowship, and I have a question please. I have a recent PhD [defended in June 2016] from a Canadian University, and therefore seem to be eligible to apply. I also have another PhD defended over 10 years ago in Russia, and I worked for some time at a Russian University before entering a doctoral program in Canada. Am I still eligible to apply in view of these latter facts?

Unfortunately, when the terms and conditions state the applicant "must have been awarded their doctoral degree within the five-year period before the 31st March 2017" it is referring to the applicant's first PhD. Subsequent PhDs do not reset the term limit.

2. APPLICATION FORM

Can you tell me when the deadline will be for this year's Government of Ireland postdoctoral fellowship?

The Applicant Deadline is 4pm (Ireland time) Wednesday 30th November 2016.

With regard to the extension of the 5 year eligibility period in the case of Maternity Leave or Carer's Leave - do you upload the documentary evidence to the online system as part of the application?



No. Applicants do not upload certified evidence of an eligible career break (e.g. Maternity Leave or Carer's Leave) as part of the application.

If successful, Applicants must provide this documentation at the award offer stage. In cases where an Applicant is unable to provide the necessary documentation at award offer stage, the award offer is withdrawn.

Is it a requirement to upload a Gantt chart or is this optional?

Applicants are asked to upload a GANTT Chart but it is not a mandatory requirement.

If I include a Figure in my proposal, with a Figure title, are the words of this title counted in the word count of that particular section?

Applicants can upload supplementary information (e.g. relevant diagram or figure) in the 'Proposed Research' section of the application form. Any supplementary information must be uploaded as a separate PDF document. On that basis, the figure title can be included with the figure in the PDF document with no effect on word counts. Figures cannot be inserted into the individual field questions where word counts apply.

Is there a particular type of referencing system (e.g. Harvard) that the Irish Research Council would like applicants to use?

No. The Council does not have a preferred referencing system. It is at the discretion of the Applicant which referencing system to use.

Will my referees have access to the text of my application in the online application system?

Referees do not have access to the application form.

How many individual referees report needs to be submitted before the referee report submission deadline? Can they be from the same country from where the applicant has applied?

You must associate two Referees with your application, neither of whom may be your named Academic Mentor. Referees may be any nationality.

My abstract is already lay enough and I don't see why do I need to write one that is more lay than that, but I understand it is a requirement. In that case, can I use the same abstract? Do you recommend me to just start a new abstract from scratch? Or can I leave this section blank?



It is up to the applicant to decide whether their abstracts are fit for purpose. The online system, however, does require both boxes to be filled.

In order to comply with the regulations, one candidate would need to submit a peer-reviewed chapter, but this is in Portuguese. Will she need to get this translated and submit the translation? Would she need translated versions of the PhD chapter and table of contents would you know?

Yes, the student will need to provide English language versions of the documents. We can't assess them otherwise. I should note, however, that the PhD chapter and table of contents are only necessary if the applicant has no other publications. And that those publications don't need to be translate.

3. ELIGIBLE FUNDING

I am wondering why the indicative salary for the postdoctoral fellowships is currently at €31,275 per annum when the IUA recommended salary scale states that a postdoc salary should be at least €37,750?

Institutions are permitted, where consistent with institutional policies, to remunerate IRC Government of Ireland Fellows at a higher rate than the indicative rate utilising an alternative source of funding. Any such top-ups to the IRC indicative rate can only be funded from a source other than the IRC award itself. The IRC will not adjudicate on or be party to any decisions within institutions in respect of any top-up funding of salaries for IRC Government of Ireland Fellows.

I have an applicant who is hoping to use the direct research expense budget to cover costs for experimental research events and surveys, particularly participation fees for research participants. As this is not one of the eligible expenses outlined in clause 5.1.4, can you clarify if the applicant can include these expenses in their proposal?

Yes, these expense are eligible. They should be listed under "essential research supplies".

'For my research and the project I am applying with, I would have to spend a period of 5 weeks ca. in another laboratory/research centre in Crete. Can the expenses for traveling and staying there be covered by the direct research expenses? And if yes, are they going to be put in the "other costs" section? If not, where?'



Yes, research activities that are directly related to the project can be covered by direct research expenses. In this case, the activity should go under “other costs”.

4. APPLYING TO THE SCHEME

a. How do I apply to this scheme?

An application to the Government of Ireland Postdoctoral Fellowship scheme will be deemed ineligible and will not be considered for funding if it has not been submitted via the online application system. No hardcopies or emailed forms will be accepted.

b. What publications and supporting documentation should be included?

For ‘Publications and Other Research Outputs’, how many peer-reviewed articles are sufficient? If an applicant only has two, should they also submit samples of her written work?

As per the Terms and Conditions 2017, an applicant must have authored or co-authored at least one published peer-reviewed research publication; or demonstrable equivalent intellectual property output; or provided samples of their written research work. There is no requirement to submit samples of written work if an applicant has at least one peer-reviewed research publication or demonstrable equivalent intellectual property output.

I have a book review which was accepted for publication but it wasn't published yet. But will be out soon. The form specifically says "in preparation publications strictly cannot" be included in the research output list. Am I allowed to include this item, even though it was accepted and is technically not in preparation but not already published?

As per the application form, publications in press can be included in this section, but submitted and in preparation publications strictly cannot. If the publication has been accepted without further correction and is due for publication, it can be included.

One of our applicants has asked the following question in relation to the publications section of the application form. She has a peer-reviewed article that has been accepted for publication and is forthcoming shortly, which is closely related to her proposed research. As this article is not currently accessible online, she would like to include it for reviewers as an upload in the ‘Samples of Written Work’ section. However, the application form



suggests to upload a file only if an applicant has no publications. Would you advise to upload the article or should this be avoided?

As the article has not yet been published it can be uploaded in the 'Samples of Written Work' section.

For the purpose of the GOIPD fellowship application, would an article published in an annual postgraduate peer-reviewed journal be considered adequate? Or should I submit a sample of my work as demonstrable equivalent intellectual property output? It was closely reviewed by the two editors of the journal in addition to by an expert in my specific field.

Yes, as the journal is peer-reviewed it is eligible.

An applicant feels that it would strengthen his application to upload samples of his written work (thesis chapter and working paper samples) IN ADDITION TO listing some conference papers which would qualify as 'demonstrable equivalent intellectual property output'. Is this permitted or would this render his application ineligible? If permitted, would reviewers consider these samples of written work, or ignore them as extraneous?

Applicants should only submit samples of their written work if they have no publications suitable for the "Significant peer-reviewed Publications" or "Other Publications and Research Outputs" sections of the application. However, applicants who accidentally submit written samples on top of their other publications will not automatically be deemed ineligible. In this case, the samples will be deemed as extraneous and will not factor into the assessment process.

c. How do I choose a Mentor and Host Institution?

Is it possible for a Professor Emeritus to be a mentor?

Yes, where the institution is satisfied that the Professor Emeritus is able to commit to the mentorship for the full duration of the award.

How can I obtain an academic mentor?

It is the applicant's responsibility to locate a Host Organisation and an Academic Mentor. The Irish Research Council does not offer advice in this regard.

Can an IRC postdoctoral researcher undertake teaching duties in an institution other than their host institution, and if so, would the IRC permit them to receive payment for this work?

Yes, so long the teaching doesn't exceed 50 hours and is approved of by their host institution and mentor.



Is it possible for an applicant to have an academic mentor who will not be employed by the Higher Education Institution until January 2017?

Yes. However, the mentor must be in place prior to the start date of the fellowship.

A member of staff in DCU is hoping to act as mentor. He is a physician but he doesn't have a PhD. This restricts him from supervising PhDs but could he mentor a post-doc?

The suitability of a member of staff to serve as a mentor is up to the research office of the host HEI to determine. The IRC has no specific eligibility requirements for mentors.

d. General online-application queries.

Can you please confirm whether an Academic Mentor needs to be a full member of staff of a HEI for the full duration of the Postdoctoral Fellowship?

The HEI/RPO must ensure an Academic Mentor is appointed with responsibility for supporting and guiding the Fellow for the full duration of the Fellowship. This Academic Mentor would normally be a Principal Investigator, or other suitably qualified person, with an employment contract in place for the full duration of the Postdoctoral Fellowship.

Can the postdoctoral fellowship start sooner than 1st Oct 2017, considering the outcomes are announced in April?

All Postdoctoral Fellowships must commence on 1st October 2017.

Are reasonable vouched expenses for meals, for example on a research trip, considered eligible costs? The application form states that subsistence/per diem rates are not an eligible cost. Living expenses (e.g. rent, food and phone) are ineligible research expenses costs.

No. Vouched expenses for meals and drinks are not considered eligible research costs.

Can an honorary emeritus act as a mentor?

Yes, an honorary emeritus can act as a mentor if they have the approval of the host institution and can adequately provide professional guidance and support to the fellow.



Can an applicant be based in one institution, with a mentor from another institution?

No. An applicant's mentor must be present in the host HEI.

Can a Mentor be named as Mentor one more than one postdoc application?

An Academic mentor at an Irish HEI/RPO is permitted to support more than one fellow under each type of Postdoctoral Fellowship available in the 2017 call. The Irish Research Council funds individual fellows to carry out original research projects. In instances where an academic mentor supports more than one fellow, the research projects must be distinct and original with no significant overlap.

The system keeps logging me off for no reason and I keep losing my work. Why does this keep happening?

There are generally two reason that this keeps happening:

1. There could be malware on your system. In order to prevent the system from being compromised it's designed to eject anyone who has an infected computer. That means that the system will prevent you from submitting until your computer's been cleaned.
2. If you're using a VPN or a proxy server this can cause the application portal to crash. Try connecting via a different network and see if the problem persists.