



2019 Government of Ireland Postdoctoral Fellowship Scheme:

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Version 2 – November 19th 2018

FAQ Deadline – 4pm (GMT) 21 November 2018

Please note that the deadline for receipt of FAQs is **16:00 (GMT) Wednesday 21 November 2018**. FAQs must be submitted no later than this date. All enquiries should be submitted to the research office of the proposed Higher Education Institution/Research Performing Organisation. The Irish Research Council does not accept enquiries directly from applicants/mentors.

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 have just submitted my PhD Thesis, and I am waiting for my Viva, can I still apply to the scheme, or do I have to wait?

Applicants to the scheme who have not been awarded a doctoral degree will have to have fulfilled within the five-year period before the 31 May 2019 all the requirements for the award of a doctoral degree but may have not yet graduated.

If the applicant expects that they will meet this criterion, they can apply under this call. However, should they fail to meet the scheme requirements, they will be deemed ineligible. Documentary evidence confirming that applicants have met all requirements for the award of their doctoral degree by 31 May 2019 will be required from applicants whose application will be recommended for funding. No documentary evidence pertaining to academic qualifications should be uploaded to the online system as a part of the fellowship application.

Is it correct that the maximum extension to the five year period for documented career breaks is five years? Are provisions made for having worked part time?

Eligible career breaks of up to 5 years are taken into account when applying. Part-time work is not considered an eligible career break.

By how much time does one period of maternity leave extend the eligibility window? Is it by 18 months, or by the time actually taken as per the documentary evidence such as a letter from HR?

The eligibility window for maternity leave is based on the maximum allowed duration of maternity leave per child i.e. 26 weeks' maternity leave and 16 weeks' additional unpaid maternity leave. This is the maximum amount of time the eligibility window can be extended by and is subject to the provision of documentary evidence.

A prospective postdoc applicant graduated with her PhD in Dec 2012. She had 3 children before this date and one child after her PhD graduation. Do all periods of maternity leave count to extend the eligibility window to apply for the GOI postdoc call (as they do when calculating ERC eligibility), or just those periods of leave taken after PhD graduation?

Only career breaks that occurred after the award of the degree are to be considered, subject to provision of documentary evidence. .



Can a researcher extend the eligibility window to apply for the GOI postdoc call if they graduated with their PhD before 2014 and had a child in May 2016 but haven't gone back to work since then and so don't have documentation to prove a maternity leave period?

The eligibility window can be extended for maternity leave only for periods of maternity leave actually taken from employment, subject to provision of relevant documentary evidence. The maximum possible extension of the eligibility window on this grounds is 42 weeks per child.

Does time as a full time carer for one's own children count as 'carer's leave' for the purposes of extending the eligibility window if the applicant has documentation to show they have been claiming home carers credit since then?

No, this would not count towards an eligible career break. To be eligible for 'carer's leave', the applicant would have to have been in receipt of the 'carer's allowance' i.e. an allowance provided by the Department of Social Protection to someone on a low income who is looking after a person who needs support because of age, disability or illness, including mental illness.

An applicant was wondering if their application from last year, which was deemed ineligible because it was missing one of the references, counts as one of their attempts at postdoctoral funding from the IRC.

Ineligible applications do not count towards the two applications limit.

If I have two unsuccessful IRC grant applications (to the CAROLINE and GOI Postdoc Fellowship calls) am I restricted from applying for IRC Principal-Investigator level funding opportunities in the future?

No. The maximum number of attempts to secure funding applies under each funding programme separately.

Can you please confirm if candidates must have formally submitted their thesis for examination and have examiners appointed and have a viva/thesis defence date scheduled at the time of submitting the proposal, on November 29 2018?

Fellows must either:

- have been awarded their doctoral degree within the five-year period before the 31 May 2019. For the purposes of this condition, the date of graduation will be taken into account; or
- must have been certified as having fulfilled within the five-year period before the 31 May 2019 all the requirements for the award of a doctoral degree,



including a viva/thesis defence where such is required and the submission of their final corrected thesis, but have not yet graduated.

Would an individual who has *two* PhDs, one earned *within* the five year period between 31 May 2014 and 31 May 2019, and the other *before* 31 May 2014 be eligible to apply, so long as they have *not* been employed as a Postdoctoral Researcher for more than 5 years at the 31 May 2019?

For the purpose of determining eligibility, the Council will consider the doctoral degree relevant to the application in question.

2. APPLICATION FORM

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 evidence of an eligible career break (e.g. Maternity Leave or Carer's Leave) or any other documentary evidence as part of the application.

If successful, applicants will be required to provide this and any other documentation at the award offer stage. In cases where an applicant is unable to provide the necessary documentation at award offer stage or if discrepancies between information included in the application form and in the documentary evidence exist, the award offer might be withdrawn.

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.

My university does not work with a final grade or grade point average system and therefore this information will not be provided in my academic transcript. In this case, what should I write in that particular field under the Academics Qualifications section?

An applicant obtained their masters at a Swedish institution, where each module is graded from F-A individually. They don't you give an average grade - it is either pass or fail. What should they include in their application form in this case?

Information included in the application form must be consistent with that included in the relevant documentary evidence. If a degree is awarded on a "Pass/Fail" basis, then the applicant should write either "Pass" or "Fail".



Can I upload a letter of support from an important project partner with my postdoc fellowship application?

No. Each application must receive two references, no more and no fewer. Applicants are not allowed to upload further references/letters of support, doing so will render the application ineligible.

3. APPLYING TO THE SCHEME

a. How do I apply to this scheme?

All applicants to the Government of Ireland Postdoctoral Fellowship scheme must submit their application using our online application system. Hardcopies or emailed application forms will not be accepted.

I am interested in the possibility of publishing journal articles from my PhD thesis - is such an activity commonly funded by the fellowships? I would also however like to develop a proposal and conduct some research to support the development of a larger project in a related area to the thesis that I would then look to apply for funding for. Is it possible to join two such activities in a single application?

Is it possible for an applicant to the two-year fellowship to plan to turn their PhD into a published manuscript and also to publish research from the elaborated research concept?

Applicants can apply for one of two different types of award:

- A one-year fellowship, 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

- A two-year fellowship, 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.

Applicants must determine which is most appropriate for their project.

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 2019, 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. If an applicant has at least one peer-reviewed research publication or demonstrable equivalent intellectual property output, they should not submit other samples of their work e.g. thesis chapter.

Can Journals which are listed in RSCI (Russian Science Citation Index) be included to the list of peer reviewed journals in an application?

Only articles published in journals which have been subject to a peer-review process can be included.

I have worked on a publication which went through peer-review, and I expect it to be published in January 2019. If I receive permission from the Journal, can I include the draft of the paper in my application?

Yes, applicants can include a forthcoming publication, with permission from the Journal, as a sample of their written work, if they do not have any published peer-reviewed publication. Applicants should not include samples of their written work if they have already authored or co-authored published peer-reviewed research publication(s).

In the ‘Publications & Other Research Outputs’ section of the application, it indicates that conference papers can be included. I have delivered a number of papers but the conference organisers have not added them to their websites which means they are not searchable. Can I still include them in this section?

Yes, such conference papers can be included in the list of outputs.

c. Academic Mentors and Host Institutions

How can I obtain an academic mentor?

It is the applicant’s responsibility to locate a Host Organisation and an Academic Mentor before submitting their application to the online system. The Council does not provide advice in this regard.

Applicants must have the permission of their proposed Academic Mentor before adding this person as an Academic Mentor to their online application form. Should an Academic Mentor contact us and ask us to have their details removed from an application form, we are obliged to do so.



The applicant in question is wondering whether joint-supervision by 2 mentors is possible (both based in the same institution but in different schools). Can you confirm if joint supervision by two mentors is allowed under this scheme?

If an applicant includes a secondary mentor in the project, can they be based at a Higher Education Institution abroad?

Yes, joint mentorship is possible and it is encouraged for interdisciplinary applications. One mentor however, will have to be designated the primary mentor.

A secondary mentor can be based in an institution abroad. The mentor based at the institution where the applicant will be primarily hosted must be the lead mentor on the project.

Is it possible for a co-mentor to also be a referee?

No. The same rules that apply to a mentor apply to a co-mentor.

Would the Council support projects where a part of the research may be carried out in an industry based outside of Ireland or at another international institution (other than the candidate's PhD lab) in a collaboration for 3-4 months?

In principle the Council supports this type of collaboration but the applicant will need to provide a justification in their application form as to why this type of collaboration is required. If successful in the 2019 GOI Postdoctoral Fellowship scheme, Fellows must obtain the prior approval of the Council before undertaking a period of more than four weeks of fieldwork or research visits.